

Construction Skills Fund – Meet The Candidate

A multi-million pound fund to help tackle the construction skills shortage was launched in June 2018. The fund is part of the government's 'National Retraining Scheme', seeking to provide the training employers want to help those out of work, or at risk of redundancy, to start new careers.

Funded by the Department for Education the pilot scheme aims to inform larger policy developments (National Retraining Scheme and T-Levels). The Construction Skills Fund (CSF) aims to increase the number of people trained in construction, tackle the skills shortage and help build the homes and infrastructure England needs.

Procure Plus is one of only three Construction Skills Fund projects in the Northwest of England.

Working with B4 Box to deliver our training, we are well ahead of our target to deliver 350 candidates into employment by June 2020. In a series of profile pieces we will be introducing some of these successful candidates to hear how this fund has changed the course of their working lives.

Today meet Lewis Preston

This is Lewis' first job since graduating from Manchester Metropolitan University where he got a 2:2 in Business Management in July 2018.

After graduating Lewis became a carer for his sister and signed on to jobseekers and carers allowance from Sept 2018 to June 2019 which is when he started at Spire CS as a Logistics Labourer.



Q+A with Lewis

How did you hear about the opportunity to retrain? What interested you about it?

I heard about the opportunity to do a CSCS card through a neighbour who had previously attended a CSCS course at The Broughton Trust. I attended the course in April 2019 and completed my Level 1 Health & Safety certificate, sat and passed my touchscreen test and applied for my CSCS card. I wanted to get into construction and always had an interest in it from when I was growing up in Salford, I would see the area being developed and see it constantly improving. I also completed a level 3 BTEC Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment so really wanted to see what it would be like to work in a construction environment.

Any challenges/barriers you faced (either training or employment)?

My real challenges were a general lack of experience and any awareness of where to get support to help with my training.

What support did you have to overcome these barriers?

I had an initial meeting with the Broughton Trust and they advised me on how I could access the Skills Fund to support my training.

What did the training cover, and what did you find useful about it?

My training covered Level 1 H&S certificate which gave me access to a CSCS card. I found it interesting learning more about the dangers on site and working in a high risk physical environment.

What role have you gone into now, what types of things are you doing on site?

I'm now working as a Site Logistics Operative. My responsibilities on site are waste management, sweeping up, recycling, clearing away pools of water and transporting scaffolding and slip guards around site.

What difference has this opportunity made to you?

It has given me the opportunity to get a full-time permanent job and has made me a more responsible and respectful person. I communicate with people at all levels on site and believe that if you respect them they will respect you regardless of if they are a Site Manager or a Labourer. Getting a permanent job has also improved my lifestyle as I now earn more in one week than I did in one month when I was on benefits which in return has made me a more confident person. It took a short while to get used to the long hours, however, I soon adapted and now even have the option of overtime and would certainly recommend the CSCS course to anyone thinking about a career in construction. I just want to keep working hard and look for training options onsite and career opportunities as I gain more experience.

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Pete Aikman
Director at Spire CS:

“Procure Plus helping us utilise The Construction Skills Fund has been invaluable to Spire CS as a business and enabled us to recruit ready trained employees. It has also helped us link in closer to the communities across Greater Manchester and support Spire CS as a business tailor making a bespoke training package”.

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creating value for our communities

Procure Plus Holdings Ltd, Duckworth House, Lancastrian Office Centre, Talbot Road, Old Trafford, Manchester M32 0FP

Tel: 0161 874 1800 email: support@procure-plus.com
www.procure-plus.com