

# Good Grows



The Social mobility Pledge insight into the Sewell Group





**Rt Hon Justine Greening MP**  
Former Secretary of State for Education

Like for many people, when I was growing up in Rotherham, my parents lived where very close to where their parents lived. I grew up with my grandparents being just round the corner. But I always knew that it would be hard for me to stay where I was growing up if I was to reach out for the opportunities that I really wanted.

Yet people shouldn't have to move miles away from their families to get the opportunities they want. That's how it was for me, and worst of all that's still how it is today. This has to change.

We need a Britain where there is opportunity on your doorstep. If we're going to make the most of ourselves as a country, then we have to make sure every person and every place is fulfilling its potential and to make sure that social mobility and getting on in life isn't defined by geography.

We all know that talent is spread evenly across our country; but we've got to confront the challenge that opportunity isn't.

However there are some fantastic companies who are working hard to change this.

One of those is the Sewell Group. They are a company that provides construction, facilities and also retail services across Hull and further across the Yorkshire and The Humber region. It is a great example of a company that provides local job opportunities and boasts a first-class apprenticeship and training scheme that promises people a real chance to get on in life, and earn a living while they learn a skill, towards a career they can have for life.

It is a company that believes social mobility is a crucial part of its business strategy, not simply an extra tick-box measure. Its owner and managing director, Dr Paul Sewell OBE, is a star example of someone who is passionate about business-led solutions to this societal problem.

But the work of companies like Sewell Group in providing meaningful job opportunities is so much more important than just job numbers and statistics, Sewell Group is dedicated to recruiting the best talent and through fostering an excellent internal culture, encouraging those people to progress within the company.

This type of culture of progression is more important than ever, because when we encourage people to learn new skills and better themselves, we become one step closer to tackling this country's skills gap.

When we tackle the skills gap, we tackle the opportunity gap. By up-skilling a whole generation of young people we can upgrade social mobility too.

So we need to make a new offer to our young people – a universal offer on opportunity, so that everyone can reach their potential, regardless of their background or where they live.

Britain's economy might be the closest it has been to full employment since the early 1970s, with the rate of unemployment now at 4%, but companies are still finding it harder to hire the right workers.

Businesses are a huge part of the solution to social mobility problems across the UK, and (just as Sewell Group is doing in Hull, it is up to businesses to step up and provide local apprenticeship opportunities wherever they're based.

The Social Mobility Pledge represents over 2 million of these employees, and with companies like Sewell Group leading by example, we will continue to share social mobility best practice of businesses across the UK for the most effective programs and efforts to be scaled to benefit the many.

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**A multi-disciplined  
group of companies  
operating across  
the Yorkshire region.**

# 1. INSIGHT SUMMARY



Sewell Group is a multi-disciplined holding group of companies operating in the investments, developments, construction, facilities management, strategic estates and retail sectors throughout Hull, Leeds and across the Yorkshire region.

The Group has been named a Sunday Times Top 100 Employer of the Year four times in the past 10 years, including 2018. It is the only company in Hull to be named in the internationally recognised 100 Best Companies list and is ranked number one in Yorkshire. The Group is one of the top ten employers in the Humber Region, employing over 500 people. Sewell was also awarded the Innovation in Engagement special award for its efforts during the Hull City of Culture year.

Its managing director, Dr Paul Sewell OBE, has a management style inspired by his early football-playing days. He believes the best leadership approach is to get the best talent on your team and “give them a good listening to rather than a

good talking to.” It is Paul’s belief that nurturing talent and boosting social mobility is good business strategy, not simply a tick-box initiative that is most fundamental to this report. It is also this approach at Sewell Group that results in low turnover and higher progression of staff within the company.

Our analysis shows that Sewell Group is one of the UK’s leading businesses in proactively enabling social mobility. It is a company that has put boosting social mobility at the heart of its business strategy in a region that, according to the Government’s Social Mobility Index (SMI), performs particularly badly in relation to working life outcomes. Nearly a quarter of local authorities in Yorkshire and The Humber region rank in the worst-performing 10 per cent of authorities for this life stage – with Kingston upon Hull, where Sewell Group is located, performing the most poorly. In part this is due to much lower rates of home ownership compared with the rest of the region. Kingston upon Hull East features in the bottom fifth in three of the four SMI measures.



The company has a proven and successful approach on delivering social mobility. It recognises that the development of its employees is pivotal to its success. All of the managers and senior directors within the company's retail arm, Sewell Retail, entered the company as junior employees. Furthermore, all four directors of the companies within the Sewell Estates arm of the Group advanced and progressed within the company.

Sewell Group is fuelled by its values and culture that encourage positive behaviours throughout the company and ensure the Group functions as a 'work family'. These values include professionalism in a team-player environment that has a customer focus, while always doing the right thing; and with high importance in the backdrop of Sewell Group's increasing success, remaining humble is a priority for the Group.

It is important to note that while Sewell Group's programmes have been beneficial to their employees, ensuring that opportunities are

spread evenly and potential can be realised, they also have strong benefits for the business, increasing workforce loyalty and creating a dynamic cohort of engaged younger employees with fresh ideas and different ways of boosting results.

Sewell Group is a firm believer in the power of apprenticeships and skills training within its Estates Group and throughout its construction and facilities companies. A key benefit of companies like Sewell Group leading the way in apprenticeships and skills is the wider positive impact on the local economy.

It is a fact that the United Kingdom is facing a skills gap. According to recent findings, three-quarters (79%) of businesses expect to increase the number of higher-skilled roles in the coming years, yet two-thirds (66%) of the same businesses fear that there will be a lack of sufficiently skilled people to fill vacancies, according to current observed trends.







Up-skilling the next generation and the future workforce is key to securing better social mobility across the United Kingdom and Sewell Group is already a leader in this area. The forward-thinking business strategy of employing apprentices and training them to advance and be leaders is ingrained in the business and is a testament to the positive company culture and values that drive Sewell Group.

It's important to stress that it is businesses across the country, large and small, that are the key part of the solution to boosting social mobility in the UK. These businesses all have the potential to have a transformative effect in boosting social mobility and addressing the skills gap. If the solutions to social mobility pioneered

by Pledge companies like Sewell Group were properly scaled, it could benefit many of the over 27 million people employed in the private sector as a whole, across many of the 5.7 million private sector businesses in the UK, from large corporations to SMEs.

Sewell Group is living proof that a business can deliver world-class services for customers and create value by understanding the importance of social mobility. It has a proud record of showing how businesses create value for both themselves, their employees and the local communities they operate in. As this report will demonstrate, there is clear potential for industry-wide learnings from Sewell Group's leadership in boosting social mobility.





## 2. THE STORY OF SEWELL GROUP

The Sewell Construction Company dates back to 1876 when it was founded by Fred Sewell. The company has grown over the years from the original construction business to now having two divisions: Estates and Retail.

Sewell Estates is made up of investments, construction and facilities management; each providing a range of services to help customers across the Yorkshire region.

Sewell Retail operates Sewell on the Go, which serves four million customers every year across its thirteen fuel and convenience stores across Hull and East Yorkshire. It is a brand that

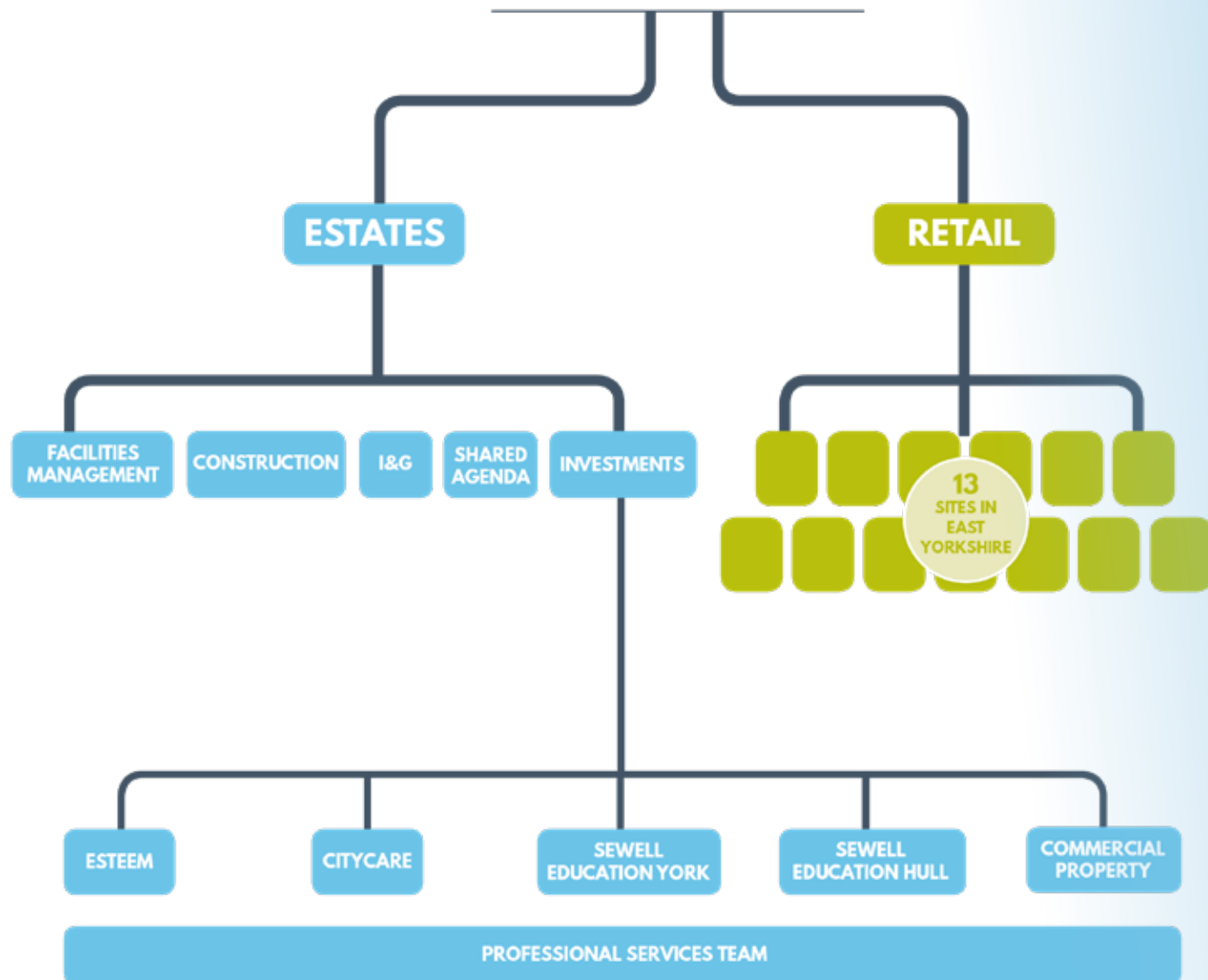
has become well recognised in the local area throughout the past decades.

Across both divisions of its business and their constituent companies, Sewell Group deploys its commitment to social mobility, recognising it is in a race for talent to deliver to the highest standards to its customers.

It understands that to ensure that these services are delivered, it all starts with its own people and employees internally, and it is there, at the very start of that process that Sewell Group's commitment to social mobility begins.







## 2.1 SEWELL ESTATES

### 2.1.1 Sewell Construction

Sewell Construction delivers a host of construction projects, primarily across the Yorkshire & North Lincolnshire region. Sewell Construction has been recognised as a Sunday Times' 'Best Company to Work For' business, and the company continually strives to be a great place to work, so that it can be a great company to do business with.

Sewell Construction and indeed the wider Sewell Group is committed to the Yorkshire region and local communities and aims to leave a legacy through economic, social and community impact.

### 2.1.2 Sewell Facilities

Sewell Facilities Management provides general maintenance and lifecycle planning, to preventative programmes of work and statutory compliance.

The company sets itself an exceptionally high standard of customer service, for example committing to a target of ensuring that help is only ever a maximum of 30 minutes away. Those high standards require commitment from staff to go above and beyond for customers, reinforcing the need for an engaged and committed workforce.

### 2.1.3 Illingworth & Gregory

Illingworth & Gregory was established in 1972 and over the decades has grown and developed into a leading Regional Principle Building Contractor.

### 2.1.4 Sewell Investments

Sewell Investments aims to unlock opportunities that contribute to the development of the Yorkshire region.

It has a successful record of development throughout its portfolio, which it credits to its principal values of partnership, trust and transparency to identify innovative solutions.

It aims to invest, develop and manage facilities throughout their lifetime of development. It aims to be an investment company that is in it for the long haul, not just at the beginning.

### 2.1.5 Shared Agenda

Shared Agenda provides estates development solutions and strategy to a range of bodies including the NHS, local authorities, emergency services, and private organisations.

They provide advice, investment, development and estate management services to unlock the aspirations of their clients and ensure that estates are being fully utilised.



## 2.2 SEWELL RETAIL

### 2.2.1 Sewell on the Go

Sewell on the Go operates over thirteen retail stores across the Hull area and Yorkshire region. In 2016 Sewell on the Go was named Forecourt Trader of the Year, picking up 14 awards overall and recognising the company's longstanding commitment to community engagement and customer service.

In 1988 Sewell built its first forecourt in Sutton - the first 24 hour service station in the region. Between 1997 and 2002, five more service stations were acquired by the company in South Cave, Beverley, Maybury, Southcoates and Ferriby.

In 2007 and 2008, six more stations were added to Sewell's portfolio, in Willerby, Wytonbar, Holderness, Pocklington, Cottingham and Chanterlands. Last year, in 2018, Sewell acquired its thirteenth retail store in Dunswell.







# 3. SOCIAL MOBILITY INSIGHT AT SEWELL GROUP

Sewell Group understands that social mobility is integral to, not an addition to, a successful growing business.

What is clear is that Sewell Group knows that the best way to grow its business is by having good people - and that is the story of social mobility at Sewell Group - a race for talent and a race to the top. As well as an open approach to recruitment, it is a place where continuous improvement and learning is encouraged, and where people can learn new skills, develop and progress.

Sewell Group's approach to continual professional development for its people is designed to best suit the learning and growth

needs of staff at every level. The company invested more than £465,000 delivering over 2,060 days of training for its people in 2017, with 332 different people trained through in-house talent development sessions.

It was clear from our visit that for Sewell a great business starts with its people and the best social mobility story is the one that means the customer is getting the best service from the best possible employee.

From one of the best inductions available, to a career path with high potential, Sewell Group is a national leader in progression and social mobility.





# 3.1 TALENT DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

As part of Sewell Group's strong commitment to the progression and development of its people, it has a comprehensive talent development pipeline to ensure all of its employees benefit from the best training and mentoring opportunities.

The Talent Development Pipeline comprises four key components: leadership challenge, business bootcamp, talent growth and high potential.

## 3.1.1 Leadership Challenge

The Leadership Challenge is a year-long programme where employees and new joiners have the opportunity to tackle real life business challenges and improve network development within the company and across the wider sector.

## 3.1.2 Business Bootcamp

The Business Bootcamp is a week-long management and development programme that looks at technical hardware training and management network development.

## 3.1.3 Talent Growth

The Talent Growth scheme is a monthly personal development programme covering leadership, engagement, people and personal improvement for all employees within the company.

## 3.1.4 High Potential

The High Potential scheme is a learner based timeline for managers within the company looking to develop further and progress to senior management or director positions within both the retail or estates divisions of the company and their respective subsidiaries.





## 3.2 INCENTIVE-BASED EMPLOYMENT

At the heart of Sewell Group's understanding of meaningful and valued employment is understanding those little extra things that can make people happier.

This is why Sewell Group offers employees a package that goes beyond just pay, that includes:

- Auto enrolment pension
- Helpline support
- Celebration of life milestones
- Sewell on the Go retail discounts
- Free Hull gym
- Bike 2 work scheme
- Take home IT
- Company car schemes







## 3.3 INVESTING IN SKILLS: TRAINEESHIPS & APPRENTICESHIPS

Sewell Group recognises that up-skilling the workforce is an important part of its business strategy.

Sewell Group sees its training schemes, traineeships and apprenticeships as an important part of encouraging the growth and development of its employees and laying the key foundations for the future growth of the business.

Many of their programmes could be adopted and scaled across not only the construction and retail sector, but right across the private sector and for growing organisations of all shapes and sizes.

### 3.3.1 Traineeships

Sewell Group has rolled out traineeships to help young people gain work experience and improve their essential skills so they can take their first steps on the career ladder.

In doing this, Sewell on the Go, the company's

retail arm, has partnered with local East Riding College to organise regular work experience placements.

The courses are aimed at people between the ages 16 and 23 who are keen to enter the workplace and build their experience, helping them to benefit from additional support and mentoring mechanisms, such as assistance with interview techniques and CV writing.

The traineeships typically last 20 weeks or less and are structured around work experience, with attendance at the College helping with the learning of key work and academic skills, such as improving essential English and Mathematics skills, and tasters in specific vocational areas of interest.

This provides a great direct opportunity for young people to learn employability skills such as communication, team work and problem solving from the hands-on work experience, while benefiting from academic studies, preparing them for the world of work.







### 3.3.2 Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships offered by Sewell Group are focused on delivering quality training to ensure every individual can fulfil their potential.

The company's apprenticeships are structured to give individuals an opportunity to experience a broad range of tasks across the industry and across different sites within the business, alongside its aforementioned talent pipeline that ensures the highest standards of employee development, learning and progression; ranging from its business bootcamp, leadership challenge, talent growth and high potential schemes.

The apprentices are based primarily in Sewell Group's headquarters and throughout its office locations across the Humber, while alongside this, studying at college or at one of their training providers.

While apprentices take part in work from day one, they also take part in Sewell Group's development programmes with additional flexibility to rotate around the business and find out what their passion is if their primary apprenticeship placement doesn't work out as planned. This ensures both an effective and holistic approach to learning new skills, acquiring meaningful workplace experiences and training to help apprentices develop as much as possible and fulfil their potential - all while earning.

Sewell Group understands that alongside the fundamentals of learning and training, support and mentoring is a crucial way to help individuals through their journey and to fulfil their potential. That is why all of their apprentices are equipped with a strong network in place to support each of them through their development on the apprenticeship programmes.







## 3.4 INVESTING IN SEWELL GROUP'S PEOPLE

### 3.4.1 Values

Sewell Group puts a lot of its success down to its culture. Paul Sewell makes clear it is a priority to ensure the organisation has the right brain "software" regarding its culture, relationships, atmosphere, morale and energy - to balance and match the necessary "hardware" of the structure, systems and processes of the business.

Owner Paul Sewell believes 'culture eats strategy for breakfast', and insists that's why the company is protective of its culture. The culture is maintained and thrives with a leadership style that allows autonomy and everyone across the business to have responsibility.

Ultimately it is talent, attitude and sharing these core values that are the only parameters for success at Sewell. Indeed, this all culminates in what Paul describes as ensuring a 'work family' ethos is integral to both the company's business strategy and its brand.

Progression is a key part of the company's culture. This helps get the best out of people in a secure supportive environment and makes promotion from within 'more of a probability than a possibility,' and thus in turn protects and enhances the culture in a virtuous circle.

### 3.4.2 Performance & Recognition

A large part of Sewell's culture and management style is to ensure that hard work is recognised and rewarded. This is why the company holds an Annual Convention & Star Awards that is held every January for one week - an opportunity for the Group's people to be recognised and take pride in their achievements over the past year.

Sewell Group ensures it upholds a performance-based culture with a vitality curve management style, a competition-driven approach that ensures a motivated workforce. Alongside this, team briefings are open and honest with full questions and answer interactions.







## 3.5 INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY

As well as commitment to its own people, Sewell Group continues to maintain commitment to its local communities. 2017 saw the business donate more than £500,000 to community causes across the Yorkshire and The Humber region.

This includes playing a leading role in Hull UK City of Culture 2017, investing a six figure sum in the project and committing to a unique year of engagement for its staff.

Sewell Group previously invested £100,000 in converting an existing warehouse unit at its Hull business park to create a new boxing and fitness centre, working with well-known professional boxer Tommy Coyle and young people in East Hull. The business continues to provide this free facility for Under-17s to encourage them to lead healthier lifestyles.

The Group also has a strong partnership with the charity Mencap, providing paid employment opportunities to young people with a learning disability in schools and offices across the city. As

part of this partnership with Mencap a number of people have participated in paid employment within Sewell Group.

A big commitment of the Sewell Group to local communities is demonstrated in the Tommy Coyle Academy. The Tommy Coyle Academy was set up on the Sewell Group campus with Commonwealth Lightweight champion boxer Tommy Coyle to help not only Sewell Group's own staff keep fit, but this was to be free to any young person in Hull under 17 years. It is run in partnership with local business and the NHS.

### 3.5.1 Why this is important

Yorkshire and The Humber performs particularly badly in relation to working lives outcomes. Nearly a quarter of local authorities in this region rank in the worst-performing 10 per cent of authorities for this life stage – with Richmondshire and Kingston upon Hull performing the most poorly, in part due to much lower rates of home ownership compared with the rest of the region.







Yorkshire and The Humber has the third joint highest percentage of jobs which are paid less than the real living wage at 26 per cent, with only York, Sheffield, Leeds and Calderdale having rates of less than 25 per cent. The region has lower than average rates of residents in top jobs and median weekly salaries are also relatively low. There is a need for a broader range of better-quality entry-level jobs and progression routes in the towns and cities throughout the region.

Sewell Group is located specifically in Kingston upon Hull East. Kingston upon Hull East is

identified in the bottom fifth of areas across England in terms of overall social mobility outcomes, ranking 464th out of 533. The Social Mobility Index ranking takes into account social mobility outcomes by life stage, including: early years, school, youth and adult.

Kingston upon Hull East is ranked as the following for each life stage: 478th for adults, 487th for youth, 503rd for school, and 61st for early years. This means that for three of the four measures, Kingston upon Hull East ranks extremely poorly.







# 4. OUTCOMES AND LEARNINGS

With the skills gap being one of the key impending barriers to better social mobility, Sewell Group, under the leadership of Paul Sewell, has recognised that encouraging the development of skills is crucial for preparing the next generation for work and also to growing a successful business.

In the words of Paul Sewell:

“This is not about CSR, this is about winning the war for talent.”

That’s why Sewell Group puts the development and progression of its people at the heart of everything it does.

Sewell Group has found that apprenticeships and traineeships are vitally important in

helping young people get experience in the workplace, learning new skills, while earning and contributing to their workplace.

Not only do they have internal benefits to the company, but they increase the breadth and diversity of skills in the economy, as well as creating opportunities for millions of people across the country every year.

Apprenticeships and training opportunities increase employment prospects, productivity of workers, and increase monetary returns for individuals over their working lives.

But nothing speaks louder for the outcomes of social mobility and business strategy than looking at impact on people.





# CASE STUDY : ROB'S STORY

Rob Cawkwell grew up on a council estate in East Hull, attended a regular comprehensive school and, to his own admission, didn't really enjoy his school days very much.

Never one to shy away from going out to work, he had a paper round from age 13 to 16 and stacked shelves at his local Co-Op for two years during his A-Levels, which he completed when he was 18.

Rob had always aspired to follow his father's footsteps into the world of construction. But his father tried to put him off after experiencing the 'boom or bust' era of the building trade and the challenge of a recession.

Undeterred, Rob took a job as a Trainee Quantity Surveyor at another local specialist joinery firm aged 18 before applying for the same role at Sewell Construction 18 months later.

His Sewell career began in January 1990, following a successful interview with current Chairman Paul Sewell and former Surveying Director Graham Atkins.

As well as 'training on the job', Rob was supported by Sewell to complete industry qualifications, including a Higher National

Certificate in Building Studies and a degree in Quantity Surveying at Nottingham Trent University, which he passed in 1996, aged 26. In the same year that he gained his degree, Rob also passed his Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) professional final exams first time, becoming one of only 15% of those who passed nationally that year.

Rob's career journey has been a varied one, starting with measuring the foundations on a sheltered housing scheme in West Hull when he first joined the business, to leading the pre-construction team through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme - the largest education regeneration programme Hull has ever seen.

Financial close on three of the schools was reached on the same day, totalling £57 million – the biggest financial contract the business has ever signed.

In 1998, Rob also worked on Victoria Dock Primary School, built by Sewell and the first PFI primary school in the UK, taking care of construction costings and the lifecycle model of the school. Three extensions have since been built by Sewell at the school and Rob was involved in each of them.



2002 saw Rob involved in Sewell building Age Concern's Hull base - the UK's first older person's healthy living centre – followed by the transformation of East Hull's Preston Road Village Centre and later the Local Improvement Finance Trust (Lift) programme, which saw the creation of brand new, state-of-the-art health centres across Hull.

Having taken on these high profile projects in a Senior Quantity Surveyor's role, Rob was appointed as Commercial Director in 2006. He spent a couple of years seconded to Citycare, working alongside Managing Director Jo Barnes as she was recruited and inducted into the business, and helping to build it into the planning and estates strategy specialist business it is today, as part of the Sewell Group.

Appointed to Sewell Construction Managing Director in April 2017, Rob is now a shareholder

in our business and heads up our more than 90-strong Sewell Construction team working Yorkshire-wide, now with offices in Hull, Leeds and Huddersfield.

In Rob's words: "I'm a lad from a council estate. I went to a normal school and I wasn't brilliant at that.

"I have got to where I am through hard work and maximising on opportunities. When I've seen the business take a direction, I have always put my hand up and said 'I'll have a go at that'."

Now, 29 years after joining Sewell, Rob is a valued member of our Senior Leadership Team and a shining example of how social background or education is no barrier to progression within our business.



# CASE STUDY : KATHERINE'S STORY



Katherine became seriously ill as a child, contracting Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) aged seven. She spent weeks on life support and months in hospital. When she woke she had to learn to walk again and was left with migraine headaches which persist to this day.

She missed much early schooling and this not only affected her education but her ability to make friends and develop wider social skills.

There are no other real long lasting issues other than the “usual things associated with an acquired brain injury” which she never specifies or talks about.

Aged nine her mother left home, leaving her, her father and Emma, her seven year old sister behind. Her father struggled as he had no domestic skills whatsoever.

There were other kids at school with a single parent but none where it was a father, but he got by with the help of his parents.

At school she developed an aspiration to work with disabled children since she was sent to a local Horse riding school for the disabled as part of her recovery and became a volunteer here for many years after.

She went to college to study childcare and hence needed a part time job to help with the finances. This job was with her local Sewell Convenience store working evenings and weekends stacking shelves etc, and it was here she met her “work family”, as it is called it at Sewell.

Store Manager Julie took her under her wing and into the office teaching her the admin tasks to run the store so well that when she was moved to run a newly acquired outlet Katherine became the youngest Manager, aged 19.

Then came a big life decision as the outlet was sold and the new owners wanted her to stay on to run it for them, enabling her to stay in familiar surrounding with the people she knew and who were obviously important in her developing confidence.

She was also now ready to go to university to follow her dream of a career in Childcare and this was becoming an agonising conundrum.

Sewell Group Managing Director Dennis visited her personally to wish her well, help with any transition issues for her, but also to say that the company valued her and wanted her to stay if that could possibly suit her.

“It was all I needed to hear” she says “somebody really wanted me.”

She moved to a bigger petrol forecourt outlet as assistant manager but soon had the top job herself but with close guidance from a more experienced manager, Lynne, who worked alongside her. Katherine wasn't too impressed with this at first as she wanted to run it herself, but it turned out to be a good decision because Lynne became her mentor - encouraging her to fulfil her dream of getting a university degree and putting all the work arrangements in place to allow her to do this part-time.

This was not to be in Childcare however, but Business. Another blow came when both Lynne and Julie got seriously ill and died and Sewell Retail MD Patrick Sewell recognised the void that there would be and stepped in to try to mitigate any loss.

He gave her one of the larger Trunk Road sites to run and then also an adjacent one down the road, but then mentioned an overall sales role in the Retail Group.

Katherine was hesitant because although it sounded great, it was a newly created role and if it didn't work out, she may have struggled to pay her bills as she lived independently.

She need not have worried because with hard work, talent and support she made a huge success of it and was appointed to the Board as Sales Director at 32 and then became a Shareholder at the tender age of 33.

Encouraged by one of the company's external mentorship programmes (with Rugby League legend and Great Britain captain Jamie Peacock) Katherine has become a mentor herself to children in care, and is taking on the medical profession to get to the bottom of her migraine problem.

Her sister Emma followed Katherine into the company and she is now an area manager with a career of her own, and two small children. She married co-worker Ashik who now has a hand car wash business of his own, with Sewell's blessing and support, and works with Sewell at the company's outlets.

# CASE STUDY : KATIE'S STORY

Katie had been made redundant from a construction company that went into administration and had already found a new job when she received a call for an interview at Sewell Group.

Initially she turned the interview down because she had already started training for her new role. However knowing the role with Sewell was much closer to what she wanted to do she quit the job and called back asking if she could still have the interview. Luckily Sewell agreed and she got the job.

Katie started her role within Sewell Facilities Management (FM) in 2009 at 19 years old as a helpdesk operator. Her first role involved processing customer calls and arranging re-active and planned tasks across our full estate.

In 2010 she took part in the company's Leadership Challenge which helped to build her confidence in dealing with people and taught her a lot more about the Sewell business as a whole. At the end of this year long development programme, the teams of two were asked to come up with a 'make a difference' challenge, and as the name implies related to proposing a change that teams thought would benefit the company.

Katie and another colleague identified the need to provide training for first line management researched different types of programmes, eventually developing Business Bootcamp which debuted as a group incentive in 2012. Since then the business has run six bootcamps in total, with the programme becoming a key part of the business' internal training programme alongside Leadership Challenge.

After three years at Sewell, the number of contracts increased significantly and the business recruited two new helpdesk operators, giving Katie the opportunity to transition into a lead role on the helpdesk.

During this time Katie developed the team and created new ways of working. As the contracts continued to increase the business recruited two more helpdesk operators taking the team up to a total of 5.

In 2017, the team was re-branded as the 'Customer Care Team' and Katie helped lead a project to review all the processes to ensure they were delivering on customer expectations both internal and external. As part of this the team delivered Customer Care team roadshows which meant that they interacted with our customers

face to face and the whole team built solid relationships with clients rather than just over the telephone.

During her time as Customer Care Team Lead Katie completed her ILM in Leadership and Management.

Whilst in her role leading the Customer Care Team, Katie worked with a colleague to implement and develop the CAFM system which involved stepping back from day to day business for two months to ensure the system was implemented across the business correctly.

The cost of the system and developments were around £500k. Following this 'project egg' in 2013 she has continued to work to develop the system, including recently implementing a new version of our mobile application.

In 2016, Katie found out she was expecting a baby and just three months into her pregnancy found herself moving into a new house and preparing for the arrival of her baby alone.

In July 2017 Katie's baby arrived, meaning Katie took six months away from the business, returning to work four days a week in Jan 2018



and then increasing back up to full time, mid-2018. Taking back the reins leading the Customer Care Team.

However, despite juggling life as a single mum and her full-time role Katie's motivation and determination to progress saw her express an interest in doing something different. Keen to nurture this desire, the business helped her move away from her Customer Care Team Leader role in January 2019 and into to a Facilities Manager role.

Katie is currently working towards IWFM and also other role specific courses such as IOSH. She has her own sites that she is responsible for managing, including: Sewell on the GO, CHCP and Sewell Investment clients.



# CASE STUDY : GLEN'S STORY

Glen began his Sewell Group journey as an apprentice bricklayer at the age of 16 in September 1982, earning a wage of £36.40 per week.

His apprenticeship came at a time when Sewell was based in Sutton on a much smaller scale and his first site was at Chiltern Street School Hull. Glen completed his City and Guilds apprenticeship qualification over three years and spent another four years studying ending with a Higher National Certificate (HNC), all while gaining practical experience on the job.

1988 saw Glen move into the office to train and work as an Estimating Assistant for Sewell, initially setting targets and measuring bonuses. The move to Geneva Way in East Hull came in 1992 and Glen's career progression continued when he was appointed as Chief Estimator in 1994.

But his lifelong passion for Information Technology (IT) never wavered and, after 17 years in estimating, the opportunity to move into IT for the business in 2005 saw him take on the IT Manager's role when a dedicated resource was set up.

Since 2010, Glen and his team have created an IT system and solutions to various technology challenges, which are bespoke to the business, saving money, time and resources.

Forward-thinking has seen Glen and his team create innovative IT solutions to ensure the IT infrastructure runs smoothly and meets the needs of the almost 500-strong team, including creating a single box which provides connectivity to the internet and internal system on site instantly.

Glen is super inquisitive and, along with his team, strives to find solutions to challenges on a daily basis. His naturally inquisitive nature saw him deconstruct and reassemble toys as a child, and he has always loved making things, progressing to 3D printing and the design element of that, always searching for the 'why' and 'how'.

A key example of this has had a positive financial impact on the business, as Glen was instrumental in looking into and securing Research and Development (R&D) Tax Credits for Sewell.

The Research and Development (R&D) tax incentive is a valuable government tax initiative. R&D Tax credits are not there as a scheme or



grant, but a tax law which HMRC introduced in April 2000, designed to encourage and reward UK limited companies for investing in innovation. Research and Development Tax Credits claims rates are the equivalent of up to 33p for every £1 spent on qualifying expenditure and companies which invest money into developing new products, services, processes or enhancing existing ones, are eligible for a cash payment or reduction of corporation tax, or increased taxable losses.

Glen is now Head of Technology, a valued member of the Senior Leadership Team and Sewell's longest-serving member of staff, marking a 37-year career with Sewell to date.

He has grown the team from a one man band to heading up a team of four, each with their own responsibilities within the business' Tech Team, proving there is no barrier to starting work at 16 and progressing to where he is today.



# CASE STUDY : MARTIN'S STORY



Martin Stead joined Sewell in 1993, aged 16, on a Management Trainee Programme. He spent his first 18 months on a construction site and was given one of 39 bungalows to oversee alongside his daily tasks.

After 26 years at the company, Martin benefitted first-hand from Sewell Group's culture of training, progression and development and is now Managing Director of Sewell Facilities Management.

Under Martin's leadership, Sewell Facilities Management has grown to over 100 staff looking after more than 4,500 building tenants. He credits Sewell Group for an amazing array

of opportunities throughout his career, and even temporarily left to travel the world before returning to the Facilities Management division in 2007.

He said: "Even at that young age I had responsibility. It was about being accountable and, inevitably, you sink or swim. I didn't think I would get to this point in my career as quickly as I have."

"But I knew if I got stuck in, I could go somewhere at Sewell. Rewards are there for hard workers, but you've got to be flexible and patient."





# CASE STUDY : TOMMY'S STORY



This is not about social mobility through employment but through guidance, mentoring, sponsorship and partnership - whilst the fiercely independent, uncontrollable individual does his own thing.

On June 1 2019 Commonwealth champion Tommy Coyle will fight in the home of boxing Madison Square Garden, New York City to fulfil a lifelong ambition.

He does so as a businessman who runs a Corporate Health & Wellbeing Business contracting with businesses such as Siemens UK, the owner of a local restaurant and bar, two gyms and a stake in his family's fruit & veg operation.

He is a local icon of giving back to his community with his "No Knives" citizenship programmes in schools and the "Box Clever" bus, which will travel around the Hull estates aided by the Humberside Police Crime Commissioner.

Yet in his own words, he could, and probably should have been in jail.

A tough and somewhat abusive upbringing led him into not going to school much and replacing it with petty crime then sport - football then boxing at local Hull amateur boys' clubs.

Tommy was already successful and the darling of Sky Sports with his combative style and epic fights when he approached Paul to see if he knew of anywhere he could set up his second gym in his native east Hull.

Paul saw more than a boxer, but a world class communicator and told him so. They also shared an upbringing in the fruit trade so they hit it off straight away and within six weeks of meeting, the Tommy Coyle Academy was set up on the Sewell Group campus. This was to be free to any young person in Hull under 17 years in partnership with local business and the NHS.

It was launched live on Sky Sports News with World Champions present.

The Tommy Coyle Academy not only encourages staff to get fit, but has already spawned a new budding Tommy in the shape of Lewis Sylvester, who has also avoided a life of crime and has now turned professional, and a female champion, to follow Barbara Butterick the first ever female boxing world champion who comes from Hull.

It has given hundreds of young people something to do and provided a vehicle to get fitter and avoid lifestyle problems for many more in the community.

His adopted "Dad" (as Tommy calls Paul) has gone very grey in trying to mentor and support this serial entrepreneur but the brand association with Sewell has been beneficial to both parties and they see a strong future together.

The Social Mobility Pledge is documenting Tommy's own Social Mobility journey to Madison Square Garden.



## 5. POLICY FOCUS AND NEXT STEPS

For Sewell Group improving social mobility is not just about doing the right thing, it's about good business sense too.

Businesses across the UK often tell us about the difficulty in attracting and retaining the talented people they need to grow and succeed.

A business strategy like that adopted by Sewell Group delivers a committed and engaged workforce, bringing fresh perspectives and solutions for clients. That has helped build a team that has driven Sewell Group's success, a team that is an asset when dealing with customers and driving forward the growth of the company.

There is a risk that many SMEs see boosting social mobility and being a good employer as a cost, but Sewell Group has proved time after time that it is an investment in success. By approaching social mobility not as a one off initiative or a CSR exercise, but instead as winning the war for talent, Sewell Group has been able to use it to develop their competitive edge, boost their customer service and improve their smart decision making throughout the business.

We call our insight "Good Grows" - social mobility and being a good employer are not an exercise in themselves, but a clear and deliberate growth strategy for business.







Based on our work with Sewell Group, our 'Good Grows' insight is one that can apply to every company, no matter their size, turning social mobility from CSR into a proven strategy for business growth.

Allowing talented young people to contribute to their full potential, encouraging a dynamic workforce, investing in employees, providing opportunity to the local community and delivering on an engaging business culture are a recipe for both business growth - and boosting social mobility.

There is exciting potential for the key insights from Sewell Group's innovation in putting social mobility at the heart of their business to be applied across the SME sector and economy as a whole:

**Regional:** Highlighting the positive impact on Hull of Sewell Group's focus on social mobility and the company's leadership as a key regional employer.

**SMEs:** The potential for a unique framework based on the Sewell approach to encourage SMEs to adopt this proven approach to boosting social mobility and business growth.





# Good Grows

