



Contact: Paula Littleboy
Title: PA & Corporate Marketing Officer
Tele: 01924 831009
E-mail p.littleboy@chevinha.co.uk
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NEWS RELEASE

Smiling all the way to the Playhouse! Chevin Housing build two Playhouses for Action for Children

Chevin Housing Group have teamed up with Action for Children's 'Small Steps' Children's Centre in Wrenthorpe and 'Forest Wood' Children's Centre in Crigglestone (commissioned by Wakefield Metropolitan District Council), to build and supply them with two playhouses constructed by Wakefield College Entry to Employment learners who are attending Chevin's Skillsbuild Centre in Featherstone.

Children's charity Action for Children was initially approached by Chevin to see how they could work in partnership to help with the centres and also provide further practical training for learners attending construction based courses at Chevin's Skillsbuild Centre. It was good news all round when Chevin agreed to carry out various maintenance tasks around the two children's centres, giving learners currently attending the Skillsbuild centre the chance to transfer their newly acquired skills into the workplace.

Whilst visiting one of the centres to put together a Children's playhouse that had already been purchased, Steve Lumb, Construction Training Co-ordinator at Chevin noticed that the quality of the playhouse could be improved. He suggested that Chevin take on board the project of the playhouses with the trainees' project managing, designing and building the playhouses at the Skillsbuild Centre.

The playhouses are now nearing completion and all of the youngsters have really enjoyed the experience of working on a project from start to finish. They have been really motivated by the project and the enjoyment that the playhouses will provide for the children and they are really proud of their work.

Two of the learners who have taken part are Sam Cambridge and Jordan Fennell who currently attend the Skillsbuild centre undertaking construction training delivered in partnership with Wakefield College. They are learning through the 'Moving On' group which was set up to give opportunities for experience to individuals who are thinking about a career in construction.

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Sam said: “We were asked to design and build the playhouses for the children’s centres as the ones they had were not very good. I was appointed Project Manager and was involved in building the framework, cladding the walls, constructing the door and window frames and fitting the roof. I have enjoyed being involved in this project as I have learnt lots of new skills and I was also able to practice skills I already have, so overall the project has been enjoyable and fun and the playhouses have turned out very well”.

Steve Lumb, Construction Training Co-ordinator at Chevin commented: “Giving learners the chance to work on a project that would produce a permanent finished job seemed to really give them a focus. They had the opportunity to work on site and meet the people they were actually doing the job for. A number of learners also completed small maintenance tasks, for example, fixing shelves, coat hooks, notice boards and paper towel dispensers. The behaviour and level of maturity shown by the learners has been exceptional on each site visit. We are hoping to deliver the playhouses to site within the next few weeks”.

Gill Sykes, Service Manager for Action for Children’s Wakefield Children’s Centres said “This project has given us a great opportunity to work in partnership with Chevin Housing and the young people studying at their Skillsbuild Centre. We’re really grateful to the learners for building two wonderful wooden playhouses for our children’s centres, which I know the children will get a huge amount of enjoyment from.”

Maureen Green, Wakefield e2e Partnership Manager commented: “Wakefield College is the lead provider for Entry to Employment in the Wakefield District. The partnership with local training providers has developed a wide range of provision for young people aged 16-19 who are not in Education, Employment and Training. The College is delighted that this fantastic partnership arrangement with Chevin Housing has offered young people not only the opportunity to make a real difference to their future life chances, but also to contribute to the local community”.

Photographed: *Trainees at Chevin’s Skillsbuild Centre who have been involved in the project and built the playhouses.*