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Modern Apprentices

Whitefriars Housing Group is celebrating after winning an award recognising its contribution to providing training and jobs for young people in Coventry.

The housing group, which took over the ownership and maintenance of the city's social housing stock in 2000, received an accreditation award for its Modern Apprentice Scheme from Coventry and Warwickshire Training.

Established in October 2001, the scheme was introduced to encourage young people to gain employment and training with Whitefriars, with a special focus on recruiting young people from ethnic minorities or who live in local communities.

Two years on, the scheme has recruited over 50 people, of whom more than 30 have gained employment with Whitefriars, other organisations, or continued training elsewhere. Three of the Modern Apprentices who secured jobs at Whitefriars have since progressed in their posts.

One of the Modern Apprentices who has benefited from the scheme is 18-year-old Antonia Crilley from Eastern Green, who joined the scheme in 2002 and now works in administration at Whitefriars.

"It's really enjoyable and I have gained lots of experience working in the property lettings section and on reception, which is what I enjoyed most. The Modern Apprentice scheme is a great way of letting school leavers like me get on-the-job training and experience," she said.

The award is the latest in a line of accolades that Whitefriars has received in recognition of its success in changing young people's lives. In the previous two years, an apprentice from the scheme has won the 'Modern Apprentice of the Year' title for Coventry and Warwickshire, which is awarded by the Heart of England Training College.

Corporate Training Officer Pam Griffin, who heads up the scheme, said: "At the point of transfer, Whitefriars made a commitment to its tenants that it would train young people from local communities and equip them to become employees.

"The Modern Apprentice scheme is a win-win situation for both Whitefriars and the young people. Whitefriars receives a constant supply of potential employees who are well trained and motivated. The young people benefit because they gain credible work experience, complete an NVQ and get paid while they do it."

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