

## Cash boost for boatbuilding firm

An engineering firm hopes to build more boats for the aquaculture industry after receiving a welcome funding boost.

Malakoff Limited, which has been building boats for over a century, has been given the nod for a £120,000 grant from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) to pay for staff training. It follows a contribution of over £200,000 from the organisation last year.

The company's project manager Ryan Stevenson hailed the "very generous" support from HIE, which will help strengthen the capabilities of the firm's new boatbuilding warehouse at Greenhead base on the outskirts of Lerwick.

"A big part of this is to try and A: stop work leaving Shetland and B: try to attract more work into Shetland," said Mr Stevenson.

The warehouse at Greenhead opened in the summer of last year to provide Malakoff with space to build bigger boats than it could at its workshop at North Ness, Lerwick.

HIE gave £214,486 towards the cost of modifications, equipment and training. Six new jobs have been created.

At over 80,000 square feet, the new site allows three boats to be worked on at the same time.



Ryan Stevenson of Malakoff and HIE's Katrina Wiseman with the new workboat at Malakoff's Greenhead premises in Lerwick. Photo: Ben Mullay courtesy of HIE

So far, two have been completed – a 12-metre ferry for Calmac (finished in just 40 days), now serving the island of Kerrera on the west coast of Scotland, and an eight-metre aluminium landing craft for

an estate owner on the west coast, too.

Two 14-metre catamarans for Cooke Aquaculture are under construction.

Such products mark a change

in direction from the usual type of model built by the firm, part of the Voe range, which are less than seven metres long. Hundreds of them have been built by Malakoff over the years. Because they are so small, they are easy to send to customers from far and wide.

The firm is setting its sights on securing more contracts with salmon farming companies.

"These catamaran workboats are big enough that we could potentially sell them outside of Shetland," said Mr Stevenson. "Obviously you can't be exporting these boats to other continents but around the North Sea they're quite exportable."

He added: "There's obviously a lot of competition in the market so we need to make sure we have got a good boat-building facility here to compete with that but our main aims are to try to capture some of the aquaculture and fishing boatbuilding jobs that have been going on."

HIE's head of business growth in Shetland Katrina Wiseman said: "Investing in training and development at Malakoff will ensure there is a highly skilled, engaged and productive workforce which is essential to the growth of the business."

## Salmon company reacts over 'blood water' issue

A salmon farming company has rejected findings that a small volume of untreated "blood water" was allowed to flow into Mid Yell Voe.

Cooke Aquaculture's processing factory at Mid Yell was inspected by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Sepa) last summer.

But the company has criticised the resulting report, which flagged up concerns that "untreated overflow from blood water tanks" was entering the sea. Fish which come into contact with blood water may contract a disease.

Cooke's head of PR Joel Richardson said: "Cooke Aquaculture Scotland has never discharged untreated wastewater from its Mid Yell packing facility and the company has requested that [Sepa] correct errors in their report noting otherwise."

Details of Sepa's inspection came to light after campaigner Don Staniford sent Freedom of Information requests to the environmental watchdog.

Sepa officer Kevin Osborn visited the Mid Yell site in August last year after a complaint was submitted citing odour and pollution.

Mr Osborn wrote: "It was evident at the time of inspection that the plant was not operating properly and was producing an 'offensive' odour... It was also evident that small amounts of effluent from the blood water storage tanks was discharging directly to Mid Yell Voe, without treatment, via what were assumed overflow pipes."

Cooke was told to improve its blood water treatment facility – which it did soon after the inspection.

Reacting to Sepa's findings, Mr Staniford said: "Discharging untreated blood water is a recipe for disaster, constitutes a significant disease risk and represents a breach of the industry's code of practice."

He called for Cooke to be expelled from the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation.

However, Mr Richardson said: "The company corrected the odour issue immediately in August. Among those measures, the manhole was heightened to ensure no future leakage of any materials. Cooke also implemented a regular filter cleaning schedule and added lids to their holding tanks, which aid in containing odours."

Sepa chief officer Anne Anderson confirmed "immediate actions" were taken and work continues "to ensure the site is compliant with all regulations and licences."

## Chances are available for new careers in early learning sector

In early learning and childcare, there are plenty of jobs available and lots of opportunities to get on the job training and qualifications.

The qualifications you need vary depending on the different roles from support worker to manager. Here are some examples of the careers up for grabs in the ELC sector:

**Support worker** – as a support worker you'll spend your day looking after small children – playing, caring for them, and making sure they are learning lots. This is an "entry level" role and it's a great way to get started in early learning and childcare and train while you work.

**Practitioner** – As an early learning and childcare practitioner you'll be responsible for meeting the care, support and learning needs of the children you look after. It will be your job to make sure the children are all constantly developing and learning – you'll often work with other practitioners and families to do this. Most school leavers will find that training to be a practitioner is right for them.

**Manager** – As a manager (or lead practitioner) you'll be tasked with the overall development, management and quality of the childcare provided. It will be your job to lead a group of staff, budgets, planning, and the bigger decision making in the nursery. You'll also keep a close eye on each child's development and will take the lead on positive and caring relationships with each child and their family.

With a range of roles and qualifications available, you can build your career according to the way you like to learn. You can do work-based qualifications, or attend college or university. Either way, you get lots of hands-on practice as part of your training.

You might start as an early learning and childcare support worker, progress to a practitioner and become a manager later down the line. There are lots of opportunities for progression.

If you know someone looking for a job that's rewarding, fun and has the potential to change lives, then early learning and childcare could be a great career for them.

• Visit [www.childcarecareersscotland.scot](http://www.childcarecareersscotland.scot) to find out more about a career in Early Learning and Childcare.

### CASE STUDY

Craig MacIntyre, 17, from Kilmore, Oban.

After leaving school, Craig took up an apprenticeship at the Stramash Outdoor Nursery. Throughout his training, Craig will undertake written and practical assessments, which will ultimately lead to an SVQ3 Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF Level 7.

Craig's mum, Katy is a child-minder and so Craig has grown up with young children at home, who he always enjoyed spending time with. His mum's influence coupled with his little brother attending the outdoor nursery, are what inspired Craig to go for the apprenticeship.

With outdoor play being the focus of Craig's nursery, he can be creative in his work and embrace the adventurous side of play, as he describes: "Our nursery is full of all sorts for the children to play with, for example, we have baskets and containers full of stones, shells, ribbons and seeds that we've collected. The nursery site is amongst the trees so there are lots of leaves, twigs and branches too."

"We encourage the children to freely develop their ideas with everything we have here and if they have an idea of something they want to create, we try as much as we can to help them to do it. Recently they wanted an obstacle course for the nursery, so we've created one with their help, using logs, tyres, rope and other pieces – they love it!"

"Being an outdoor nursery, we're usually playing outside for most of the day and that's what I love most about my job, only on the wettest and windiest days do we use the huts for some shelter. I think it makes a huge difference in a time when technology is being used more and more in education – with no electricity, wifi or running water, the children are challenged to learn how to make things with little help."

"I love seeing it when the kids learn something new or master something they've been trying to do for a while, like climb that little bit higher in the tree. It's also really rewarding when the children see me outside of work and they run over to talk to me."

"If I was to say one thing to somebody considering a career in early learning and childcare, I'd say go for it! It's a great job and you really feel you have made a difference in a child's life."

Column sponsored by Smarter Scotland

## Movers and shapers

**Kickstart your career in Early Learning and Childcare – college courses are now open for applications.**

With the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare services across Scotland, nurseries around the country are looking for caring and creative people who are full of energy.

College courses are now open for applications. There are lots of different childcare qualifications that offer the flexibility of full-time or part-time courses, all of which are combined with on the job training too.

Early Learning professionals are responsible for giving Scotland's

children the best start in life using ideas and activities that help develop essential life skills.

There are plenty of jobs available across a range of different roles, working in a number of settings from a traditional nursery to a playgroup. Essentially, a place where young children are nurtured and cared for and where they begin their learning journey with professional staff.

If you know someone looking for a job that's rewarding, fun and will positively affect lives, then Early Learning and Childcare could be a great career for them.

Visit [www.childcarecareersscotland.scot](http://www.childcarecareersscotland.scot) to find out more about a career in Early Learning and Childcare. School leavers can also talk to their careers adviser at school or ask their local college, training provider or nursery for advice.