

## Wider application

The following lessons have been learned from the training programme:

- It is important to get to know candidates individually before committing them to specific training programmes
- Agencies which are contracted to help the long-term unemployed return to work provide access to alternative sources of project income and they also help recruit trainees
- NVQs in landscaping and NPTCs in tree surgery are easier to deliver than NVQs in tree work

## Further information

### National Urban Forestry Unit

This leaflet is one of a series produced by the National Urban Forestry Unit. NUFU is a charitable trust which provides a national focus for the exchange of information and good practice in urban forestry. If you would like further information on other case studies, or if you have examples of good practice to share, please contact:

**National Urban Forestry Unit**  
The Science Park  
Stafford Road  
WOLVERHAMPTON WV10 9RT

**Tel:** +44 (0)1902 828600  
**Fax:** +44 (0)1902 828700  
**Email:** [info@nufu.org.uk](mailto:info@nufu.org.uk)  
**Website:** [www.nufu.org.uk](http://www.nufu.org.uk)

### Trees for London

Trees for London, which is part of Trees for Cities, is an independent charity working to improve the urban environment. Trees for London's projects are carried out in partnership with the community, business and local government and targeted at the poorest parts of the capital.

**Trees for London**  
Prince Consort Lodge  
Kennington Park  
Kennington Park Place  
LONDON SE11 4AS

**Tel:** +44 (0) 207 587 1320  
**Fax:** +44 (0) 207 793 9042  
**Email:** [training@treesforcities.org](mailto:training@treesforcities.org)  
**Website:** [www.treesforlondon.org.uk](http://www.treesforlondon.org.uk)

### Further reading

**National Proficiency Tests Council (2003) Test schedules for NPTC Chain Saw awards.** National Proficiency Tests Council, Stoneleigh

**Lantra (2002) Amenity Horticulture National Occupational Standards and Qualification Structures for NVQ/SVQ levels 1 and 2.** Lantra, Kenilworth

**Trees for London (2003) Annual report.** Trees for London, London

Photography: Trees for London

PRODUCED BY



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



# Urban Forestry in Practice

## Training the long-term unemployed to manage the urban forest



# Training the long-term unemployed to manage the urban forest

## Introduction

Trees and woods in towns need skilled management, and care of the urban forest presents a considerable employment opportunity. Training for recognised qualifications in landscaping and tree work can be particularly beneficial for the long-term unemployed, providing an effective route into paid employment.

## Specific example

### Project name and location

Trees for London social enterprise **training programme for long-term unemployed, London, UK**

### Project partners

- Trees for London
- Agencies *Work Directions, Working Links* and *Progress2Work*
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- London Development Agency
- Isle of Dogs Community Foundation

### Project objectives

- To assist long-term unemployed trainees re-enter the job market by providing them with valuable employment-related skills and vocational qualifications
- To increase the local skill base for managing trees and urban woodland
- To increase community cohesiveness by working with long-term unemployed members of the local community
- To undertake essential landscape management and maintenance of urban greenspace

### Project description

The charity *Trees for London* initiated the social enterprise training programme in January 2003, and they provide the accredited centre for the training.

The technical training is carried out by two experienced horticulturalists, an arborist and a manager. They are backed by the employment support agencies in the partnership whose staff are skilled in helping the long-term unemployed return to work.

Before committing unemployed candidates to specific training courses, time is spent getting to know each of them individually. Trainees join the scheme initially for one month in order to have their potential for further training appraised.

The landscaping scheme involves National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) training at either *Level I* or *II*. These courses are much easier to deliver than the more demanding NVQ in tree work. The NVQs contain a number of modules and require some written work. They take 4 to 9 months to complete.

For the specialist training in tree surgery and forestry, the National Proficiency Test Council (NPTC) scheme is used, focussing on *CS 30/31* - chainsaw operation and maintenance and *CS 38* - tree climbing. Those who achieve these qualifications are immediately able to apply for posts as ground workers, working in support of tree surgeons. The NPTC scheme involves far less paper work than the NVQs, and the training and tests can be completed in just over a week. However, it may not suit all candidates as it requires significant physical fitness and is considerably more expensive.

*Learning to prune shrubs in Kennington Park*



## Results

Interest in the training scheme is high and it attracts some 500 enquiries each year. The level of successful completion based on 80 candidates in 2003 was around 65% for the landscaping NVQs. For NPTC training the success rate was about 75%, which is encouraging in view of the strict assessment regime for what is potentially dangerous work.

Some trainees need to re-acquire a number of work-related habits, so professional counsellors are brought in from referral agencies as appropriate. Good time keeping is emphasised as part of the training. Absences are followed up on the day and excuses for late arrival, early departure or absence are always challenged and discussed.

Those trainees who do not achieve full formal qualifications may nevertheless gain accreditation for a number of units on the modular NVQ in landscaping. They also gain useful personal skills such as improved organisational ability, punctuality, reliability and communication and they are also taught how to address problems which may arise beyond the workplace.

Around 80% of the previously unemployed trainees have found some form of employment as a result of the scheme, and about 40% full-time work. In addition to temporary and part-time work, trainees have found full-time jobs in London parks, and by setting up as landscape contractors and tree surgeons.

*Safety is of paramount importance and trainees have to become familiar with complex equipment*



*Skill with a chainsaw increases the employment prospects of trainees on the NPTC courses*

