

# Second chances

## 'VOID' HOMES BROUGHT BACK INTO USE WHILE EX-PRISONERS HELPED INTO WORK

FORMER prison inmates have been involved in an innovative scheme to get them into work, while improving council-owned homes.

Bounceback, a community interest company, has been working with ex-offenders from Brixton prison, in Jebb Avenue, to spruce up "void" properties on the Myatts Field North Estate.

Void properties are empty homes that need to be brought

### By BEN MORGAN

back into use, with the council contracting out the work to private companies.

Bounceback has been working with Lambeth council contractor Rydon and subcontractor SDP Solutions, to carry out the works on the estate.

It has been hailed as a landmark project that offers the former prisoners a route back into training and site-based

work with on-the-job experience after their release, or while on licence from prison.

SDP Solutions director Mark Dixon said: "We see the voids as a perfect training ground for those who wish to break into our industry.

"It will provide real training in a real environment and Bounceback mirrors our belief that this type of on-site training is the way forward for providing the workforce of the future."

Bounceback has also been praised by Lambeth councillor Jack Hopkins, cabinet member for communities, who believes the project is a good way for the ex-offenders to go straight.

Cllr Hopkins said: "I support anything that can be done to help them get back on the straight and narrow.

"Getting a job is really important part of that and I'm really pleased that Bounceback has been able to employ them for the refurbishment work.

"It's also great news that Rydon and SDP Solution has agreed to work with them to get them a better outcome for those who want to go straight."

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**BOUNCING BACK:** Desi Mahusa; Howard James, Brian Campbell, Abdulbaari Mandary and supervisor Andy Cole

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**BRUSHING UP:** Desi Mahusa helps paint a house in Brixton

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