



Building Plymouth Pilot Professional Work Experience Programme

July 2018



Background

With the construction industry experiencing significant growth, the major issue facing the sector is the ageing workforce and declining numbers of new and young talent entering the industry. To help improve the image of construction and increase awareness of careers in construction and the built environment, the Building Plymouth partnership has proudly 'Adopted' Eggbuckland Community College.

As part of this 'Adoption' the local construction industry is keen to promote the 180+ careers available across trade, technical and professional roles, accessible through apprenticeships, school leaver programmes as well as graduate entry positions.

Recognising that 60% of the new construction jobs will be in the areas of design and management, it is even more critical to showcase the breadth of design, engineering, surveying and management roles available to young people, alongside the better recognised trade roles.

Construction professionals based within Millfields, Stonehouse Plymouth have led an innovative pilot professional work experience programme to enable Year 12 students from Eggbuckland Community College to gain a valuable insight into the professional and technical roles that exist within the exciting world of construction.



The Challenge

The professional work experience opportunity was promoted to Year 12 students who then applied, were short-listed and invited to an interview before four successful candidates were recruited, with the process enabling the students to gain real life employability skills.

The recruited students were then briefed on the task - to investigate, design and price an extension to a school.

During the work experience week held in July 2018, the students worked on their 'live' design project supported by professionals in four different organisations based within the Millfields, allowing the students to understand the different aspects of the construction process, careers and skills involved:

- **Airey & Coles** – learning about structural and civil engineering
- **SDS** - learning about mechanical and electrical engineering
- **QSPM** – learning about project and cost management
- **Stride Treglown** – learning about design and architecture

The week's industry exposure culminated in the four students bringing their ideas together facilitated by experts at SDS and then preparing a design proposal presentation that was delivered to the industry representatives showing how the students had interpreted the brief. After the students shared their proposal, SDS briefed the students on how the project brief was approached in real life to continue their learning and understanding.

Benefits to the students and employers

Patryk Lizut – Year 12 Student

The work experience placement was such an excellent opportunity for me because I was able to get a taste of the different structural jobs available that I might have not known existed without this opportunity. The placement really allowed me to experience a job which I might not have considered, but might consider doing now. All of the companies are really, really nice and look after you very well. One of the factors that made me enjoy this placement was just from the excellent and caring environment I was in. This work experience is a very good chance to test all your skills in the different companies but it also allows you to figure out what you're most interested in and possibly suggests what kind of environment you're going to like to work in.

Edward Kelly – Year 12 student

The Building Plymouth work experience is a very useful opportunity for anyone looking at a career in design/engineering, all of the employers were very friendly and welcoming into the workplace and helped me through every part of the work experience. All tasks set were relevant to the final project and helped to develop the final plan.

Ethan Norrish – Year 12 student

Through the work experience which I had completed with QSPM, SDS and Stride Treglown it has given me a broader view of what the engineering and design industry is like. It has shown that I have an interest in Mechanical engineering and I am less interested in the designing such as architecture. I also found out that every day I completed was challenging but every minute was worth it as I persevered through it learning new skills.

Lynn Harris – Careers Coordinator, Eggbuckland Community College

This pilot work experience project has been a fantastic way of showcasing the different roles within the construction sector. We are very grateful to the companies involved for putting together such an innovative idea that allowed the students to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the industry with a view to shaping their own career pathways. From visiting and talking to the students within the workplace and when they returned to College, it was clear they had all enjoyed the experience, grown in confidence, developed their knowledge and skills as well as given them the opportunity to think about their “next steps” beyond Sixth Form.

David Bayliss MCIAT MAPM - Regional Director, Stride Treglown

For a number of years we have taken on work experience pupils from various schools.

Generally it has been ‘ad-hoc’ as to who has contacted us direct to ask for a week’s experience in our office. This year we have piloted this different approach with Eggbuckland Community College and the other named consultants to try and offer a more joined up approach. This pilot was to look at a group of pupils that are interested in a career in the construction industry to give them a more holistic view of the different professional roles there are that make up a Design Team to deliver professional design services on construction projects. We felt at the end of the week that we had provided a much more coherent experience for the pupils and it had provided more benefit than the previous work experience process we have gone through. It certainly helped that the pupils fully engaged with the idea and were very motivated to develop their skills and understanding during the week they were with us.

Hopefully we can continue this arrangement in the future and possibly discuss with other schools and consultants to roll it out to a wider group.

Benefits to the students and employers

Mark Plant CEng MIET MIHEEM - Regional Director, Services Design Solution Ltd

We were inspired by the Building Plymouth's giant squid programme and felt that there was an opportunity to create a pilot scheme in a similar format to provide a "real life" experience of the rarely understood professional side of construction.

The students were encouraged to apply for the work experience placement by sending in their CV's and a covering letter. As with any real job application the CV's were shortlisted and the students were invited to interviews which resulted in the top 4 students being selected to attend the work experience scheme. The 4 students selected had fantastic CV's and were outstanding in their interviews way beyond our expectations which is a credit to them and the school.

The pilot scheme was formatted to give the students an overview of each of the businesses, with such limited time we gave the students tasks in order to gain enough experience to come together at the end of the week and prepare a design for a school.

On the final day the students spent the morning designing a school utilising the skills they had picked up during the week, the output from the students was exceptional, well thought out and considered which was fantastic to see.

It was a pleasure to meet the students and to be given the opportunity to introduce the professional side of construction.

Following the scheme we received 2 applications for further work experience, we have had the pleasure of providing Patryk and Dominik with a further week of work experience during the summer holiday.



Working on the live project brief at SDS

With thanks to our industry hosts:





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