



Hampshire  
County Council



WILLMOTT DIXON

SINCE 1852

T·R·P

The Training & Recruitment Partnership Ltd



## Building Lives

20-year old Mike has lived in Andover all his life. After school, he joined Andover College to study bricklaying, and was delighted to secure an apprenticeship with Taylor Wimpey at Augusta Park on leaving college in July 2017. Mike has been deaf from birth, but this has never held him back – he got a cochlear implant at age 3, which has enabled him to be successful in the hearing world. He loved the work outdoors, with the team of learners and qualified bricklayers, and was disappointed in summer 2019 when his apprenticeship concluded but there was no space for him to remain at Taylor Wimpey.



With no CSCS card, Mike was unable to get back to bricklaying. He found work in warehousing, but it was sporadic, and by April 2020, a month after lockdown arrived he found himself out of work. A meeting with a DWP workcoach told him about Hampshire County Council's Construction Skills Fund (CSF) course in Winchester. Doing this course would enable him to get a CSCS card: "I knew if I got my card, I would have a good chance of getting back to bricklaying which is what I really wanted. My girlfriend was pregnant – I needed to find work."

"This course has opened doors for me – it's sorted my future."



Mike joined a virtual course run by the Training and Recruitment Partnership, the CSF training partner in Winchester, in July 2020. There was a site visit at the Willmott Dixon site in Winchester, where Winchester City Council's new Sport and Leisure Park is being built – a good reminder of the practical implications for the learning that the CSCS card course would involve. Then there were two days of online training, and finally Mike attended in person to take the CSCS test. He passed and received his CSCS card 10 days later.

Local Andover employer Persimmon works closely with Test Valley Borough Council to deliver value for local people, as well as great houses, through its Section 106 Employment and Skills Plan (ESP). Working with Hampshire County Council, an ESP review revealed that Persimmon were looking to take on bricklayers at its housing development in Picket Twenty, and Mike jumped at the chance. "I'm going on as a trainee bricklayer, but I'm happy with that – I just want to get back into it."

Mike's deafness hasn't affected his journey. "Sometimes I have to ask people to repeat themselves. You do get the odd person who makes comments, but mostly people have been good to me throughout my experience. I learn fast and I'm always looking to achieve the next step in life."

"I'm going on as a trainee, but I'm happy with that – I just want to get back to bricklaying."

Mike's goal is to further his career. "I want to end up as a team leader, or a bricklayer who does groundworks. I like all the different elements of the job, and I'd really like to help other people become good bricklayers as well. " And the CSF CSCS card course has made all the difference: "I couldn't get a job before because I didn't have the CSCS card. The course wasn't difficult because I'd covered a lot of it before. But it's opened doors for me. If I hadn't done this course I might still be sat at home. But now I'm moving forward. It's sorted out my future."

"Being deaf has not held me back. You get the odd person making comments, but mostly people have been good to me. I learn fast and I'm always looking to achieve the next step in life."