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# Neighbourhood Ranger earns his spurs

Jamie Fawcett was 'over the moon' when he took up a trainee position with Connect Housing's Neighbourhood Ranger team last year, and now his apprenticeship has turned into permanent employment.

'It's impossible to find building work for someone my age,' said the young man from Morley, who spent six months as a Trainee Neighbourhood Ranger, part of the handyman service provided by Connect Housing, a housing association operating across West Yorkshire. He accompanied John Middleton, one of Connect's full-time Rangers, seeing to minor repairs and adaptations for over 2000 Leeds tenants.

Jamie's six-month trainee contract (paid for by the now-defunct Future Jobs Fund) was about to come to an end, and he had started searching for new employment, though with no luck and little hope.

'More experienced older tradesmen are getting all the jobs, because they're out of work as well,' he said.

Luckily for Jamie, Connect was planning an expansion of the Neighbourhood Ranger service, and a vacancy was advertised just as Jamie's trainee contract was coming to an end. He saw off strong competition from other applicants, and was confirmed as a fully-fledged Neighbourhood Ranger.

'No more Mondays off,' he observes with a smile, as his new post means a jump from 25 hours per week to 37.

'I'm delighted that Jamie has joined our team on a permanent basis,' said Martyn Broadest, Connect's Director of Regeneration. 'All the young people that we have worked with through the Future Jobs Fund were unemployed for a long time before coming to Connect. We were hopeful that working with us for six months would give them the boost they needed to find long term employment in the future – but little did we expect that one of those jobs would be with us!'

What is it about the job that Jamie likes? 'You're meeting different people all the time, and you're not just in one place,' he says. 'And you're helping people all the time. There's always something coming up that you've never done before.'

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## Photographs



These and other photographs are available by request from David Troupes on 0300 5000 600 or [david.troupes@connecthousing.org.uk](mailto:david.troupes@connecthousing.org.uk)

## Notes for the Editor

- 7.9% of the Yorkshire and Humberside population is employed in the construction industry. (source: Annual Population Survey 10/08 to 09/09)
- 11% of redundancies reported to Leeds JobCentre Plus in 2009 were in the construction industry. (source: Yorkshire & Humber Regional LMI Forum)
- Connect Housing is a not-for-profit housing association with approximately 3,000 homes across West Yorkshire.

## Additional quote from Martyn Broadest, Director of Regeneration at Connect Housing

'Jamie is a popular addition to our Neighbourhood Ranger service, which is both highly valued by our customers, and provides the Association with a very cost effective repairs service.'