

MOVING ON UP

Willmott Dixon's determination to add value for local economies and local people has helped Sunderland-based electrical contractor McNally & Thompson go from strength to strength, with new jobs and opportunities created in the process.

McNally & Thompson has now been working with Willmott Dixon for about four years. Successful projects include the Dolphin Leisure Centre in Darlington, the TRW factory in Sunderland and the UTC South Durham. "By being part of the company's high-profile, high-standard projects, other companies are noticing us," says managing director Fred Hood. "We've had quite a few enquiries and have gained



McNally & Thompson has been able to take on several local trainees

several new customers."

The firm has also moved to larger premises, employed two new local people, taken on five local apprentices and two mature trainees, and given more work to its local suppliers. For the trainees in particular, the benefits have been considerable.

"They were previously working as labourers and had no formal training," Fred says. "The opportunity to have proper training is something they never dreamed of and they now have much brighter prospects. It's generated tremendous loyalty."

McNally & Thompson also values Willmott Dixon's way of working. "They are very fair about how they share their pipeline of work, which encourages us to try to win contracts, and we know that payment will always be made on time, which is fantastic and one less thing to worry about.

"We've also got to know the people personally," Fred adds. "At the end of a successful project, we all have a night out to celebrate. It means a lot to us."

VIRTUOUS CIRCLE

Helping to secure sustained

local economic and community benefits is integral to Willmott Dixon's way of working. A prime example is its relationship with Woodtech Joinery.

The Middlesbrough business has been involved in all of Willmott Dixon's recent projects in the North East, including Newcastle City Centre Police Station, Redcar Heart and Hebburn Community Hub. From Teesside to Newcastle, the work gives Woodtech stability and allows it to create jobs for local people.

"Willmott Dixon is a highly valued client and we really appreciate the good relationship that we have with them. They have become a major part of our business turnover and the steady

flow of work means a lot to us," says director Andrew Simpson. "We have been able to take on about 10 more people including three apprentices, who have not only been able to complete their apprenticeship with us but have also remained with us."

The business predominantly focuses on manufacturing and installation. However, with Willmott Dixon increasingly asking for specialised work, it has been able to develop a degree of diversification. "We've invested in specialist machinery, so we can now offer additional scope and capabilities," says Andrew.

The benefits of the continuing relationship have cascaded to other local firms. "We have our own local mini supply chain for materials, and the busier we are,

"The flow of work means a lot to us. And the busier we are, the busier our local suppliers are"

the busier our suppliers are."

Woodtech Joinery has wholeheartedly embraced working with Willmott Dixon to support the community too, such as by providing free materials and labour to help create facilities for Zoe's Place, a charity-run hospice for babies and infants in Middlesbrough. "It's great to be able to give back to our local community and make a lasting and important



WILLMOTT DIXON

SINCE 1852

Willmott Dixon is a privately owned contracting, residential development and property support company. Being a large company means we have the scale to create a huge and lasting positive impact on society. This is not only done through what we build and maintain - it's achieved through the fantastic efforts of all our people who make a major contribution to enhancing their local communities. In 2014, this contribution saw us become the only company in our sector to win a Queen's Award for Enterprise for sustainable development.

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The Willmott Dixon Foundation invests over £2.5m a year improving society's wellbeing and aims to enhance the life chances of 10,000 young people by 2020. Email alison.symmers@willmottdixon.co.uk to find out how the Foundation is active in your area.

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WHY WILLMOTT DIXON STAYS LOYAL TO LOCAL COMPANIES



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“It’s our ability to strengthen society’s long-term wellbeing that I find particularly rewarding”

I’m proud of the contribution Willmott Dixon is making to the North East’s economy by using local companies to deliver our projects across the region.

Projects such as UTC South Durham, the Department for Education offices in Darlington, the TRW factory in Sunderland, Teesside University’s green wall, Redcar Heart and Hebburn Community Hub are exciting new additions for our region.

Just as important as the physical product is how we can leave a legacy of lifetime skills and small business growth. Through these projects, local companies such as Durham-based Leybourne Urwin, Sunderland’s McNally & Thompson and Middlesbrough-based Woodtech Joinery have grown and prospered.

It’s our ability to strengthen society’s long-term wellbeing through supporting jobs and local businesses that I find particularly rewarding and you can read real examples in Building Futures in the North East of local companies that have grown.

You can also read the story of Jonathan, our trainee from County Durham, which shows what is possible when opportunities arise for young people to show their potential.

I hope you enjoy reading how we are creating a lasting impact on lives in the North East.

Nick Corrigan
Operations director
Willmott Dixon in the North

SENSE OF SECURITY

With supply chain competition very high in the North East, ensuring continual work to sustain jobs can be a major challenge for local companies. Willmott Dixon’s commitment to using local suppliers and its use of an efficient tendering process has been a real asset to businesses in the area, not least for mechanical and electrical services company Leybourne Urwin.

As Chris Urwin, director, explains: “When we tender for work, we are normally in competition with up to 15 companies and it’s not easy to stay positive about our chances. With Willmott Dixon, we have competed with just four or five companies, which has been a great motivator.”

Based in Stanley, County Durham, the company has worked with Willmott Dixon for nearly three years now, with projects including the Dolphin Leisure Centre in Darlington and the Houghall Campus at East Durham College. “It’s been a huge benefit for the business,” says Chris. “Having a steady flow of work has been fantastic and we’ve had invaluable introductions to other businesses and organisations involved in the projects.”

Working with Willmott Dixon has also enabled Leybourne Urwin to take on several more staff and apprentices, who attend Newcastle College, boosting local employment as well as providing job security for their existing team.

And the benefits haven’t stopped with them. “We only use local suppliers for our own needs,” says Chris. “And we’ve been able



Leybourne Urwin has had a steady flow of work from Willmott Dixon over the past three years - and has been able to pass on more business to its own local suppliers

to pass a lot more business on to them. For our electrical services partner, for example, this has meant that their employees’ jobs have been sustained, plus they have taken on additional people to accommodate the work.”

The company is also very enthusiastic about Willmott Dixon’s collaborative approach. Chris says: “The company fully involves us throughout the entire process. Having real insight into every aspect of a project from the outset makes us feel far more engaged and even more determined to deliver the best possible outcomes from start to finish.

“We’ve had invaluable introductions to other businesses and organisations”

“Willmott Dixon’s people are great to work with and genuine, which is really refreshing and makes every job a pleasure. All in all, the company has been very important to us and we hope that our relationship will continue into the future.”

SEIZING A CHANCE

For 30-year-old Jonathan Walls from Consett, County Durham, a management trainee position at Willmott Dixon is taking him much further than he ever imagined.

Jonathan had spent six years working in the automotive sector but knew that it wasn’t right for him in the long term. He left his job and went travelling for the next few years, but after coming home he found himself with no career and no prospects.

While he was overseas, however, he spent several months working in construction and was very keen to pursue a career in the industry, so he enrolled on a two-year HNC in Construction and the Built Environment at Sunderland College. He also began working for a local construction company on a voluntary basis in order to gain experience. He saw Willmott Dixon working on an adjacent site and asked about available positions, which ultimately led to a management trainee offer.

“The company not only offered me a position with a salary, they offered to reimburse the enrolment fees I’d paid for the first year of the HNC, fund the second year and pay for a degree course. I was absolutely over the moon, and I still am!” says Jonathan. “Given my age and background, I think it’s very unlikely that I would have had a similar offer from anyone else. They took a chance on me and that’s incredible.”

Jonathan worked at the TRW factory in Sunderland and the UTC South Durham while he completed the HNC and has now been offered a place at Northumbria University to study



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for a degree in Construction Project Management. This is normally a five-year course, but Jonathan’s excellent college results mean that the day-release course will take him just three years to complete.

“Willmott Dixon is a fantastic company to work for. I’ve met some amazing people, I’m getting loads of support from everyone and there are lots of opportunities

for career development,” he says. “If the company hadn’t given me this chance, I wouldn’t have got this far without heavy student loan debts, and I probably wouldn’t have gone beyond an HNC. I want to get the best university results I possibly can and stay with them long term. I feel huge loyalty to Willmott Dixon and want to repay their faith in me.”