

DIO shares construction career opportunities with local school

Construction work to ready RAF Lakenheath for the arrival of the new F35s is well under way.

DIO awarded a contract worth £160m to the Kier VolkerFitzpatrick (KVF) joint venture in November to deliver critical infrastructure at the Suffolk airbase. At the height of construction, it is expected that there will be up to 700 people on site supporting the programme.

In addition to promoting the economic benefits of the project to the local area, DIO and contractors KVF feel strongly that the project should also strengthen and support the local community.

In 2017, Kier commissioned a research report into the image and recruitment crisis facing the built environment. The majority of the parents surveyed (73%) said they would not want their child to consider a career in the construction sector as they view the work as manual, poorly paid and not for girls.

The construction industry needs 400,000 recruits each year to keep up with demand and to meet its ongoing requirements.

DIO is supporting KVF's social value manager on an innovative project to reach out to local students to give them an insight into the variety of careers available within the construction industry.

Once a month Year 10 students from nearby Mildenhall College Academy will chat via Skype to someone working on the RAF Lakenheath construction project. Students will have the opportunity during the 30 minute sessions to speak to a range of people about their careers in the construction industry.

Pupils taking part in the chats will also be provided with each speaker's CV and a workbook, which will support their career discussions in the classroom.

The first session kicks off Friday 27 September 2019 with a construction project manager. Further sessions will continue throughout the school year and will involve chats with design managers, those working in the energy sector, health and social care and IT.

In addition to strengthening relationships between the project and the local community, it is hoped that the regular chats will encourage young people to consider a career in construction.

DIO USVF Programme Director, Keith Maddison, said:

We are happy to support the work that KVF is doing with the local community around RAF Lakenheath.

It is important to us that the project provides social as well as economic benefits for the local area and that these benefits last even after construction has finished.

Construction can offer exciting opportunities and I hope that these regular conversations with local students will open their eyes to the many options available to people who choose a career in this industry.

Chris Evans, managing director of VolkerFitzpatrick's Civils division, said:

Our people are the driving force behind each and every one of our projects and it is essential that we continue to attract new people into the industry. Initiatives like this are a fantastic way of engaging with the next generation of professionals and sharing the diverse range of opportunities available to them within construction.

Managing Director Strategic Projects at Kier, James Hindes, said:

At Kier we are always looking for innovative ways to engage with the local community throughout the delivery of our projects. I'm pleased the KVF team have been able to find a way to host career sessions with schools local to RAF Lakenheath as the nature of the project prevents us from being able to invite pupils to the site.

Engaging with the local community about the project is hugely important, but it's also vital for us to promote the construction industry as a viable and exciting career route to ensure we can recruit the next generation of talent.

Further information:

DIO website: www.gov.uk/dio

Twitter: @mod_dio

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