

TRACK 2 TRAIN

APPLICANT

Dodie Piddock

TOTAL PROJECT COST

£767,857.00

£173,478

£767,857

Tyne Esk LEADER

Match Funding

PROJECT AIMS

- Restore the industrial building at Newtongrange train station.
- Provide much needed facilities at the train station, such as toilets and warm seating areas.
- Run a commercial training cafe bistro for local young people as well as some people with convictions and those at risk of offending.
- Enhance social inclusion by improving employability for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
- Reduce crime, poverty and stigma associated with people with convictions.

PROJECT DETAIL

The Track 2 Train project is an innovative training project that will offer real employment for those who have been in the justice system or are at risk of offending. This project will bring the long empty Newtongrange station building back into use by redeveloping the unit as a vibrant community hub. The station building will be restored to include facilities, providing an enhanced customer experience for rail passengers.

The station hub will include a quality café bistro, commercial training kitchen, learning centre and a business space supporting social and community businesses. It will provide annual placements for people with convictions to gain work experience in a supported and nurtured yet real job environment.

The project will support people with convictions, as well as drug and alcohol related mental health issues, to make positive transitions in their lives. Trainees will be able to build their confidence and motivation as well as develop their skills and reap the benefits of a real work environment. By interacting with members of the public, social inclusion of stigmatised groups will be promoted. All services delivered by the project will be focussed on progression, with sustainable employment and poverty reduction as the ultimate end goal.

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LESSONS LEARNED

“The project has taken a lot longer than I would have hoped for, it is good advice to being able to accept that something that is supposed to take a year to complete might actually take twice as long. One lesson that I have learned from this project so far is that you should refrain from promising anything that someone else is going to deliver for you.

It was a shock that all the returned tenders were significantly more expensive than our initial feasibility costings. This is something that needs to be considered if undertaking a project that includes construction work.

Overall, the most important lesson I have learned is to keep the focus on the project aims and remember to be transparent with all the stakeholders. If your project is a good one people will listen.”