

SBFM launches Evolve

2 years ago



SBFM has launched Evolve – an industry-leading initiative that provides sustainable employment opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups.

It's designed to increase the earning potential of low-income workers, including cleaners, while at the same time widening the talent pool for UK businesses by diversifying the workforce.

The initiative draws inspiration from our very own Operations Director, Nana Osei, who has worked in the industry for 15 years. Despite holding a degree, he spent many years as a cleaner where it cost him half of his salary to travel to and from work each day, before finally reaching the position of area manager. Evolve is dedicated to supporting individuals facing similar barriers to employment and career development.

Candidates include ex-offenders, care leavers, the long-term unemployed, refugees, disabled people, and those experiencing homelessness. They will receive dedicated support to build their skills, gain confidence, and secure employment.

People from disadvantaged groups face challenges that many others don't, including lack of formal qualifications, gaps in their employment history, discrimination, prejudice, and language barriers.

Lack of opportunity means that care leavers in England are over 10x more likely than their peers to not be in education, employment, or training (NEET) by the time they reach 21. While only 17% of ex-offenders manage to get a job within a year of release.

SBFM is already working with organisations such as New Futures Network, The Timpson Foundation, Ingeus and Shaw Trust to identify and recruit talent from a wider pool of people who find it difficult to gain work. We then recruit them into cleaning roles at our Evolve Partner sites.

Through the Evolve initiative, a role with us is just the starting point. By leveraging relationships with our clients, which include some of the UK's leading businesses such as PureGym, A.P. Moller, Maersk, and DPD, we can provide candidates the chance to move into direct employment in more diverse industries.

It's a model that's already delivering results, with several ex-offenders and care leavers working as cleaners at PureGym, whilst receiving free training to become personal trainers.

With labour shortages across the UK in various sectors, and the worst cost of living crisis in decades, we see Evolve as an initiative that will not only address the ongoing issues, but also create life-changing opportunities for people who have traditionally faced barriers to employment and career development.

SBFM is uniting our industry peers, along with leading business from other sectors to adopt a similar approach by putting people first and transforming the FM industry.

SBFM CEO, Matt Chapman, says: "Evolve is about breaking down barriers. We need to drop the stereotypical approach that ex-offenders, care leavers and other disadvantaged groups don't deserve a chance. Many are highly skilled and come with qualities that can plug labour shortages across a range of industries. We are already bearing witness to success stories from the programme. The initiative is for the industry, not just SBFM and we would love to speak more with our allies."

People and Social Impact Director, Kelly Dolphin, added: "Someone shouldn't be waiting 15 years to progress in a cleaning role. It's wrong, and that's why we're changing things. We are calling on the facilities management industry to get on board with this because we aren't seeing enough opportunities or progression for cleaners across the board. We continue to establish partnerships with our clients, researching their future recruitment needs and identifying which roles might be filled by those coming through the Evolve initiative. It's time for change and for this approach to become the norm across the industry."