



News Release

October 5, 2021

Urgent funding call to secure future of Shropshire construction skills project

A Shropshire project, which has trained 300 unemployed people for jobs in the construction industry could be scrapped without an urgent £350,000 funding boost, it has emerged.

The situation has prompted concern from supported employment and training charity Landau which says the blow comes at a time when the county's construction sector is already facing a shrinking workforce and skills deficit.

The Marches Construction Ready Partnership (MCR) has been helping to provide life-changing career opportunities for unemployed people, students and those looking to make a career change since 2019 by delivering practical, on-site construction training in Shropshire.

In turn, the scheme, funded by the Construction Skills Fund, has been supporting the region's construction industry by providing businesses with site-ready employees.

To date the project has delivered training to 300 individuals and helped secure long-term employment for 150 in roles such as brick laying, carpentry, plastering, roofing, painting and decorating.

However, when the current phase of training ends later this month, there is no further funding available to enable the project to continue.

The situation has led to Wellington-based Landau, which manages the project, to call for urgent help from organisations and businesses to do whatever they can to help secure the future of the scheme.

Caroline Richardson, Head of Employment Services for Landau, said: "The success of this project has been absolutely remarkable, and it will be a bitter blow to the sector if it cannot continue.

"It has not only enabled people to better their lives by accessing the training and skills they need for work but it has also enabled construction companies to fill vacancies with site-ready candidates so they can hit the ground running.

“This has been particularly important as the sector recovers from the pandemic and demand for large scale developments has returned.

“What’s more, with demand expected to rise further over the coming years, it’s essential that we do what we can to continue to support the industry with skills and training.

“We are continually being asked by local Job Centres for candidates to fill their vacancies but very soon our stream of trainees will dry up and we will be unable to support construction companies.

“The local economic review has identified a shortage of 5,000 skilled construction workers over the next five years. This partnership is well placed to alleviate some of that impact on local businesses, but we need urgent funding if we are to address the predicted shortages in time.

“If we can secure an additional £350,000 this will enable us to continue delivering the scheme and train a further 300 individuals and we would urge any organisations that can help to get in touch.”

To date financial support for the Marches Construction Partnership has been provided by the Department of Education through the Construction Skills Fund and administered by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), but no further funds have been earmarked for the project to continue in Shropshire.

The scheme has seen the establishment of skills training hubs on site at active construction sites across the county so that participants get the necessary hands-on practical experience required to make them ready for the world of work.

The partnership is backed by an innovative group of organisations including the Marches Local Enterprise (MLEP), the Wrekin Housing Trust, Shropshire Council, Telford & Wrekin Council and Telford College.

Any organisations interested in supporting the partnership can contact Caroline Richardson at Landau by emailing constructionhub@landau.co.uk or contacting 01952 221460.

For more information on the other services provided by Landau visit the website <https://www.landau.co.uk/>.

You can also follow the charity and its work by visiting @landaulimited on Facebook, Landau Limited on LinkedIn and @landaulimited on Twitter.

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For further information about this press release, please contact Lorna McCann at Be Bold PR using the email lorna.mccann@beboldpr.com or by calling 01952 898121

Photo caption: Caroline Richardson, Head of Employment Services for Landau.

Notes to Editors

Landau is a registered charity which has been delivering supported employment services to those with learning and physical disabilities, individuals with mental ill health, long term unemployed, and young people since 1995.

Helping over 600 people a year across Stoke, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Herefordshire, Landau is committed to empowering individuals through formal/informal learning for the benefit of the clients and the wider community.

It became a Centre of Excellence in 2020 for its IPS service for those with enduring mental health problems.

For more information on Landau visit: <https://landau.co.uk>

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