

**CHANGING CAREER  
PERCEPTIONS  
DURING THE COST  
OF LIVING CRISIS**

 **REDROW**

# CHALLENGING MISCONCEPTIONS

Foreword by Karen Jones, Human Resources Director



**Apprenticeships provide fantastic opportunities to earn whilst you learn and our latest research shows many young people are now reconsidering their career options amidst the cost-of-living crisis.**

More than a quarter (27%) of young adults (16 to 24) in the UK are now re-evaluating their finances and career choices because of the cost-of-living crisis, prioritising apprenticeships over higher education.

However, despite apprenticeships growing in popularity among young people two in three (68%) still believe that there is a general stigma associated with being an apprentice, rather than pursuing higher education.

Given the disruption to the nation's classrooms over the past three years in the wake of the pandemic pupils have been more likely to miss out on careers advice and now with the cost of living crisis and extremely high costs of university fees it has never been more important for young people to be made aware of apprenticeship routes.

It was particularly concerning to see this year, therefore, that 41% of young people say they weren't told anything about apprenticeships at school, the highest level we've seen since we started surveying in 2017. Having now seen a consecutive decline in these results for the last four years it is critical that the quality of careers advice available to young people is improved.

The advice offered in schools is absolutely key to inspiring young people to choose the career path that best suits them, so we are calling on the government to take urgent steps to arrest this decline and improve the quality of careers education for young people and to make them recognise apprenticeships as an equally valid step towards a successful career.

We are committed to playing our part to help break the stigma around apprentices and construction as a career path by offering more information for schools and parents as well as promoting the benefits among young people to demonstrate how apprentices can equip them with skills for life and put them on the path to a successful and fulfilling career. It is our job to provide the very best training to create a sustainable future and apprentices are the lifeblood of our industry.

As a gold member of the 5% Club, we are committed to ensuring apprentices, graduates and trainees make up at least 5% of the workforce in the next five years. However, in practice, we go well beyond this with 15% of our total colleagues currently working towards qualifications or on the job training, such as apprenticeships.

This National Apprenticeship Week we are encouraging more young people to consider a career in construction with over 70 nationwide trade positions being released. To find out more, please visit: [www.redrowplc.co.uk/apprentices](http://www.redrowplc.co.uk/apprentices).

**27%**

of young adults (16 to 24) in the UK are now re-evaluating their finances and career choices.

**68%**

still believe that there is a general stigma associated with being an apprentice.

**41%**

of young people say they weren't told anything about apprenticeships at school.

**70**

Redrow apprenticeship positions available.

# CAREERS IN CONSTRUCTION AND APPRENTICESHIPS

Top 5 benefits of apprenticeships vs university according to 16-24 year olds


- |   |  |     |
|---|--|-----|
| 1 | Earn a salary whilst learning  | 58% |
| 2 | Gain practical work experience   | 45% |
| 3 | Avoid student debt   | 44% |
| 4 | Learn from industry experts  | 42% |
| 5 | Progression and promotion will be easier because of practical experience | 37% |


## KEY FINDINGS

**44%**   
say financial implications are one of the biggest turn-offs for university degrees due to cost of living

**68%**   
Two in three of young people believe there is a general stigma associated with being an apprentice rather than pursuing higher education

- 16–24-year-olds believe they're already getting a head start on their skill set, with 45% saying time spent playing video games such as Minecraft and The Sims enhances transferable skills for real world jobs
- 41% of young people say they weren't told anything about

**56%**   
The number of young people who are more likely to consider an apprenticeship over university

**54%**   
More than half of young people think they will earn more than their parents in their lifetime

**2 in 5**   
Two in five young adults believe careers in construction are often overlooked with only a quarter (24%) of young people considering one

- apprenticeships at school, the highest level since we started surveying in 2017
- Half of women (49%) are now open to considering a career in construction compared to over two thirds (67%) of men

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## RE-EVALUATING CAREER PATHS

Historically, the financial benefits of undertaking an apprenticeship have been well understood by both young people and their parents. However, this year in the wake of much wider concerns around cost of living, the financial benefits of apprenticeships are clearly at the forefront of people's minds.

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**1/4**

More than a quarter (27%) of young adults say they have reevaluated their finances and career choices as a result of the cost of living.



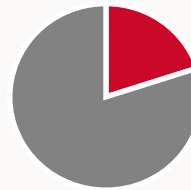
**2/5**

Two in five (45%) say the rise in the cost of living has made them want to earn more money in the future.



**1/3**

Similarly, more than a third (36%) want to earn more money earlier in their career as a result.



**1/5**

A fifth (22%) also say they now prioritise earning money over learning or studying at university.



**1/2**

This explains why half (56%) agreed they are more likely to consider an apprenticeship over a university degree.



**1/2**

It's encouraging that the current economic climate hasn't affected young people's ambition with more than half of respondents (54%) still thinking they will earn more than their parents in their lifetime.

“A GREAT BENEFIT IS THE FACT WE GET PAID FOR THE WORK WE DO DURING THE APPRENTICESHIP, ALONGSIDE STUDYING. COMPARING THAT TO UNIVERSITY, WHERE YOU GET A QUALIFICATION COUPLED WITH MASSIVE DEBT, I KNEW AN APPRENTICESHIP WAS THE CORRECT PATH FOR ME.”

Tashai Simms – Redrow apprentice



# LET'S STAMP OUT THE STIGMA

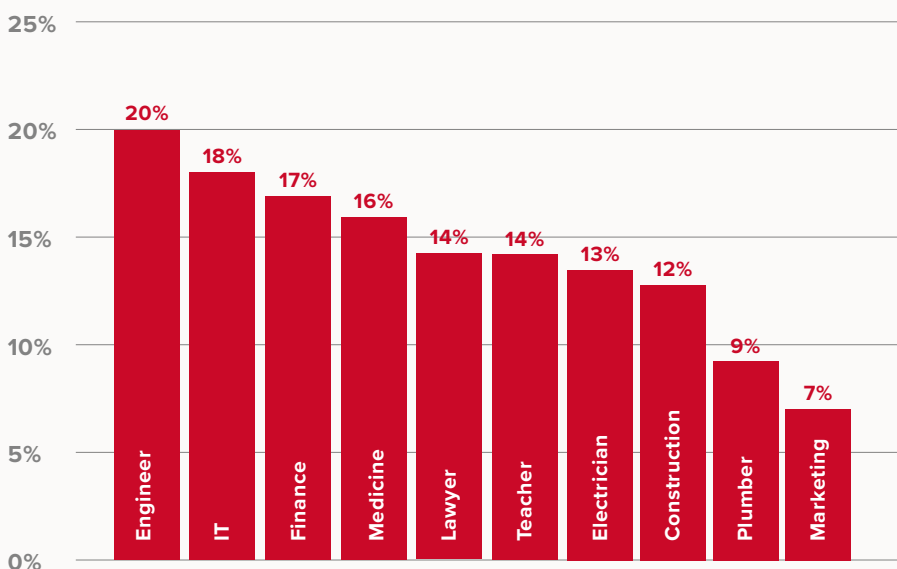


There has been clear progress in terms of the number of young people considering apprenticeships as a viable pathway, however, two in three (68%) of those aged between 16 to 24 believe that there is still a stigma associated with being an apprentice, rather than pursuing higher education. Two in five (44%) parents also agree.

Half (49%) agreed their school did not encourage them to go into apprenticeships and two in five (41%) say they were not told anything about apprenticeships, compared to 32% last year. Parents agreed with three in four (75%) saying people don't know enough about apprenticeships.

Instead, almost three in four (72%) young adults agree going to university was encouraged at school more than other options, while 58% say going to university was encouraged more by their parents. This is also supported by that fact more than half of parents (51%) would prefer their child to go into further education.

## Top 10 careers parents would encourage their children into



“I CHOSE THE REDROW APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME AS MY DAD RUNS HIS OWN BUSINESS AND HAS WORKED AS A SUBCONTRACTOR FOR REDROW FOR MANY YEARS.”

Travis Floyd – Redrow apprentice



## WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

This year's research shows **half of women (49%)** have considered and are open to working in construction.

The survey of 1,000 young adults aged 16-24 found that after decades of men dominating the construction industry, more women are looking to enter the sector. In fact, three fifths (60%) of women believe that a career in construction is often overlooked. The increased female interest in a construction career follows a trend of young adults re-evaluating their finances and career choices because of the cost-of-living crisis.

**Karen Jones, HR Director for Redrow, comments:** "it's really encouraging to see more women are open to choosing a career in construction – and hopefully turning the tide on construction being such a male dominated industry. At Redrow, we are always looking for ways to make our workplace more inclusive, such as installing new site facilities on developments and updating PPE, however, more needs to be done to bridge the knowledge and perception gap of apprenticeships at a school level."



"I AM VERY KEEN TO GET MORE WOMEN INTO CONSTRUCTION AND GET MORE INVOLVED IN HELPING WOMEN INTO THE INDUSTRY."

**Jennifer Kehoe** – Redrow apprentice

## WHO'S THE MOST INFLUENTIAL?

The biggest influences on young adults' choice of education and employment

	2022	2023
<b>FAMILY</b>	31%	37%
<b>FRIENDS</b>	27%	31%
<b>SCHOOL</b>	25%	19%

When looking back at 2022 findings, teachers and parents led the pack in terms of where young people got their information on careers, so it's

interesting to see a noticeable shift to young people taking their friends' advice above that of their teachers in this year's data. This further highlights

the issues around careers education in schools and the need for further action to be taken to provide the right advice and support for young people.

## EARN WHILE YOU LEARN

It's positive to see those aged 16 to 24 were most likely to associate the opportunity to earn money while studying and not incurring student debt (47%) with apprenticeships, with more young people believing that an apprenticeship brings greater financial independence earlier (38%), compared to last year at just 28% of people holding that view.

The top three perceived benefits of apprenticeships:

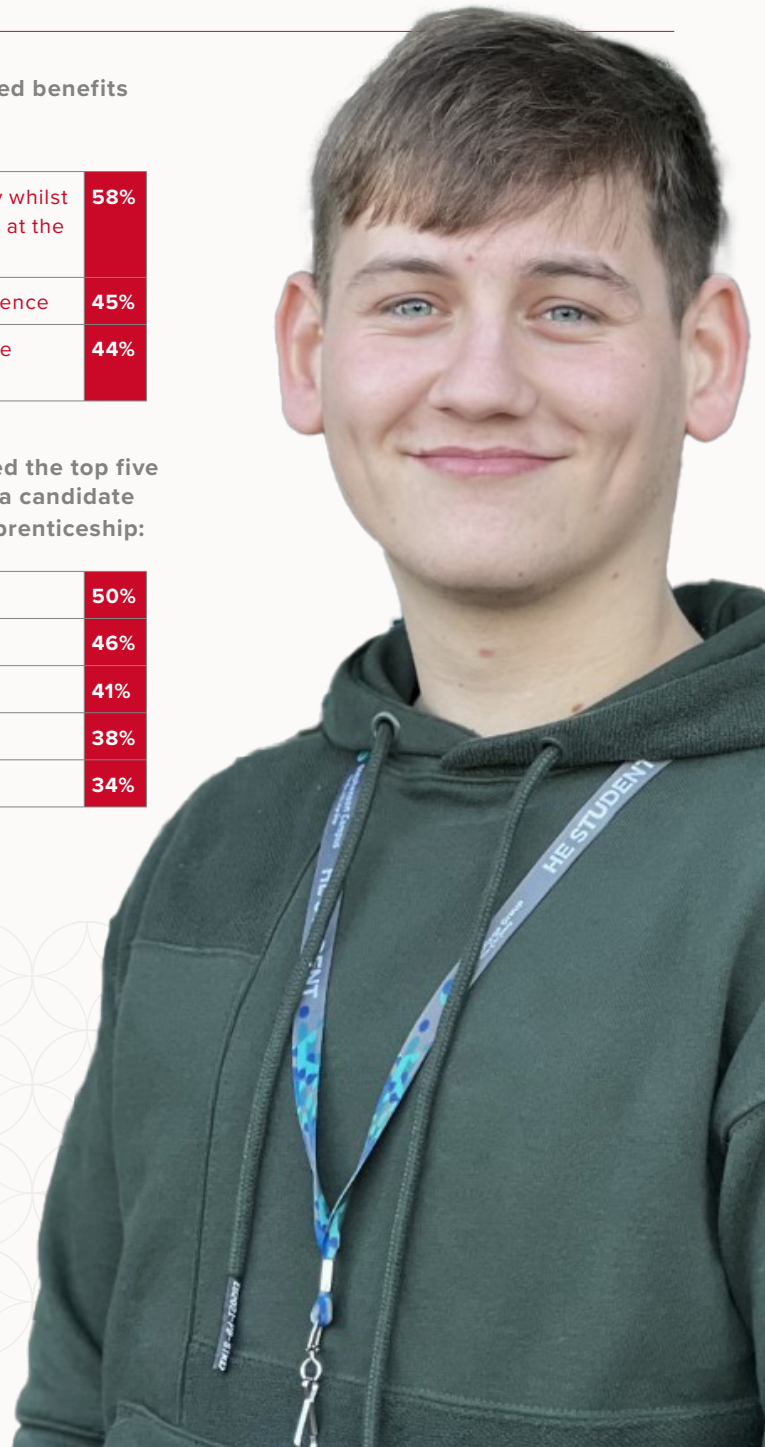
<b>1</b>	You can earn a salary whilst studying and training at the same time	<b>58%</b>
<b>2</b>	Practical work experience	<b>45%</b>
<b>3</b>	You don't have a large student debt	<b>44%</b>

Young adults identified the top five most important skills a candidate would need for an apprenticeship:

<b>1</b>	Willingness to learn	<b>50%</b>
<b>2</b>	Communication skills	<b>46%</b>
<b>3</b>	Teamwork skills	<b>41%</b>
<b>4</b>	Being practical	<b>38%</b>
<b>5</b>	Open-minded	<b>34%</b>

“BE CONFIDENT AND NEVER BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS, YOU’VE GOT TO BOTHER PEOPLE, THERE’S SO MUCH KNOWLEDGE TO GAIN FROM OTHER PEOPLE.”

Elliot Austin – Redrow apprentice



# CONSIDERING CAREERS IN CONSTRUCTION

Unfortunately, **nearly two thirds (62%)** of young people agree careers in construction are often overlooked. However, more encouragingly two in five (43%) would like to know more about construction apprenticeships.

We explored the key reasons young people consider careers in construction, unsurprisingly salary came out top, however, it was interesting to see Redrow apprentices highlighted long term career opportunities as the second biggest reason, whereas those not in the industry placed this 5th. This suggests that those in the construction sector understand the long term opportunities to a much greater extent.

## THE BIGGEST REASONS FOR YOUNG ADULTS TO EXPLORE A CAREER IN CONSTRUCTION

Salary opportunities	44%
The variety of different projects	37%
Gaining new skills across different roles	37%
Seeing the impact of their work in real life	30%
Long-term career opportunities	30%

## REDROW APPRENTICES BIGGEST REASONS FOR STARTING A CAREER IN CONSTRUCTION

Long term career opportunities	60%
Salary or money you can earn	48%
Opportunity to build or create something physical / tangible	40%
Seeing the impact of their work in real life	38%
Transferable skills learnt	26%

# FEMALE AND LGBTQ LEADERS LEAD THE WAY

It's fantastic to see young people would like to work for a **company that has strong female and LGBTQ leaders (81%)**, highlighting the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion for young people when considering their career.

**Redrow is committed to building a culture that is inclusive to all and we're proud to be included in the Financial Times (FT's) annual**

**listing for Diversity Leaders 2023.** 91% of our employees believe we are committed to continuously promoting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion and as a business we have over 80 representatives within the business who act as points of contact, feedback ideas and drive the vision.

**Karen Jones, HR director for Redrow, said:** "To be included as one of the FT's Diversity Leaders for 2023 is reflective of our commitment to creating a workplace where everyone feels included and free to be themselves. It's great recognition for our colleagues who have sought



**Zara Barrow**  
Group Construction Director

to embrace diversity in all aspects of the business; creating an environment where employees can fulfil their potential."



# ASK A FEMALE APPRENTICE

“WHAT REALLY DRIVES ME IS HELPING WOMEN SUCCEED IN A MALE DOMINATED INDUSTRY”

**Tashai Simms** – 20, Construction Worker & Apprentice at Redrow in South Midlands



## **Why did you choose an apprenticeship?**

I chose the apprenticeship route as I knew I wanted to go into construction and saw it as the best path into the industry because it enables me to work on the job whilst studying.

## **What are the key benefits to an apprenticeship in your opinion?**

I am constantly learning and developing new skills, which will all be useful throughout my life and during my career. A great benefit is the fact we get paid for the work we do during the apprenticeship, alongside studying. Comparing that to university, where you get a qualification coupled with massive debt, I knew an apprenticeship was the correct path for me.

## **Why did you choose to enter construction?**

I wanted to choose a different path to what women are typically 'expected' to take. I don't want to conform to society's set rules of what women should or shouldn't do, that's clearly reflected in my choice of apprenticeship. What really drives me is breaking down barriers, helping women succeed in a male dominant industry and proving people wrong.

## **What do your day-to-day responsibilities involve?**

Every day is different! In the morning, we'll receive drawings for the plot and development we'll be working on. From there, we started building the house. This can be the interior; the stud work walls (for the bedrooms, bathrooms/ensuites, lounge, kitchen, cupboards, toilets) or the floor joisting. Exterior wise, it can be anything from front and back doors to front porches to roofing. Normally we're productive and smash through quite a bit of work so when it comes to break time we can relax and have a good laugh.

## **What are your favourite responsibilities?**

I would say anything second fixing is most exciting. It can be stressful at times, but once you've finished you can sit back and think 'yeah I did that and I'm proud of it'. It's very satisfying to see the work you've done fully completed. You really must have a finisher's touch as everything is very intricate in detail. Everything in the second fixing just looks so good!

## **What is your favourite thing about working for Redrow?**

Redrow is diverse and fully representative of the UK. They are also great employers who are so attentive and accommodating, as an apprentice this is both helpful and comforting.

## **What makes a good apprentice?**

Saying 'yes' to all opportunities that come your way. Always giving 100% by constantly learning new things. And most importantly, to always be punctual and on top of your commitments.

## **What advice would you give to other school leavers or other people wanting to do apprenticeship?**

Take the jump and go for it. It's a good opportunity to further yourself and start a career. Through your apprenticeship you will be exposed to new opportunities where you'll be able to work your way up.

## **Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?**

In 10 years' time I see myself being a fully qualified chippy with a lot of valuable experience. I would love to look at the possibility of working for myself and starting a small construction company.

# ASK A APPRENTICE WHO'S CHANGED THEIR CAREER PATH

"I'M RETRAINING AS A CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICE FOLLOWING A CAREER IN THE POLICE FORCE AND WANT TO ENCOURAGE MORE WOMEN INTO THE INDUSTRY"

**Jennifer Kehoe** – 40, Construction Worker & Apprentice at Redrow in the Southern Division



## **What were you doing before your apprenticeship?**

I have had a varied career so far. I was a Police Officer for 8 years and then went into private security, namely close protection, looking after a wide variety of clients. More recently, I worked closer to my home, leading security teams at events and festivals.

## **Why did you choose an apprenticeship?**

I have always wanted a trade but wasn't able to pay for training and to lose income, so an apprenticeship was the perfect way to learn whilst also earning and getting site experience.

## **What are the key benefits to an apprenticeship in your opinion?**

The key benefits are being able to learn whilst doing the job on a real construction site. You experience the reality of being, in my case, a bricklayer. I also earn whilst being trained so that is a huge benefit.

## **Why did you choose to enter construction?**

I have always wanted a trade, but it wasn't something I thought I could do as I wasn't aware that these types of apprenticeships existed. Later on, I realised this was something I could do. I felt ready to take on a new challenge! I have always been an outdoorsy type of person, so a 'hands on' career is ideal for me.

## **What do your day-to-day responsibilities involve?**

I get up very early and I am ready for work at 7.30am. I meet with the bricklayers and find out what the plan is for the day. Sometimes I work alone preparing the blockwork by filling in any cracks or holes to ensure it is airtight. I may build decorative pillars inside a garage, do some tidying- up and occasionally help the bricklaying gang lay some bricks- but I am still early on in my apprenticeship. I have a couple of breaks during the day and towards the end I spend some time recording evidence of what I have achieved. Pictures support my learning and give me an understanding of what I am doing and why.

## **What are your favourite responsibilities or what work is most exciting for you?**

I really enjoy making decorative pillars as I get a chance to take my time and ensure my work is neat. Seeing the end result is truly worth it, especially knowing it will soon be someone's home, which is amazing.

## **What makes a good apprentice?**

Someone who gives 100%, keeps their head down and trust the process. It's about being useful, knowing you will get to where you want by being patient and enthusiastic.

## **What advice would you give to other school leavers or other people wanting to do apprenticeship?**

Getting a trade will set you up for life and open many doors. To be paid to learn on a construction site is a fantastic opportunity so I would highly recommend it. If you work hard, you will be in a great position to be hired full-time.

## **Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?**

I am very keen to get more women into construction. So perhaps I will be more involved in helping women, or maybe even run my own construction company!

# ASK AN EX-APPRENTICE

“CONSTRUCTION RUNS IN THE FAMILY SO AN APPRENTICESHIP WITH REDROW WAS A NATURAL WAY IN FOR ME”

**Elliott Austin** – 20, is a Trainee Civil Engineer at Redrow in the South West Division, who started as an apprentice 4 years ago.



## **Why did you choose to enter construction?**

It actually runs in my family. My Mum works for Redrow and so does my brother, so it felt like a natural path to follow in my family's footsteps. There is definitely a stigma around the construction industry, from first glance people think it's just trades. However, people don't know there are a lot of different pathways, from customer service, to technical and sales.

## **What are the key benefits to an apprenticeship in your opinion?**

I really enjoyed it, you get to be part of a young team in a larger company and all learn together. Everyday keeps me busy and it's amazing to see sites from land appraisal through to exit strategy. Redrow offers a great rotational scheme so you can really try out everything and find the area you are passionate about.

## **What skills are important?**

I wasn't very academic at school but the core subjects I now use every day, especially maths. I was helping a cousin with her maths homework and realised how much of what you learn in year 10 and year 11 maths translates into skills in the real world, even if it doesn't feel like it.

## **How did you hear about Redrow?**

My brother is a quantity surveyor and Mum works at Redrow in the sales department, so I looked on the website. I'd previously completed work experience in 2017, so applied and got it!

## **What makes a good apprentice?**

Someone who is confident and not afraid to ask questions, you've got to bother people, there's so much knowledge from people in the office. Put yourself out there!

## **What advice would you give to other school leavers or other people wanting to do apprenticeship?**

It is definitely something I had to weigh up, the university vs apprenticeship route. You get yourself into a lot of debt at university and come out with a piece of paper, rather than the experience of an apprenticeship. It's not just the experience you get from the industry but the life skills you learn. You learn to be confident, how to work in a team as well as starting up savings and pension schemes which are all useful life tools.

## **Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?**

I would love to stay at Redrow. The Austin family have been at Redrow for 20 years now. Working my way up to Technical Director would be great but I guess the sky's the limit!

# METHODOLOGY

For the seventh year we asked parents, young adults, and our own apprentices about their perceptions of apprenticeships and careers in the construction industry.

WHO WE SURVEYED	NO. OF SURVEY RESPONSES
YOUNG PEOPLE (16-21-YEAR-OLDS)	1,000
PARENTS OF 16-21-YEAR-OLDS	1,000
REDROW APPRENTICES	118



# ABOUT REDROW



Redrow was established in 1974 and today is one of the most successful and acclaimed homebuilders in the country. For the year to 3 July 2022, the company built more than 5,700 new homes across England and Wales.

Over Redrow's history, spanning almost 50 years, it has earned a unique reputation for delivering high quality, award-winning homes that are built in well-chosen locations with excellent place making.

diversity and inclusion respectively. It was also included in the FTSE4Good Index Series, for demonstrating strong Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices.



Redrow's purpose is to create a better way to live. It has a robust strategy in place to deliver on this aim, which is based on three core pillars: Thriving Communities, Building Responsibly and Valuing People.

In 2022, Redrow became one of the first house builders to implement the New Homes Quality Board's new code of practice, an independent not-for-profit organisation that has been set up to offer better protection and increased transparency for customers. Redrow is consistently rated as 'excellent' on Trustpilot and once again achieved the Five Star Customer Satisfaction award from the Home Builders' Federation (HBF). Visit [redrow.co.uk](http://redrow.co.uk) for more detail.

Redrow was included in the FT's annual listings of both Europe's Climate Leaders 2022 and Diversity Leaders 2023 for achieving significant reductions in its greenhouse gas emissions and leading in workplace



