

PRESS RELEASE

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YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING UP ROLES TO LOOK AFTER THE NATION'S WATERWAYS

Waterways and wellbeing charity Canal & River Trust has welcomed a wave of 47 young people to its regional, construction, and digital marketing teams as part of the government's Kickstart initiative, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions.

In Burnley, Leicester, and Walsall, 23 young people have joined the Trust and will gain experience in waterway care and customer service, including canal and towpath maintenance and a range of 'green' environmental projects. Another 22 positions are based with the Trust's construction teams, where participants will learn heritage skills ranging from masonry, bricklaying, and carpentry, to canal bank protection and towpath resurfacing. A further two participants have joined the Trust's social media and web content teams to promote the use of canals to waterside communities.

The participants started their six-month placements in June 2021.

Danny Matley, strategic programmes manager at Canal & River Trust, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for young people to gain valuable experience working on the waterways. Whilst many of the techniques remain similar to when the canals were built, modern methods have also come to play an important role. The participants will be learning both heritage skills and getting involved in topical projects, such as how to 'green' the waterways and how to promote them to a wider audience.

"We look forward to sharing our skills and will encourage the young people to share their ideas with us. We hope to inspire a new generation of waterways workers, who will have experienced the benefits of being by the water and caring for the canals first-hand."

The Kickstart initiative is a programme for young people aged 16-24 who are claiming Universal Credit and are at risk of long-term unemployment. The programme will support young people to

Canal & River Trust, Toll House, Delamere Terrace, London, W2 6ND

T: 0203 3204 4514 **E:** press.office@canalrivertrust.org.uk **W:** www.canalrivertrust.org.uk **Twitter:** [@CanalRiverTrust](https://twitter.com/CanalRiverTrust)

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build up their experience and help them move into sustained employment after they have completed their Kickstart-funded role.

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For further information, please contact:

Fran Read, national press officer

e fran.read@canalrivertrust.org.uk m 07796 610 427

Notes to editors

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across Wales and England. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.

Kickstart programme

Kickstart will enable employers to recruit young people for 25 hours per week at the relevant National Minimum Wage, to be re-imbursed 100% by the Government. The funding will also include associated employer National Insurance contributions, employer minimum auto-enrolment pension contributions and an additional £1,500 per placement for set up costs.