

A wider role than profitability

KIER SHEFFIELD LLP is responsible for the repairs and maintenance work to over 50,000 council and housing association homes across South Yorkshire. It also provides a number of other services including:

- the repairs and maintenance of council municipal buildings and other public sector buildings
- new building schemes
- refurbishment work to thousands of homes and buildings across Sheffield
- the manufacturing and supply of kitchens, composite doors and windows to over 50,000 homes.

As one of the largest employers in the City, Kier Sheffield understands that its role goes wider than that of business profitability.

A number of long term regeneration commitments form part of the overall strategy for the business. This includes supporting employees by training and upskilling to meet changes in market demand, supporting young people who are disengaged or want to learn through a less academic route, supporting education and industry by link-



ing the needs of both sectors to provide real opportunities on the ground.

The results are impressive. Kier Sheffield have helped to develop a number of programmes that have benefited hundreds of young people over the last year alone.

This has included over 50 young people come through on an apprentice-

ship programme, 160 young people come through supported learning programmes and 300 14-16 year olds come through the innovative 'Construction Design Centre' that is based on the Manor Lane site.

One of the programmes, the City Stewardship scheme contributes to Sheffield becoming a cleaner, safer,

greener environment in which to live and helps to improve the appearance of estates throughout the City. Projects include "Garden Pledge" where elderly and disabled people have their gardens tended to once a year, painting and decorating both vacant properties and communal areas of flats and maisonettes, fitting smoke alarms and working on crime reduction initiatives.

Last year they completed over 2700 gardens for the elderly and disabled which not only improves the landscape but also wards off potential threats to our vulnerable residents.

Kier Sheffield are also taking a strategic lead role on employment by chairing the local Work and Skills Board which will be employer led and will co-ordinate employment and skills-related activity across the city. Sheffield will be the first local authority in the consortium to establish this type of arrangement.

Kier Sheffield are proud of their contribution to the local communities they serve. They have transformed the way the service to tenants is delivered

by working with them closely and shaping the service around their requirements.

Their awards are testament to the dedication of the whole team which includes the Local Government Chronicle Award for Public Private Partnership of the Year, Contract Journal Award for Diversity and Beacon Partner status which is the highest award to a local authority partner for improvement on services.

Dave Sheridan, managing director comments

'We have had a fantastic year both in terms of business performance and in our wider agenda on long term regeneration. Our business affects over 5000 people across Sheffield in some way which is a big responsibility for us but our commitment to date has shown great results which we will continue to build on over the coming years.'

Business is growing and the future looks rosy.

The key now is to keep up the momentum and leave a legacy that will benefit Sheffield for years to come.

An award-winning partnership



Our successful partnering approach is helping to establish a long-term legacy in terms of local employment, training and environment.

"The relationship that we have built with Kier has been a fantastic success which has been highlighted by winning a number of awards for partnering including most recently achieving Beacon status. This could only be achieved by a commitment from all parties to a shared vision and a relationship built on trust."

Sir Robert Kerslake
Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council

For more information please contact us on 0114 273 5260
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Looking to expansion and delivering service

2006 has been a very interesting year for our industry and a positive one for our own operations in South Yorkshire.

Unfortunately the telemarketing sector still suffers somewhat from a poor public image, with call centres being berated for creating 'silent calls'.

Fortunately things are improving and measures are in place to ensure that they continue to improve considerably. Great effort has been made to improve the technology available to companies and to ensure self-regulation. This has restricted the number of nuisance cold calls to a level far below that of regions in the rest of the world.

Conscientious companies regularly publicise the telephone preference service contact number for individuals who do not wish to receive calls – this is 0845 070 0707. We take the view that it certainly doesn't help the industry as a whole for people to receive calls when they do not wish to.

Responsible operators also know that it is in their best interests to provide good working conditions for a stable, productive workforce. We are proud to have members of our team who reach milestones such as ten years service and people who develop their careers with us.

Unfortunately, many organisations are still looking strictly at the cost advantages in locating call centres in India or the Caribbean for pure cost saving grounds. Recently in Sheffield we have witnessed large scale redundancies from big operators.



By ANTHONY HINCHLIFFE
Ant Marketing

As a local operator with a huge loyalty to the area and its people we are working with those affected by the recent redundancies with a view to employing people wherever possible.

At Ant Marketing we have continued to expand our operations locally, which has enabled us to keep a far tighter management control in terms of quality and call consistency.

There are real concerns for the UK call centre industry by locating operations in far off locations. This could be a retrograde step after so much good work has been done in building public confidence.

By moving abroad, operators can avoid the strict DTI guidelines that UK companies need to follow. These include the Data Protection Act Telephone Preference Service, which is designed to protect people who do not wish to receive cold calls.

A UK call centre contacting someone who has 'opted out' is

liable to be fined. But there is no such protection for somebody contacted by an overseas call centre.

Meanwhile, clients have become more demanding in terms of the levels of IT which need to be employed to ensure the smooth running of a telephone-based marketing campaign.

Those organisations with less sophistication in terms of technology fall behind and will soon be unable to provide the solution sort by forward thinking organisations.

Ant Marketing have invested significantly in the latest call centre technology from the USA and we have all the facilities that our clients demand available in-house.

In order to expand the business, not only have we recruited additional executives to manage our client base in London, but we also have dedicated account management resources in the US and Europe.

The US market place, after four years of research, is proving to be a very buoyant area for our company. As confidence is increasing following 9/11 and the Iraq war, we are noticing US companies can be far more aggressive in penetrating European markets – and Ant Marketing can help them here by carrying their sales and appointment setting calls.

2006 has been an interesting year with many clients expanding their remit and old clients returning to the fold. Our strategy for 2007 relates to expansion and improving the delivery of services to those demanding clients of ours!