

## case study

### Construction workshop at Simon House

Hard-working residents of a hostel in Oxford have been making the most of practical training opportunities by painting several rooms and communal areas as they train for a decorating qualification.

Recently recognised as an official training centre for the Open College Network (OCN), A2Dominion's Simon House now runs specialised construction training courses in a dedicated training workshop. Residents are encouraged to take up meaningful activities during their stay, helping them to identify goals and improve their skills which will ultimately help them move on to independent living.

Course participant Michael Surfleet said: "I enjoyed the painting and decorating course as it gave me something to focus on during my time in the hostel and it also helped towards my recovery.

"The tutor not only taught me to do the things explained in the course criteria but went out of his way to teach me things that he has learnt from his own



career. There wasn't one piece of the course that I didn't enjoy even the written work and it has helped me to gain skills I thought I never had.

"I would like to thank the staff at Simon house and Mike the tutor for taking the time and giving me the opportunity to gain the skills I needed to get my life back on track."

Deputy Manager of Simon House, Darren Lewis said: "Becoming a recognised centre of the OCN is fantastic news. It is something we have been working towards for a long time now and means that all our residents will have the opportunity to be recognised for their skills with the community and return to work with confidence."

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## ■ Contact

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## ■ Notes to editors

1. The Housing Corporation approved the merger between A2 Housing Group and Dominion Housing Group in July 2008. The new **A2Dominion Group** officially launched on 1 October 2008.

With over 30,000 homes in management and a further 6,000 in the development pipeline, the Group is one of the country's leading developers of affordable housing.

Visit [www.a2dominion.co.uk](http://www.a2dominion.co.uk) for more information.