



News Release

EPIC wins West Midlands “What we are Proud of Awards”

Local Housing Association, EPIC has won the West Midlands “What we are Proud of Awards” for their innovative approach to delivering Jobs, Homes and Training. EPIC came top in an event that saw 3 Midlands based housing organisations go head to head in presenting a successful scheme to delegates at a specially arranged awards evening in Sutton Coldfield. Delegates voted for the best scheme at the end of the evening.

Jobs, Homes & Training has seen EPIC provide employment for 27 young people aged 18 to 24 through the Government’s Future Jobs Fund Programme. Lots of different jobs have been on offer ranging from garden maintenance through to research and administration.

Another important element of Jobs, Homes & Training has been the setting up of a new social enterprise – the Bentilee Environmental Services and Training Team (BEST). The new team have been out and about in Bentilee painting fences, maintaining gardens and picking up litter. BEST have also started offering a low cost maintenance service to local people, which could help to create even more jobs in the future.

EPIC has also joined forces with locally based landlords Aspire Housing and Staffordshire Housing Association to create the area’s first Housing Apprenticeships. Six local people will be selected for the apprentice positions, spending time working in each organisation towards a long term career in housing.

Robert McIntyre, aged 23 and an EPIC tenant told delegates:

“I have a nice home, a good job and have had the opportunity to go on lots of different training courses with EPIC – it’s been a real confidence booster”.

Len Gibbs, Chief Executive of EPIC said:

"We are really pleased to have won the West Midlands What we are Proud of Awards. We are very passionate about helping people achieve their full potential through creating new jobs, providing high quality housing and first class training."

To get in touch with the BEST Team, residents can call Malcolm Burdon on 01782 222362.

ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Empowering People Inspiring Communities (EPIC) is an independent, charitable organisation providing around 1,000 homes for affordable rent in the Bentilee area of Stoke-on-Trent. The organisation's vision is:

"To establish a reputation as a leading social enterprise delivering high quality services and neighbourhood regeneration solutions."
www.epichousing.co.uk

Jobs, Homes Training is a new scheme developed by EPIC which is about:

- Creating jobs that local people can succeed in.
- Being passionate about helping our tenants gain real independence.
- Joining up our housing management service to the services we run for unemployed people.
- Ensuring that our day-to-day repairs and our stock improvement spend all create opportunities for training and work.
- Providing first class vocational and non-vocational training.
- Taking a real interest in people.

Future Jobs Fund (FJF) is a Government initiative which aims to create jobs for unemployed young people aged 18-24 for a minimum of 6 months. EPIC are working in partnership with Groundwork (UK), the National Housing Federation and Stoke-on-Trent City Council to deliver this scheme.