

Willmott Dixon brings Lordshill Youth Project facilities into 21st century

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[Willmott Dixon](#) and supply chain partners donate hundreds of hours to give new future to initiative improving life chances for hundreds of young people in Southampton.

Willmott Dixon's purpose to improve the fabric of communities where it works saw the company give a new lease of life to an initiative in Southampton that gives young people important life skills to build their confidence, resilience and independence.

The Lordshill Youth Project was formed in 1999 as a partnership between the local church, Police and the local Sainsburys supermarket to provide young people with a safe and fun space supervised by qualified youth workers to offer guidance and support towards achieving their goals as young adults.

However, the Zoe Braithwaite Centre where it delivers the much-valued services needed a complete revamp, and that's where Willmott Dixon stepped in. A team of volunteers joined forces with the company's supply chain to transform the facilities over a four-week period. This included adding new electrics, toilets and kitchen so they complied with current safety standards, as well as fixing walls, emptying gutters and providing a complete redecoration to improve the centre's facilities for everyone to benefit from. The work saved the Lordshill Youth Project thousands of pounds, which it can instead spend on its main activity.

Local support

It comes after Willmott Dixon attended a Solent Careers Hub school-based activity where they met with young people and local businesses to promote careers opportunities. It was here they found out about the Lordshill project and decided to help.

Richard Poulter, Managing Director for Willmott Dixon in the South explains: "This project is about more than just refurbishing a building; it's about creating opportunities that will help young people thrive in the

future. Seeing our teams and supply chain partners come together to make a real difference was incredibly inspiring. Their generosity, combined with the dedication of our people, ensures that we leave a lasting, positive impact on the lives of those who rely on this space."

Afterwards, comments from young people who use the facilities included; 'Wow this is so beautiful' and 'I don't feel imprisoned by dark colours I feel liberated, thank you to everyone who made this special community project happen.'





Helping young people thrive

Over 26-years, the project has supported thousands of young people to build positive relationships, raise aspirations, gain access to education, employment or life skills and even receive counselling during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the project grew, it moved into the Zoe Braithwaite Centre in Lordhill where it expanded to provide club-based sessions. Working with delivery partner Youth Options, the project provides activities that include everything from crafts to sport as well as hosting holiday clubs where young people learn to prepare and eat healthy food.

In the 2023-24 financial year alone, the Lordhill Youth Project ran over 1100 sessions, providing a safe space for over 200 young people with their mental wellbeing and future opportunities.

Councillor Alex Winning, Cabinet Member for Children and Learning: "The Lordshill Youth Project is an amazing initiative. Having a space to meet with friends that is dry, warm and welcoming can make a huge difference to a young person. When that space is also a place to access support, advice or counselling it can become a lifeline. We are incredibly grateful to Willmott Dixon and all of their sub-contractors for their expertise and support in helping to update the space so it can continue for the next 26 years."

Coxford Ward Councillor Rebecca Greenhalgh: "As a city, our ambition is to help young people thrive. The Lordshill Youth Project is a place where they can access support, play a game of pool or just enjoy spending time with each other. Having been used for many years the space needed to be updated. The building now meets building regulation standards, and the interior is bright and welcoming. Thank you to every volunteer for giving their time so generously and to those who kindly donated materials."

Suppliers involved include:

- AkzoNobel - Concept design and full donation of paint and materials.
- Tarkett - Donated vinyl and matting for upgraded flooring.
- Whitecroft - Provided an upgraded lighting system.
- Ideal Standard - Supplied a new Doc M Suite for improved accessibility.
- Willmott Dixon - Provided project management services, sanitaryware and decorative items.
- Horizon Environmental - Conducted a crucial asbestos survey to facilitate safe renovations.
- Ideal Interiors, Mitie, SPP Fine Finishes, Global Ceramic, Broadsword, Collards, Dryden, Nuneaton Signs, and Speedy - Contributed through skilled labour, material donations, and logistical support.
- Howdens - Donated a fully fitted kitchen.