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News Release

Local lad invited to House of Commons

Brenton Johnson, aged 16 from Castleford has been short listed for the 2009 Young Builder of the Year award which is run by Youthbuild UK.

Brenton, along with 11 other students achieved the City and Guilds Introductory Certificate in Basic Construction at Chevin Housing Group's Construction Training Centre in Featherstone in July this year. He has been hard at work over the past 2 years with school work and learning construction skills, attending the training centre 1 and a half days a week and getting hands on experience in a variety of construction skills including bench and site carpentry, joinery, brick work and basic electrical installation.

Brenton was put forward for the Young Builder of the Year award by his tutors from Wakefield Homebuilder and Chevin Housing. He came to the training centre initially lacking self-confidence and has worked extremely hard turning himself from a 'cant-do' student to a 'can-do' student. He has shown determination, focus and patience throughout the modules he has worked on, offering help to other students along the way.

Brenton said "I can't believe I am through to the finals for this award, its fantastic. I have really enjoyed studying and learning at the centre, I have come away with a first level qualification which is great and I now know what I want to do and that is to be a brick layer".

Joanne - Brenton's mum commented "We are so proud of Brenton for getting his first level qualification and being short listed for this award. He has never been part of anything like this and it is a massive achievement for him. We could never get Brenton out of bed for school but when it was a training day he was up and ready!! He really enjoyed being part of the group and getting stuck in to practical exercises and was over the moon when he completed a task. The whole thing has been a great experience for Brenton and of great benefit as now he will hopefully be able to move on and get further training/experience in the construction industry."

Steve Lumb, Construction Training Co-ordinator at Chevin said "Brenton did particularly well during his time at the training centre. He really struggled during the early part of the course and regularly suggested that he couldn't do what was being asked of him. However, through his own determination and with a little extra encouragement he completed the course and gained his qualification. Brenton has a fantastic sense of humour and was a very popular member of the team. I am sure he will do well in the future and I wish him every success."

Sarah Reynolds, Skills and Training Team Mentor for Groundwork Wakefield, commented “Although Brenton lacks confidence in his own abilities he has confidence around others and this shows with his sense of humour. It has been a joy to watch his confidence grow by producing some great work.”

She added: “Brenton’s confidence was his main barrier when it didn’t go right the first time. However after getting through several units he realised he could do it and it spurred him on. He had a real determination not to give up and went on to offer support to others in the group, I’m very proud of him.”

Photographed: Brenton getting hands on experience at the construction centre

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Notes for editors regarding the training facility and partnership working
Chevin are working in partnership with Wakefield’s Adult and Community Education Services and the Wakefield Homebuilder partnership, in the delivery of the Construction Skills Training programme to meet local needs. Wakefield MDC Family Services and local schools are funding the training which is being delivered at Chevin’s Construction Training Centre based in Featherstone.

Chevin Housing Group background

The Chevin Housing Group was formed in 2001 following the merger of a number of associations who had been in operation from as far back as 1974. The current group consists of Chevin Housing Association Ltd, Harewood Housing Society Ltd and Synergy Housing Solutions Ltd.

The vision for the Chevin Group is, ‘building a better future for people and communities’. In order to achieve this we are involved in a diverse range of activities. These include; managing and maintaining rented and leasehold homes, the development of new and refurbished homes (including rented, leasehold and sale options) and regeneration services, working in partnership with local people to enable them to play a part in the future of their neighbourhoods.

The Group operates across Yorkshire and the Humber and North Nottinghamshire, with around 6,500 rented homes in management. We also manage a further 1650 leasehold homes which include 750 private sector flats.

The Group’s reinvestment programme is around £6m per annum and the Development Programme is producing around 250 new homes each year. In 2004 the Group formed the Synergy partnership which is a regional based development partnership of associations with Chevin Housing Group as the lead partner for delivery. Synergy Housing Solutions Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Chevin provides a development service to the Synergy partners.

An inspection carried out by the Audit Commission in 2006 determined that Chevin provides a good 2 star service with promising prospects for improvement. The report commented that, ‘Chevin is a customer focussed organisation, which develops services based on customer feedback’.

The Group employs around 200 staff headed by the Group Chief Executive, Steve Close.