



## SFT Delivers Positive impact of delivering hub programme



### Window firm opens up to apprentices

Cumbernauld firm takes on new recruits to combat skills shortage

By HANNAH HURLEY

CMS Window Systems has welcomed a dozen new recruits to its apprenticeship programme as the company aims to bridge the industry skills shortage. The Cumbernauld-headquartered firm, which manufactures and installs windows, doors and curtain walling, will deliver training to 12 apprentices via the CMS Academy. Apprentices will be trained through a combination of experience onsite, at the CMS "innovation hub" on its Cumbernauld campus, Glasgow, and in the firm's window and door factories. CMS describes the programme as "the most comprehensive scheme of its kind" in the door and window industry, which is designed to help overcome the skills shortage which has affected the sector since the financial crisis in 2008, and provide local jobs. The 27-week course provides training and experience in window fabrication and installation, while mentors "take time" to select one or two individuals to join a further 18-month development programme upon completion.



Results will be trained onsite, in CMS factories and at the CMS Academy

#### APPRENTICESHIP

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DAVID RITCHIE, CEO

CMS has already provided more than 100 apprenticeships over 12 years, many of which have resulted in permanent roles as part of the 270-strong workforce at its Cumbernauld and Kirkcaldy factories and recycling centres. The company said apprenticeships have been the core of its "sustainability strategy" based on social, economic and environmental targets to benefit the local communities in which it operates. Chief executive David Ritchie said: "The programme is central to the future success of our business. The 2008 recession left our sector depleted of skilled workers, and with Brexit just around the corner, there is no guarantee that the European workforce which proved so valuable in filling the gap will be accessible going forwards. We also have to address the issue of an ageing workforce. The average age of a tradesman in the UK is now 57, so we need to do our bit to ensure the next generation of skilled workers is coming through and ready to step in once the current skilled workforce retires. Integrating an apprenticeship programme into our long-term strategy is a win-win for us and the economy more broadly. The Scottish Government aims to cut youth unemployment by 40 per cent by 2021, but we still have 13 per cent of young people aged between 16 and 24 counted as unemployed and seeking work, in the year to March 2018. "This programme means we can provide opportunities to bring this figure down and nurture the talent that is clearly there on our doorstep," Emma Phillips, head of human resources, added. "The aim of the CMS Apprenticeship Programme is to develop the greatest talent by providing young people with training and experience across a range of different areas within CMS. This will enable them to develop their technical and personal skills for a long and successful career with the company, the routes for which are clearly defined. In April CMS, which has been backed by private equity investor LDC since 2016, landed a £10 million contract to design, make and install the glazing for Glasgow's £100m Atlantic Square development. hannah.hurley@gamedia.co.uk

The Scotsman 27 November 2018

Well-designed buildings, built for community use, have the power to transform lives. Through the SFT-managed hub programme, new schools, health centres and other community buildings are doing just that – creating employment, helping the environment and providing communities with much-improved places for them to learn, visit or work.

We have been successfully delivering the Scotland-wide hub programme since the first hub company started operating in 2010, that is based on a partnership between the public and private sectors to deliver new community facilities.

Today, the five hub companies are providing the public sector with an efficient approach to deliver and manage buildings more effectively, with continuous improvement leading to better value.

Collectively, the hub companies have been developing and delivering a near £3bn pipeline of award-winning community infrastructure, with the construction of the projects supporting many thousands of jobs as well as creating many graduate and apprenticeship appointments.

CMS Window Systems based in Cumbernauld is one of the many hundreds of small to medium sized businesses appointed onto the hub supply chain. It operates within the very heart of its local community and over the years has employed well over 100 apprentices, many of whom have

gone on to receive formal qualifications and become full time members of staff. And this year the firm has taken on ten more.

David Ritchie, the company's chief executive said: "Being on the hub supply chain provides us with a greater insight to potential future work. This then allows us to plan our resources accordingly, so we can recruit more local people.

"Such has been our success, that we have recently opened up a brand-new production factory in Fife that is allowing us to expand our product range and employ many more local people and apprentices.

"We are renowned across the UK for our track record in providing employment opportunities for young people, and for being one of the first businesses in the window and door industry to become a Scottish Living Wage Employer."

David MacDonald, SFT's national hub programme director said. "The example of CMS Window Systems is one of many success stories created via the hub programme. With almost 80% of the work in hub being undertaken by Scottish SMEs, this demonstrates that the programme is making a significant contribution to sustainable economic development across Scotland."