

THE SKILL MILL

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The Skill Mill

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Introduction

The Skill Mill is a multi-award-winning social enterprise which provides employment opportunities for young people aged between sixteen and eighteen. We employ only ex-offenders, actively reducing reoffending whilst increasing engagement, participation, employability and educational levels of the young people to increase their life chances.

The stigma attached to having a criminal record, lack of previous opportunity and the negative societal attitudes towards children who have committed offences creates enormous barriers for children. Often even with the best will in the world children are unable to access education, training or employment opportunities which are vital to helping them move forwards with their lives. The Skill Mill removes these barriers and enables them to gain work skills, knowledge and importantly confidence.

The Skill Mill provides employment opportunities in water and land based management, helping to reduce flood risk and improve the local environment. In turn, this brings social and environmental benefits to communities by involving local people directly in the delivery of services. Children undertake accredited training and achieve a nationally recognised qualification. They acquire knowledge and skills by working alongside local private contractors and partners. Follow on employment opportunities with partner organisations and the wider labour market are sought for each employee and support towards this goal is provided from the outset. Each cohort receives six months paid employment, invaluable practical real work experience, a nationally recognised qualification, and further opportunities for progression with local companies at the end of their time with The Skill Mill.

The Skill Mill is a certified Social Enterprise and member of Social Enterprise UK, buying from The Skill Mill means you are 'buying social'. 'Buying social' is about using your money, as an individual or an organisation, to create a positive impact on the world we live in. When you buy from a social enterprise you are choosing to spend your money with a business that is giving something back, reinvesting their profits to address the most pressing issues in society.



2021



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Our Story

The Skill Mill was established in 2013. The idea initially came about after the Environment Agency approached Newcastle Youth Offending Team (YOT) about cleaning-up local waterways. Sessions were then organised where young people would work for 5 hours per day on watercourse tasks. It soon became evident that reoffending rates for the young people taking part were lower than the national average.

The Skill Mill was then launched to provide young people taking part in the sessions with progression routes into employment. The first Skill Mill site was set up in Newcastle in 2014, others soon followed in the North of England and even in the Estonian capital, Tallinn.

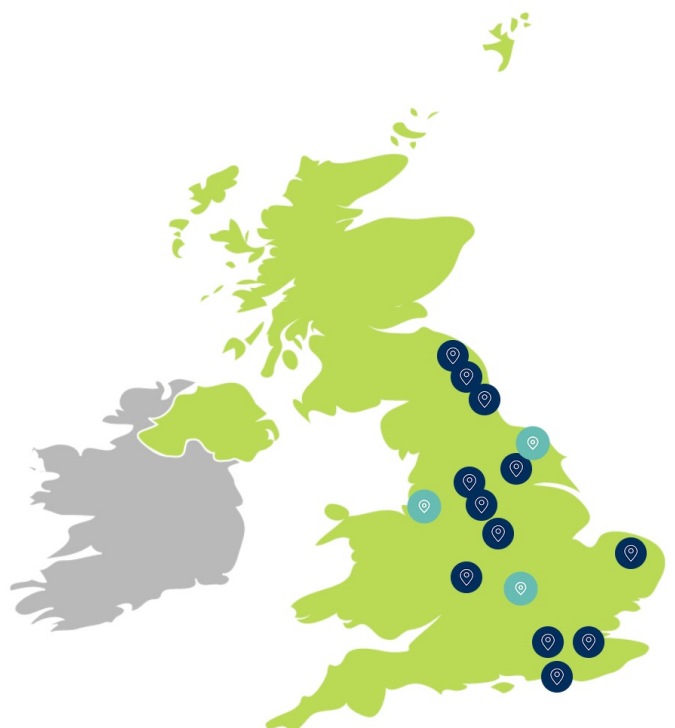
In 9 years, The Skill Mill has employed 362 young people in the UK. Just 27 of those have been re-convicted. This means our re-conviction rate is 7.4%, compared compared to a counter factual of 72% for young offenders with 11+ convictions. 75% of the young people The Skill Mill has employed have progressed to further employment, education, or training.

United Kingdom Locations:

Birmingham	Surrey
Croydon	West Sussex
Durham	
Leeds	
Newcastle	
Norfolk	
Northumberland	
Nottingham	
Oldham	
Rochdale/Bury	

Following a major investment from the Life Chances Fund, The Skill Mill has been able to further expand, and in August 2020 launched 7 sites under a Social Impact Bond. The Life Chances Fund is committed by central government to help people in society who face the most significant barriers to leading happy and productive lives. It provides top up contributions to outcomes-based contracts involving social investment, referred to as Social Impact Bonds. These contracts must be locally commissioned and aim to tackle complex social problems.

The Skill Mill's growth has been possible with ongoing support from partnership organisations and businesses. The Skill Mill is supported by an Advisory Board of representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors. It is this partnership which makes the Skill Mill unique and brings significant added value.



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Aims & Objectives

- ⚙️ Improve the flow of watercourses contributing to the reduction of flood risk and provide urban and rural environmental improvement services.
- ⚙️ Increase engagement, participation, employability and educational levels of the young people and move them closer to long term sustainable employment.
- ⚙️ Reduce re-offending and increase community safety through engagement of ex-offenders in employment.
- ⚙️ Demonstrate that design-thinking and co-creation through effective partnerships can result in innovative solutions to social and environmental problems and make significant savings to the state.

Although progress continues to be made with reducing youth re-offending and use of custody, there is evidence of a need to further develop innovative solutions for continued improvement.

The Skill Mill focuses on the vital pathway of employment, skilling up young people and progressing them to employment elsewhere. Projects that are funded on a long term basis are no longer a feasible model. The Skill Mill demonstrates that by providing young people with cost effective employment

opportunities, significant savings are made to the state in the long term.

The young people benefit from improved skills and confidence, which widens their future opportunities and reduces their risk of social exclusion during adulthood. Spending time in nature is another significant positive aspect. The mental health benefits include improved mood, reduced feelings of stress and anger, and improved self-esteem as well as the obvious physical health benefits from doing active practical work.



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United Nations Sustainability Development Goals

The work of The Skill Mill is intimately connected with the UN Sustainability Development Goals. The focused work supports young men and women out of the criminal justice system, through paid employment, undertaking meaningful physical work and improving the natural environment. This aligns with the goals noted:

Goal 1 - End Poverty:

The Skill Mill works exclusively with young people who are disadvantaged in many ways. They are identified foremost by their behaviours which have brought them into the criminal justice system. These behaviours are overwhelmingly symptomatic of poverty. At The Skill Mill all the beneficiaries complete a poverty spotlight questionnaire which has been co-designed by Skill Mill and Poverty Stoplight Foundation in order that they can self-assess poverty indicators and develop an action plan to address the barriers. Furthermore the paid job, skill development and qualifications contribute significantly to lifting the young people out of poverty with ripple effects into their families and communities.

Goal 3 – Good Health:

Employment on the scheme provides a

structured environment where the combination of drug and alcohol are not acceptable. As such the ongoing work provides an opportunity for reduced drug and alcohol intake leading to direct benefits for the individuals concerned with positive follow on impacts to their communities. The Skill Mill offers employment which is primarily outdoors and physically challenging. The combination of physical work in nature has demonstrable physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits.

Goal 4 – Quality Education:

Many of the individuals employed by the Skill Mill have not engaged with the education system. As such the Skill Mill provides a structured environment where basic qualifications are secured and with their experience provide a sound basis for ongoing employment.

Goal 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation:

The Skill Mill actively improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping. Skill Mill works within the Water Framework Directive and is a partner in the Catchment Area for Tyne and Wear.

View the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030.html>



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Goal 8 – Good jobs and Economic Growth:

The practice of regular routine work helps increase economic productivity and connects job creation with environmental improvement. As a social enterprise The Skill Mill is a highly innovative organisation which is using economic activity to deliver material benefits to society at large and the individuals who it serves. This has been recognised at Government level as a model to be adopted elsewhere. It reduces the number of youth not in employment or education.

Goal 9 - Innovation:

Through co-design and design thinking techniques between Skill Mill and its partners there has been progress in developing innovative approaches to solving the problem of youth crime. The approaches have been recognised in the UK with a number of innovation competitions recognising the practice including The Environment Agency and the Youth Justice Board (England and Wales). Skill Mill is a lead partner for the COST Association Action Multi-Disciplinary Innovation for Social Change.

Goal 10 – Reduce Inequality:

The Skill Mill empowers and promotes the social, economic and political inclusion of young people, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status with the excluded young offenders providing the individuals with means and confidence to positively engage with the society around them and engage with the wider labour market.

Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities:

The Skill Mill works with young people living in communities where economic decline and deprivation has been severe. The model has been recognised by Eurocities as an example of effective practice in Newcastle upon Tyne where the model began and now operating in many other cities in England. The work itself benefits communities by delivering services which improve the local environment, increase civic pride and care for public spaces and community assets.

Goal 12 – Sustainable Consumption and Production:

Skill mill has an environmental management policy which has a goal for zero waste. All green waste is disposed of safely in municipal amenities sites unless it can be reused in the form of dead hedges etc. The Skill Mill is now supplying face masks which use only 100% natural materials, and there is no waste in the production process. The Skill Mill has a paperless policy and meets this 90% of the time. All unavoidable paper use is with recycled materials. Skill Mill organises a separate project Edible designed to reduce food waste and has piloted this activity with a supermarket chain.

Goal 13 – Climate Action:

Skill Mill is first and foremost an environmental services organisation. It provides services which care for the maintenance of local urban green spaces and also rural land maintenance. Work is undertaken to reduce flood risk arising from increased risk through climate change. The Skill Mill organises the

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Annual World Cleanup Day which is a global event mobilising citizens, community groups, corporations and government bodies to participate in a day of action to highlight the issue of waste and especially single use plastic. During 2019 over 200 events were organised across the UK and included over 20,000 people.



Goal 14 - Life Below Water:

The Skill Mill has partnerships with a number of water friendly organisations including Northumberland Rivers Trust, Canal and River Trust, Thames Water, Severn Trent Water and Northumbrian Water. The Skill Mill provides services which contribute to protection against environmental degradation, overfishing, climate change and pollution.

Goal 15 - Life on Land:

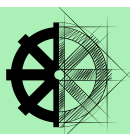
The Skill Mill is committed to protecting natural habitats and managing woodland sustainably. Tree planting, habitat building, vegetation cleanups and litter picking are just a few of the activities which are frequently carried out across our teams. We are committed to connecting people to nature, and promote the protection of green spaces.

Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals:

One of the defining features of The Skill Mill is the scope and scale of the partnerships that have been developed in each location. Skill Mill has received recognition for the unique triple-helix approach to solving multiple social and environmental impact. In 2019 Skill Mill received the Children and Young People Now Partnership Working Award. The academic community, civil society organisations, corporations and citizens are all working together through the Skill Mill to support the development and co-design solutions to the social and environmental challenges.



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Awards

2022

Children and Young People Now Youth Justice Award 2021 - *Highly Commended*

2021

Children and Young People Now Youth Justice Award 2021 - *Winner*

The Queen's Award for Enterprise: Promoting Opportunity 2021 - *Winner*

The Queen's Award for Enterprise: Sustainable Development 2021 - *Winner*

NatWest SE100 List 2021

NatWest SE100 Awards 2021 – *Finalist*

Social Enterprise UK Social Investment Deal of the Year 2021 - *Finalist*

2020

Children and Young People Now Youth Justice Award 2020 - *Highly Commended*

North East England Chamber Business Employer of the Year Award 2020 – *Shortlisted (All awards cancelled due to Covid-19)*

IoD Yorkshire & North East Director of the Year Awards (Davie Parks) 2020 - *Shortlisted*

North East Business Awards Heart of the Community Award 2020 – *Finalist*

NatWest SE100 List 2020

Howard League Community Awards Organisation of the Year 2020 – *Commended*

Howard League Community Awards Criminal Justice Champion (Davie Parks) 2020 – *Shortlisted*

Social Enterprise UK 2020 Roll of Honour

2019

Children & Young People Now Awards Partnership Working Award 2019 – *Winner*

Children and Young People Now Youth Justice Award 2019 – *Shortlisted*

Howard League Community Awards Organisation of the Year 2019 – *Shortlisted*

Social Enterprise UK Prove it Social Impact Award 2019 – *Shortlisted*

2018

Social Enterprise UK Environmental Social Enterprise of the Year 2018 – *Finalist*

Social Enterprise UK International Impact Social Enterprise of the Year 2018 – *Finalist*

2017

Institute for Civil Engineers Royal Haskoning Award July 2017 – *Shortlisted*

Investing in Children Award 2017 – *Winner*

Innovation in Politics Jobs Category 2017 – *Shortlisted*

Innovation in Politics Prosperity Category 2017 – *Shortlisted*

Howard League Community Awards Restorative Justice Award 2017 – *Commended*

Flood and Coast Awarding Excellence 2017 Efficiency Award – *Highly Commended*

Ajujaht 2016/17 E-dible – Top 30 (Top 4 Social Enterprise)



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Awards

2016

Children and Young People Now Youth Justice Award, November 2016 – *Shortlisted*
 Social Enterprise UK Environmental Social Enterprise of the Year 2016 – *Shortlisted*
 Water Industry Achievement Awards 2016 Community Project of the Year – *Winner*
 Eurocities Inclusive Labour Market 2016 – Best Practice Award
 Going the Extra Mile 2016 – *Winner*
 Constructing Excellence Award 2016 – *Winner*
 Estonian Ministry of Justice Essay Competition 2016 – *Highly Commended*

2015

Ajujaht 2015/16 – Top 30 (Top 4 Social Enterprise)

2014

Association of YOT Managers' John Hawkins' Award November 2014 – *Winner*
 Children and Young People Now Youth Justice Award November 2014 – *Winner*

2013

Project Oracle Evidence Competition June 2013 – *Shortlisted*
 Youth Justice Board Effective Practice Good Evidence Award 2013 – *Shortlisted*



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Testimonials

"Sean gave me that massive chance to prove that I'm not a criminal and I can work, I'm willing to work, and get up every morning and to do stuff for the environment."

Former Skill Mill employee, now working at the Environment Agency

"I must say that I've personally been really impressed with the work carried out so far by the young people. What they have done in the short time they've been down by the canal so far has made a massive impact – the site looks brilliant and its made a real impact to the Meadow Lane site. All the work has been conducted to a high standard, and they have all acted extremely professionally whilst they have been with us. I'm really looking forward to seeing what else they achieve."

Andrew Stone at East Midlands Canal and River Trust

"Gro-Organic have recently worked with young people from The Skill Mill to clear up and develop an over grown green space for adults with additional needs and tidy up gardens for local residents who are unable to themselves. The young people who worked with us did a thorough job. I was really impressed by their professionalism and the care these young people took. Thank you so much for all your hard work and we look forward to working with you all again soon."

Tal Arrowsmith at Gro-Organic C.I.C



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"I believe firmly that people who make mistakes should be given the chance to make amends and undertake rehabilitation to enable them to contribute positively to society and break the cycle of offending. Projects like Skill Mill, which give young people mentoring and qualifications, are invaluable in preventing the cycle of offending behaviour. I've been delighted to meet the young men involved in this project and to hear about the benefits they feel it has brought to their lives."

Barry Coppinger, PCC Cleveland.

"Programmes like this one offer a fantastic social and learning environment for young people. Our participants will receive valuable work experience whilst also gaining independence and developing essential life skills such as team work and communication skills."

Cllr Olwyn Gunn, Cabinet member for Children and Young People's Services

"I wasn't expecting to end up getting a job, I wouldn't of done if it wasn't for Skill Mill. It's been good working with Gary and the other lads. I've enjoyed it. It's a good working environment. I'm lucky to have the chance to do the AQA as well because you don't just get to do things like that."

Former Skill Mill employee now working at Balfour Beatty



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Meet the Team: Directors



David Parks BSc (Hons), PG Dip, ADPED Social Work
david.parks@theskillmill.org

David grew up in Glasgow, Scotland and has worked in Community Development and Young People's Services in Glasgow, Belfast, North Tyneside and Newcastle upon Tyne. David was a Team Manager at Newcastle Youth Offending Team for 12 years, where he managed a range of multi-disciplinary services for young people at risk. David specialised in Court Work, Restorative Justice, and Education, Training and Employment support initiatives. Prior to this David worked as a Prevention Manager at North Tyneside Youth Offending Team for 11 years.

David has developed a network of pan European partners sharing practice and ideas across a range of criminal justice activities and has directed the academic research partnership between Newcastle Youth Offending Team and Northumbria University. He qualified in the Advanced Diploma in Practice Education and Development (Social Work) in 2003 and has a strong commitment to Social Work education and training, teaching on a number of Criminology, Law and Social Policy modules. David is an Associate Partner of the Centre of Offenders and Offending at Northumbria University and a founding Director of The Skill Mill Limited. David is currently Managing Director of The Skill Mill Limited working at The Skill Mill Hub in Gateshead.



Linzie Pentleton BSc (Hons)
linzie.pentleton@theskillmill.org

Linzie started her career as a civil engineer working for two local authorities (Alnwick District Council and Sunderland City Council) where she obtained an ONC and HNC in civil engineering. She joined Northumbrian Water in 1997, and since then has worked in various departments and roles. Starting in the sewerage network department as a Technician she then went on to become a Project Manager within the Investment Delivery Department, delivering new network infrastructure. From there she became the Water Efficiency Manager, working with the community and schools to reduce water consumption. She then progressed to be a Wastewater Treatment Manager responsible for the treatment works compliance in the Hexham area which lead her then to become a Water Treatment Manager. Ensuring drinking water supplying Northumberland was to the correct quality and quantity. During this time she also studied for a BA (Hons) in Leadership and Management which she completed in 2012 and also became a qualified NVQ assessor. She is now the Sewerage Network Controller for Northumberland and Tyne working closely with local authorities to minimise flooding and the Environment Agency preventing pollution. Linzie is a founding Director of The Skill Mill Limited.



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Meet the Team: Directors



Dr. Katri-Liis Lepik

katri-liis@theskillmill.org

Katri-Liis Lepik is an Associate Professor of Management at Tallinn University, Estonia. She is a lecturer in the global Master's programme of Social Entrepreneurship and a mentor in the online Social Entrepreneurship Incubation Program. Currently she also runs the international COST network "Multi-disciplinary innovation for social change" covering 38 countries. Having worked for public, private and non-profit sector, she possesses competences relevant for cross-sectoral cooperation and management consultancy.

Katri-Liis has worked with the other Skill Mill board members for over 20 years developing services and international projects in the social field. Her other social enterprise E-dible deals with rescuing food and raising awareness on the circular economy.



Andy Peaden CQSW, MSc

andy.peaden@theskillmill.org

Andy started his career working as a volunteer with Northumbria Probation Service in 1987. He became an Intermediate Treatment worker with Blyth Valley Juvenile Justice team in 1988 and qualified as a Probation Officer in 1991. Andy worked in a range of different locations for both Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire Probation services, including 3 years as manager of St John's Voluntary Probation Hostel in Leeds.

Andy left Probation to go back to the world of Youth Justice in 2003 becoming the South Yorkshire ISSP consortium manager. He became Sheffield Youth Offending Service manager in 2005 and Assistant Director for Youth Services in Sheffield 2010. In 2011 Andy was seconded into Sheffield Futures (an independent charity delivering Youth services and Connexions) as Chief Executive. He moved to Leeds to take up the position of Head of Leeds Youth Justice Service in 2012 leaving Leeds in 2020. He is now an Independent Youth Justice consultant. Andy was vice chair and then chair of The Association of Youth Offending Team Managers (AYM) and has been a Director of The Skill Mill Limited since 2018.



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Meet the Team: Directors



Andrew Park

info@theskillmill.org

Andrew has worked in a range of areas across Government including the economic and domestic affairs secretariat, youth policy, further education and apprenticeships and charity governance. He has extensive experience in designing and setting up new organisations, programmes and projects - with a particular focus upon strategic planning, governance and partnership working.

Prior to moving to Ofcom in 2018 to lead its online strategy and planning team he spent four years with the Centre for Social Impact Bonds and led the design and creation of the Life Chances Fund - an £80m fund centred upon driving closer collaboration between local and central government and front line organisations by focusing upon a shared desire to deliver better outcomes for people and communities across the country.



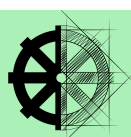
Sadiq Mussani

info@theskillmill.org

Sadiq works at the British Asian Trust, leading social finance programmes in India and Pakistan. He has nine years of experience across strategy consulting, M&A, international development, public service reform and innovative finance for social impact.

Previously, Sadiq worked at Social Finance UK as an advisor to local, regional and central government, and has worked with several social enterprises to scale their impact. While at Social Finance, Sadiq led work on the design, launch and performance management of the Skill Mill's Social Impact Bond.

Sadiq also sits on the board of Kindred, a collaborative peer-to-peer support network and investor based in the Liverpool City Region, and he used to be on the Advisory Board for Beyond the Classroom, a youth-led education social enterprise.



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Meet the Team: Staff



Charlotte Clarke BSc (Hons)
charlotte.clark@theskillmill.org

Charlotte grew up in South Yorkshire before moving to Newcastle for 3 years whilst studying Crime Science at Northumbria University. It was during this time Charlotte became a volunteer at Newcastle Youth Offending Team before helping to establish The Skill Mill on a voluntary basis. Charlotte now lives back in South Yorkshire and oversees all Skill Mill sites around the UK, travelling where she's needed and heading to The Skill Mill Hub in Gateshead a number of times a week.



Kay Finlay BSc (Hons), MA
kay.finlay@theskillmill.org

Kay grew up in the North East of England where she has studied at Northumbria University. Kay has her BA (Hons) in Criminology and MA in Criminology and Criminal Justice. She volunteered at The Skill Mill whilst she was studying for her MA and then progressed into a full time role working at The Skill Mill Hub in Gateshead in 2018. Kay is currently overseeing a number of work projects across our sites.



Peter Cook
durham@theskillmill.org

Peter has worked with County Durham Youth Justice Service for 18 years. Peter has worked predominantly in Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes (ISSP), a community based initiative designed for young people who pose a high level of risk. Peter has been a Skill Mill supervisor since the launch of our Durham site in 2017. Prior to working with the Youth Justice Service, Peter was a leisure accessory store manager.



Paul Hitchman
leeds@theskillmill.org

Paul grew up in Sheffield, and has lived in Leeds for over 20 years. He was a Foster Carer for over 12 years, caring for young people of all ages. Paul has also worked in Pastoral Education role, as well as Child Protection and Child Safeguarding posts. He has been a part-time police officer in Leeds for over 6 years, and is a district response trained officer. In addition, Paul has spent time within the Police Operational Support Unit covering the whole of West Yorkshire, the role involved responding to incidents involving major disorder. Paul is now Skill Mill Supervisor at our Leeds site.



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Meet the Team: Staff



Roland O'Neill

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Roland has worked for Birmingham Youth Offending Service for over 20 years. He has had different roles and has worked on a variety of projects including life skills and positive activities. Roland has also supported young people with arts and crafts, woodwork, horticulture and cycling proficiency. Prior to working with the Youth Justice Service, Roland worked in the construction industry for several years. Roland is now Skill Mill supervisor of our Birmingham site.



Matthew Jones

rochdale@theskillmill.org

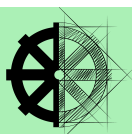
Matthew has worked at Rochdale Youth Justice Service for 15 years and has experience in a number of roles. Matthew established a 'Peer Mentoring Scheme' at Rochdale Youth Justice Service where young people who have previously been involved with the Youth Justice Service provide support for children and young people who are currently involved with the Youth Justice Service. Prior to this Matthew has worked with young people experiencing homelessness and as a teaching assistant in a school. Matthew is now Skill Mill supervisor of our Rochdale/Bury site.



Safir Rafiq

oldham@theskillmill.org

Saf grew up in Oldham, Greater Manchester. He began working with Oldham Youth Justice Service in 2005. During this time, Saf has worked on a large number of programmes and projects. He has acquired Level 3 Youth and Community Studies, and Youth Justice Effective Practice Certification. Saf is passionate about his local community, and really enjoys making a difference to the lives of young people.



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Meet the Team: Staff



Paul Kenny

nottingham@theskillmill.org

Paul grew up in the Nottingham area. He has over 25 years of experience working within the construction sector. Paul has also ran his own business which specialised in construction and design. Additionally, Paul has worked in partnership with the Canal and River Trust, supporting their apprenticeship programme. This role involved supporting young people to develop construction based skills, which they could transfer into longer-term employment elsewhere. Paul has also worked on English Heritage structures and environmental awareness projects across the canal systems in Nottinghamshire. He is passionate about architecture and heritage, and enjoys spending time with wildlife. Paul is now Skill Mill Supervisor at our Nottingham site.



Ross Carter

surrey@theskillmill.org

Ross has over 26 years of experience in construction, youth and family work. He has worked for the NHS and local authorities in case management, group work and mediation, supporting vulnerable young people at risk of being criminalised. In 2018 Ross developed his own projects creating awareness and support for young people and parents around knife crime, gangs and exploitation. Ross has worked in both Birmingham and Surrey, and is now Skill Mill Supervisor at our Surrey site.



Jake Kinsey

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Jake grew up in Brighton, where he has spent most of his time playing football, and completed his BA in Sport Coaching and Development in 2016. He has been involved in coaching a variety of sports, as well as teaching on the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Jake has been involved in the construction industry for 18 years. He also has experience in coaching communication and emotional regulation groups, and has experience working in secondary education with young people with complex needs. Jake enjoys working with young people to increase their life chances, and is now Skill Mill Supervisor at our West Sussex site.



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Meet the Team: Staff



David Edgar

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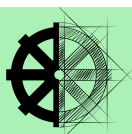
David has over 20 years experience in a range of roles which involve working with young people. David has experience of detached youth work, and has worked within a local Youth Offending Service. David has held roles within The National Trust and the YMCA, working with disadvantaged young people from inner city areas. He also has experience working for Local Authorities, maintaining their parks, community centre gardens, and urban spaces; David even has experience in all aspects of landscaping! David has a passion for being outdoors, he has volunteered for a range of organisations including The National Trust and The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. David is also a qualified Mountain Biking instructor, and shared this with young people whilst making a course from recycled materials! David is currently working on a European Structural and Investment Funds project in Newcastle.



Mark Cooper

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Mark is a Youth Justice Worker from Leeds. He first joined the service in 1999 when it evolved as part of Probation and Social Services. He has fulfilled many roles within the service including running a national campaign against Knife Crime. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience in working with young people and helping them achieve goals. Mark has also worked in the Construction Industry. He enjoys helping young people learn and develop life skills, moving them on to fulfil their potential and leave their offending behaviour behind them. Mark is currently Skill Mill Supervisor at our second Leeds site.



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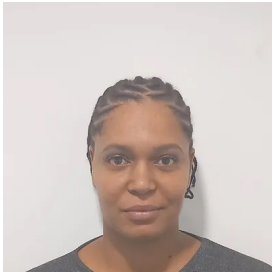
Meet the Team: Staff



David Lebourn

norfolk@theskillmill.org

David grew up on the borders of Essex and East London. He has had a range of roles over the past 33 years from working with children in an amateur dramatics group which toured shows across the UK, as well as Australia. David has a strong construction background, specialising in timber framed buildings and groundworks. He has a total of 15 years experience in the security sector, where he developed excellent interpersonal skills, dealing with anti-social and sometimes life threatening situations. At the beginning of the Pandemic David stepped into the role of PPE officer for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Since the pandemic, David has looked to adapt his skillset and has undertaken qualifications in Covid testing and containment, Safeguarding, Mental Health and Wellbeing in both Adults and Children, and is continuing his education in these fields. David is currently Skill Mill supervisor at our Norfolk site.



Deandra Smith

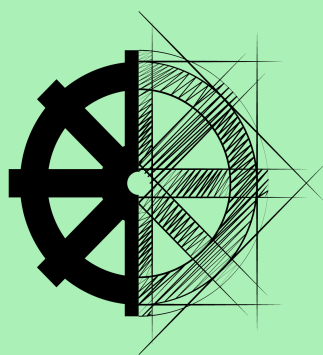
croydon@theskillmill.org

Deandra grew up in Hertfordshire, where she studied and majored in Sports Science and became a Sport Science Lecturer delivering courses across North and Central London. With a flare for programmes, Deandra volunteered with VSO to become Team Leader and managed a group of British and Khmer volunteers in Cambodia for 3 months. From this she went to work with vulnerable homeless young people, creating programmes and projects to increase their independent living skills. After a life altering injury, Deandra transitioned into the construction industry working as a Site Administrator with hope of progressing into Quality/Environmental industries. Deandra has joined The Skill Mill and is supervisor at our Croydon site.



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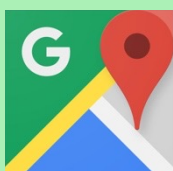
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