

Business Briefing

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EAST MIDLANDS

Conference Highlights How Training Builds Better Businesses

More than 300 employers heard about how skills and funding can play a key role in building stronger and more successful businesses in the East Midlands at a recent conference in Nottingham.

During the event, entitled 'Business and Skills Conference: Grow, Perform, Succeed', delegates heard from Formula One and Cosworth guru Mark Gallagher as well as business and skills advisers from several support agencies.

A number of employers from across the region also shared their experiences of accessing Government-funded services to develop the skills of their workforce, how this had benefited their business and the contribution made to the regeneration of the local economy.



Liz Searle, Director designate of the Employer Skills Services for the Skills Funding Agency.

Keynote speaker Mark Gallagher, General Manager F1 Operations, gave a fascinating insight into the world of top-level motor sport, drawing parallels between the challenging, high-speed environment of Formula One and the fast-paced business world of today.

"Some may see Formula One as a glamorous industry to be in, but the issues we face are exactly the same as any other engineering or manufacturing business," he said. "Cosworth's UK success is down to the way we train our staff and unleash their potential through apprenticeships and by investing in training."

The conference – delivered in partnership by the Learning and Skills Council, National Apprenticeship Service, Business Link East Midlands, East Midlands Business Forum, Jobcentre Plus and East Midlands Development Agency – also offered businesses the opportunity to find out more about changes to the way training is funded and coordinated in the region.

Liz Searle, Director designate of the Employer Skills Services for the Skills Funding Agency, said: "Our aim in putting on the conference was to supply employers with information about the services available to help their business succeed in 2010 and beyond. A skilled workforce is more productive, more innovative and helps build stronger businesses. The benefits for the individual are great too. Skills help them climb higher and increase their earning potential."

Also speaking at the conference was Government Office East Midlands' newly appointed Regional Director, Stephen Hillier, who explained how the region is at the forefront of jobs for the future and how young apprentices can boost profits and bring vibrancy, energy and fresh ideas into a business whilst securing our future labour market.

Full details of the changes to the coordination of training and Apprenticeships can be found on page 8.



Cake-cutting marks launch of National Apprenticeship Week

During the Business and Skills Conference, a very special cake was cut to celebrate the start of the third annual National Apprenticeship Week.

The magnificent three-layer cake was created by students at Derby College's new Catering and Hospitality academy based at The Roundhouse in Pride Park. Derby College Executive Head Chef Shirley Sweeney said: "It was a privilege to be asked to make the cake that was the centrepiece of the National Apprenticeship Week regional celebrations."

Pictured here cutting the cake are (from left to right): Mandie Stravino from Derby College; Geoff Hall from Abacus Lighting; Stephen Hillier, Government Office East Midlands and Karen Woodward, National Apprenticeship Service.

Further details about National Apprenticeship Week can be found on pages 3-6 of the Business Bulletin.

Train to Gain helps firms fight recession

Business leaders in the East Midlands have praised the Government's flagship Train to Gain service, saying it has helped them provide vital training to their staff during the downturn.

Firms of all sizes have reaped the benefits of Government-funded training support, according to recent figures from the Learning and Skills Council.

In a survey of employers who use the service, 80 per cent said they were likely to recommend Train to Gain to others and use it again themselves. A significant number (41 per cent) also said Train to Gain had helped them cope with the recession.

Tony Belmega, Director of Train to Gain for the LSC East Midlands, explained that since Train to Gain was launched in 2006, £174.9 million has been spent on funded training for 12,354 employers and 156,000 employees in the East Midlands.

"Most employers recognise the importance of training in the current economic climate and the Train to Gain service is expected to fund training for 1.4 million learners nationally in the current and next financial year," he said.

The current national budget for Train to Gain is £925 million and this will rise to almost £1 billion for the 2010-11 financial year.

Continued Tony: "It has always been the case that demand for skills training cannot be funded by the public purse alone. Now, more than ever, employers are increasingly showing they understand the value of investing in the skills of their workforce.

"However, we must make sure that Train to Gain's growth is sustainable and that it helps the individuals and employers that need it most, especially in the current economic climate."



Harpal Chopra (left) and Ramesh Patel of Apex Dyers and Finishers in Leicester are being assessed by Ravinder Dhani and Harminder Johal from Train to Gain providers Market Driven Training.

Productivity improvements

Two East Midlands firms to benefit from the Train to Gain service are Kemps Bakery in Eckington, Derbyshire, and Leicester-based Apex Dyers and Finishers.

Founded in 1988 Apex has seen productivity improve by 10 per cent since staff embarked on NVQ qualifications in Performing Manufacturing Operations.

The staff development was supported by Train to Gain and delivered by specialist textile training company Market Driven Training (MDT) Ltd.

Commented factory manager Paul McNeil: "We are already highly successful overseas but to stay ahead of the game it's essential to continue to improve the quality of goods produced and make sure our staff are the best.

"The training has been of great benefit and I've noticed increased job awareness from our employees, a greater knowledge of chemical and industrial safety and an improvement in communication between workers and supervisors."

Meanwhile www.kempsbakery.co.uk and its shop in Eckington benefited from free on-site NVQ training for five members of its team after being introduced to Train to Gain through Business Link.

Commented one of the founders, Rob Clarke: "Train to Gain helped us to find the right training by assessing our skills requirements before accessing publicly funded skills programmes."

More firms make Skills Pledge

A Leicestershire firm helping young people get work experience, a wild game production company in Chesterfield and an injection moulding company in Oakham are just some of the organisations making the Skills Pledge.

Since its launch in June 2007 the Skills Pledge has helped over 371,235 employees as 2,638 East Midlands employers have made the public commitment to invest in the skills of their workforce.

Nationally the Skills Pledge has benefited almost 7.2 million employees who now have the opportunity to realise their potential and increase their skills by undertaking training leading to a recognised qualification.

Leicestershire Education Business Company (LEBC), an organisation that works with companies and organisations so that young people can get work experience, made the Skills Pledge to confirm its commitment to raising skills within its own company and the young people it works with.



Steve Ayre (left) and Stuart Jolly from Rutland Plastics.

Rick Bestwick, based on the Holmewood Industrial Park, Chesterfield, produces a range of wild game products. It made the Skills Pledge in April 2009 and 28 members of its workforce have since completed NVQs.

Rutland Plastics of Oakham employs around 100 staff, and since making the Skills Pledge in April 2009, it has offered staff NVQs Levels 1, 2 and 3 in Polymer processing and related operations.

The Skills Pledge is a public commitment made by the leader of an organisation confirming that they will develop the skills of their employees, including all of those lacking basic skills or a first full Level 2 qualification.

To find out more about the Skills Pledge call 0845 600 9006 or visit <http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk/employers-pledge.html>

To find out more about how Train To Gain can help your business, call 0845 600 9006 or visit www.traintogain.gov.uk

Apprenticeships



Apprentices bring business benefits

As Regional Director Apprenticeships, LSC East Midlands, Karen Woodward says she is on a mission to raise the profile of Apprenticeships by promoting the benefits to business.

Karen is no stranger to the East Midlands' business community, having worked with the former Training & Enterprise Council, Southern Derbyshire Chamber, Derby and Derbyshire Business Venture and the LSC before taking up her current post with the National Apprenticeship Service in April last year.

As a result she is very familiar with the issues faced by businesses and their attitude towards Apprenticeships.

"If you spoke to most employers now, a lot would say 'what a pity Apprenticeships were allowed to die out'. They think it happened 20 or 30 years ago," Karen explained.

"We want to raise their profile again. Ten years ago, there were only 65,000 apprentices across England; last year there were 240,000, and we want to get to 400,000 by 2020."

Good for Business

She went on to say that Sir Alan Sugar and the 'Good For Business' campaign did a lot to raise the profile of Apprenticeships, but what really grabbed the attention of employers was a recent financial incentive to take on 16 and 17-year-old apprentices.

As part of the AGE 16-17 incentive, employers were offered £2,500 to take on a previously unemployed young person from that age group. The money was in addition to the costs of training, which was fully met by the National Apprenticeship Service.

"This was a short-term measure," said Karen. "We recognise the particular issues faced by young

people given the tough economic conditions and we want to support them and ensure that we are training a new generation for economic recovery.

"It has been difficult over the past year and we saw a dip in the number of 16 and 17-year-old apprentices as employers became worried about taking on new staff.

"But, despite these concerns, we have seen apprentice numbers pick up recently."

Appetite for Training

Despite recent economic difficulties, over 100,000 16 and 17-year-olds started an Apprenticeship and, contrary to the negative image portrayed in some quarters, there is a great appetite for training and many more young people want to learn whilst they are in work.

But Karen is aware that it's all about the bottom line for employers, and is keen to highlight the strong business benefits to having an apprentice.

"Businesses are finding they improve profitability, they make fewer mistakes and they tend to be very loyal.

"In the past people believed there was no business benefit until the Apprenticeship was completed but we have looked at the return on investment and we found it can be within anything from a year to three years," she added.

Apprenticeships are open to all businesses, regardless of size – even sole traders – provided their apprentice is employed, paid at least £95 per week and have someone to mentor and support them.



Karen Woodward

For further information about taking on an apprentice contact 08000 150 600 or visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk.

To work out your return on investment from taking on an apprentice, visit <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Employers/ROI-Tool.aspx>

APPRENTICESHIPS – SOME FACTS

Latest provisional figures show a record high of 234,000 people starting an Apprenticeship in 2008/09, an increase of four per cent on 2007/08

Since 1996/97 over two million people have started an Apprenticeship

Investment for Apprenticeships has increased by almost a quarter between 2007/08 and 2009/10 to over £1 billion. Since 2001 the Government has invested £7.4 billion in Apprenticeships, of which over £5 billion is for 16 to 18-year-olds

In January 2009 the Prime Minister announced a £140 million package to provide an extra 35,000 Apprenticeship places over the coming year

EMT Tourism Director, Ruth Hyde feeds the giraffes at Twycross Zoo as part of the 'Back to the Floor' initiative.



East Midlands Tourism goes 'Back to the Floor'

As part of National Apprenticeship Week's, 'Back to the Floor' initiative, the team at East Midlands Tourism, have taken time out from their day jobs to find out what it's like to be an apprentice in the region's tourism industry.

Several senior staff members at EMT – the tourism arm of the regional development agency, emda – rolled up their sleeves to lend a hand in some of the region's most challenging tourism positions.

At Twycross Zoo in Leicestershire EMT Tourism Director, Ruth Hyde donned wellington boots and waterproofs to spend the day under the supervision of a student keeper. The day's duties included preparing breakfast for giraffes, serving lunch to chimps and penguins, sweeping out and hosing down animal enclosures and putting the alpacas to bed.

Ruth commented: "It was fascinating to get behind the scenes at one of our region's leading attractions and I gained a fantastic insight into what an apprentice keeper does on a daily basis.

"It is very hard work, definitely messy, but extremely rewarding. I have learnt so much from the day's experience."

Ruth went on to explain that tourism is a growing industry in the East Midlands and supports almost 100,000 jobs.

"We are keen to encourage young people to consider a career in tourism and by combining theory and practice an Apprenticeship is a great way to fast track a career within the tourism industry," she added.

While Ruth was at the Zoo, Claire Lambert, Investment Manager at EMT, spent the day in the kitchens at Center Parcs, Sherwood Forest with apprentice chefs trained by West Nottinghamshire College.

Meanwhile Marketing and Communication Manager, Una Mullan, spent the day on the frontline of the region's tourism industry at the Nottingham Tourist Information Centre which deals with around 290,000 visitors a year and 16,000 telephone enquiries.

Karen Woodward, National Apprenticeship Service Regional Director, commented: "It's great to have the support of EMT as the leisure, travel and tourism industries offer such a vast range of opportunities for apprentices in the East Midlands.

"There are opportunities as customer service assistants, hotel and accommodation managers, leisure and theme park attendants and travel consultants.

"A tourism apprenticeship is great for anyone with an interest in travel and working directly with customers.

"It is not necessarily a nine to five job and apprentices often experience working anti-social hours but tourism does present very rewarding, interesting and varied work," she added.

Minister backs Apprenticeship Week

Government Minister Phil Hope MP pledged his support for National Apprenticeship Week by attending an event in Northamptonshire.

The Minister for the East Midlands teamed up with Tresham College and the National Apprenticeship Service for an event at Rockingham Speedway, in Corby, to help kick-off a week of events aimed at boosting the number of apprentices in the county.

The launch was supported by a number of major employers in the construction industry, who insisted that 'jobs are out there' for hard-working young people. The event also offered prospective apprentices the chance to demonstrate the skills they hope will secure them a work-based training programme.

Commented Phil Hope: "This generation of young people in the East Midlands has so much to give. By giving them their backing, employers can help them on their career paths and derive enormous benefits for their own business in the process."

As part of National Apprenticeship Week, members of the National Apprenticeship Service toured Northamptonshire in a specially equipped 'road show' bus to raise awareness of Apprenticeships and career opportunities for young people.

Council Director Shadows Apprentice

As part of the week-long celebration of the talents and skills of all apprentices across the region, Andrew Flack, Corporate Director of the Children and Young People Division at Derby City Council went 'back to the floor' to shadow one of the Division's young apprentices, Henna Malika.

Andrew worked alongside the Business Administration apprentice to get a good understanding of what it's like to be starting out in a career. Henna's Apprenticeship at Derby City Council is organised through Derby College. She attends the college on day release and is working towards an NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration.

Makeovers for charity

Qualified beauty therapy apprenticeship students from Chesterfield College have raised more than £400 for charity.

In celebration of National Apprenticeship Week they offered a wide variety of low-cost treatments to the public, donating all funds to the College's charity partner, Ashgate Hospice.

The treatments on offer demonstrated a wide range of skills the apprentices have learnt, including Indian head massages, skin diagnosis and makeup lessons, manicures and body massages.



During the week, the college also received a visit from Natascha Engel, Labour MP for North East Derbyshire. As part of her visit, the MP met with College apprentices from a wide range of industries, including joinery and hairdressing.

Holistic therapy apprentice Hannah Robson, 18, treating one of the visitors to the Ashgate Hospice event.

Julie Richards, Director of Business Enterprise at Chesterfield College, explained: "The 'drop-in' event wasn't just a great opportunity to raise funds for Ashgate Hospice, it also showcased the impressive skills which our apprentices have acquired to the public.

"We're proud of what each apprentice has achieved and we want the public to see just how good they really are.

"They work really hard throughout the year and it's great to give them the recognition they deserve."



Swapping jobs for the day, from left to right are Tom McGowan, Chris Martin, Carl Leeson and Liam Ruddick.

Job swap for footballers

Apprenticeships are playing an increasingly important role in developing the sports superstars of the future, a fact highlighted during a series of events organised as part of National Apprenticeship Week.

In Northamptonshire, training provider Starting Off teamed up with Northampton Town FC to organise an apprentice job swap.

Carl Leeson, from Cosworth, and Chris Martin – who is about to start work at Intersoccer – spent a morning experiencing what it is like to be an Apprentice Footballer. They cleaned some boots, joined in with some training and helped organise the pitch for the first-team players.

In the afternoon Northampton Town FC Apprentice Footballers, Liam Ruddick and Tom McGowan, were given a tour of Cosworth by Carl Leeson to get an insight into other types of career offered by a leading employer.

In Nottinghamshire, Nottingham Rugby's Community and Education Manager John Widdowson demonstrated what is taught on the club's Apprenticeship programme during a visit to Stanstead Primary School in Bulwell.

He was joined by three of the club's apprentices who led sessions in physical development and rugby coaching.

Nottingham Rugby's apprenticeship is equivalent to a BTEC level qualification and aims to equip new coaches with the skills needed to work in schools. South Nottingham College has supported the scheme by providing library facilities and the apprentices attend training sessions with the college's athlete performance programme.

College leaders spend a day with companies

The leaders of two Leicestershire colleges have been given a taste of what its like to be an apprentice after spending a day on the shopfloor at two local companies.

Matt Pinches, the deputy principal of South Leicestershire College, in Wigston, visited Babcock International Group, in Whetstone, which supplies the Army with hi-tech equipment. Here he worked with Joe Tate, who is studying for a mechanical Advanced Apprenticeship.

Joe, a former pupil of John Cleveland College, in Hinckley, showed him how a specialised piece of carbon was produced to prevent enemy missiles from attacking UK military planes.

Mr Pinches said: "The day was thoroughly enjoyable and it was enlightening to see what our apprentices do on a day-to-day basis.

During National Apprentices Week he also spent time at Leicester Education Business Company, where he met Administration Apprentice Hannah Sinclair, and East Leake to visit Richard Walton, an apprentice at British Gypsum.

Meanwhile Maggie Galliers, principal of Leicester College, showed her support for National Apprenticeship Week by shadowing fabrication and welding apprentice Luke Baber, 27, of Broughton Astley.

She said: "It was useful to get some insight into the process and I was impressed with the high skill levels and very sharp awareness of health and safety.

"Apprenticeship Week is a real opportunity to demonstrate the benefits apprentices bring to the organisations they work for."



Geoff Hall (right) returns to the shop floor watched by two of his apprentices and Karen Woodward, Regional Director Apprentices.

Vacancies soar past 500 mark

The number of Apprenticeship vacancies in the East Midlands currently awaiting applications has soared past the 500 mark for the first time since the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) was set up in 2009.

The message to anyone looking to launch or even re-launch their career through an apprenticeship is to go online and visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk.

Across the region there is a varied choice of Apprenticeships in a wide range of sectors, including marketing, vehicle maintenance, childcare, construction and manufacturing, and in many instances there are no age or experience restrictions.

The news of the surge in vacancies will come as a great boost to the local business community as it is a firm indication that the regional economy is continuing to show the green shoots of recovery.

It also shows the NAS campaign to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to businesses – including a highly successful 'Apprenticeship Week' in February – has worked, as East Midlands Regional Director Karen Woodward confirmed.

"The increase in vacancies just goes to show that our efforts are paying dividends.

"We've had a fantastic response following Apprenticeship Week in February, and long may it continue," she said.

"Apprenticeships are a win-win situation for everyone. Employers get highly motivated employees that are receiving vocational training, which is often subsidised or even fully funded, at the same time as they are working.

"On the other side, straightforward higher education is not for everyone and Apprenticeships offer people a way to learn and earn at the same time."

MD STEPS BACK IN TIME

Abacus Lighting has a long history of successful Apprenticeships; in fact current Managing Director, Geoff Hall, joined the company as a 15-year-old apprentice over 50 years ago!

To help celebrate National Apprenticeship Week, Geoff put on his overalls and went 'back to the floor' for a day to work alongside the latest tranche of Abacus apprentices.

His efforts also coincided with the launch of the new 'Abacus Academy' which recognises the Nottinghamshire company's commitment to training and a career-long development.

The Academy will not only encompass the apprentice programme, but any training delivered across the business. It will also offer CPD training to members of the wider lighting industry.

Geoff said: "We've taken on apprentices throughout our 50-year history and they've been an invaluable asset to company growth. Employing apprentices ensures a home-grown workforce who are continually developed and supported. This improves retention and loyalty.

"Indeed, we have a number of former apprentices still with us after 20 or 30 years and I believe they have been an invaluable part of the company's development, growth and success."

Apprenticeship boost for accountancy firm

With an increased bottom line and a client base that has doubled in the last year, a Lincolnshire accountancy firm has seen the benefits that taking on apprentices can bring.

When the time came to take on additional staff, Belinda Darley, Managing Director of ABC Accounting Services in Gainsborough knew she wanted committed individuals she could train from scratch to work for her business, so she called Lincoln College to get some advice.

"The college advised us that taking on apprentices would be the perfect solution," said Belinda who

took on three accounting apprentices in 2008 and has seen her business flourish as a result.

"Taking on the apprentices has really benefited our business. Not only have they worked to increase our bottom line, our client base has doubled in the last year," Belinda explained.

"The apprentices are able to apply the ideas and theory they've learnt at college to the work they do here, with fantastic results.

"They have proven themselves to be incredibly hard working, focused and full of ambition," she added.

Hairdresser is a cut above

A Nottingham hairdressing salon has proved it is a cut above the rest after winning a prestigious award at the Nottinghamshire Ethnic Minority Business Awards 2009 for its commitment to staff training and development.

Hi Tec Salon on Sneinton Square Market scooped first prize in the Developing Business Excellence Through their People category, sponsored by Train to Gain, funded by the LSC.

The salon started from humble beginnings when it was established by Elayne Small in 1997 and has established itself as the only salon in the East Midlands that caters for all hair types – African, Caribbean, European, Oriental and Asian.

Elayne, a qualified hairdressing tutor herself, now combines her own in-house training programme with New College Nottingham's NVQ in Hairdressing.

Commented Elayne: "Thanks to the qualifications, we can offer a personalised and tailored service to every client, encouraging them to come back time and time again."

Also honoured at the Ethnic Minority Business Awards was a Derbyshire-based organisation specialising in the delivery of cultural awareness courses. A runner-up in the Developing Business Excellence Through their People category, Noble Khan Ltd was singled out for its commitment to staff training and development.

Another runner-up in the same category was Cooperative Community Action, based in Hyson Green. The community-based social enterprise develops activities and programmes to address issues faced by a range of disadvantaged people in Nottinghamshire.

Provider of the quarter

Corporate College @ Derby College is celebrating being named The Learning and Skills Council's Train to Gain Provider of the Quarter after meeting its delivery targets and achieving a success rate of nearly 90 per cent for over 10,000 learners in the past year.

Commercial Director for the Derby College Group Mandie Stravino was recently presented with the award at a Training Provider network meeting at the Belton Woods Hotel near Grantham.

High quality training is critical to the success of Train to Gain and Corporate College was also the first provider in the region to achieve the prestigious Training Quality Standard (TQS). It has also received awards for excellence in retail, healthcare, hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism, adult social care, facilities care management and manufacturing and engineering.

Tony Belmega, Director, Train to Gain for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) East Midlands, said: "The Provider of the Quarter award celebrates the success of those delivering Train to Gain funded courses and showcases the excellent contributions made by providers like Derby College."



A new training programme is helping Laing O'Rourke to fill vacancies.

New factory offering employment opportunities

A new factory that manufactures a range of pre-cast concrete products for the construction industry is now providing potential jobs for unemployed people in Nottinghamshire.

Laing O'Rourke is working with Making the Connection, a recruitment and skills solution service supported by the LSC that serves communities across Nottinghamshire.

Making the Connection has worked closely with the new Laing O'Rourke factory in Worksop to develop a pre-employment programme for Jobcentre Plus clients. The programme includes a four-week training course that aims to provide people with relevant skills, qualifications and further understanding of the manufacturing sector.

The training was delivered in partnership by North Nottinghamshire College and the construction company and included units on manual handling, health and safety, emergency first aid, abrasive wheels and the CV and application process.

Following completion of the course, some trainees attended sessions to improve literacy and numeracy and also complete their Construction Skills Certification Scheme card with North Nottinghamshire College.

Everyone who completed the training was guaranteed an interview with Laing O'Rourke, and so far this process has resulted in 24 confirmed offers of employment, with other applicants still under consideration.

Commented Steve Buczek, HR Business Partner at Laing O'Rourke: "By working with MTC we have been able to provide some great pre-employment training for a whole host of people. The calibre of candidates has been excellent and we will seek to continue the gateway process as we move forward with satisfying our recruitment needs."

MTC Project Manager Graham Whiting added: "Our selling point to employers is that they get a local and loyal workforce with the skills they need."

New agencies to take over from the LSC

The LSC will cease to exist from March 31, 2010 as a result of provisions in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Funding for young people aged 16-18 will be transferred to local authorities and a new national body – the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) – will support these arrangements.

At the same time, the funding of adult skills for people aged over 19 will become the responsibility of another new national body, the Skills Funding Agency.

The key responsibilities of the new organisations are as follows:

• Skills Funding Agency

The Agency will be the single contractor for all publicly funded post-19 education and training and all Apprenticeship provision in England, outside of higher education.

Part of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Skills Funding Agency will focus exclusively on adult skills and work with employers, colleges, providers and other stakeholders to ensure that the system works for both learners and providers.

The Agency will provide funding in response to local and regional demand through Employer Skills Service teams.

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), which will be housed within the Skills Funding Agency, will also have a key role in developing relationships with businesses.

In addition to NAS, the Agency will be responsible for the Adult Advancement and Careers Service (AACCS), the Learner Skills Service and the National Employer Skills Service, which will respond to employers' needs.

• The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)

The YPLA aims to support local authorities in fulfilling their new 16-19 learner responsibilities. It will also fund and performance-manage school academies whilst providing support for learners.

A non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the YPLA will also work with partners to provide information on skills needs and economic and labour market intelligence.

HELP FOR EMPLOYERS

Skilled staff provide the essential foundations for any business and in the East Midlands a number of organisations can help businesses plan and manage their training needs.

If you would like more information on improving your business, the following organisations would be pleased to help.

National Apprenticeship Service

Apprenticeships are the proven way to train your workforce, making your organisation more effective, productive and competitive by addressing your skills gaps. Part of the Skills Funding Agency, the NAS offers apprenticeship programmes designed to help employees reach a high level of competency and performance.

t: 08000 150 600
e: emrapprnticeships@lsc.gov.uk
www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Business Link

Business Link provides local access to business support. It draws on a national network that provides information and advice to start, maintain or grow any aspect of a business. It can help employers ensure their people have the right skills by identifying needs, pinpointing the right training and any funding initiatives available.

t: 0845 058 6644
e: info@businesslinkem.co.uk
www.businesslink.gov.uk/eastmidlands

East Midlands Development Agency

East Midlands Development Agency (emda) is one of nine Regional Development Agencies in England with a focus to economic development. Its vision is that by 2020 the East Midlands will be a flourishing region, made up of growing and innovative businesses.

t: 0115 988 8300
e: info@emda.org.uk
www.emda.org.uk

Train to Gain

The responsibility of the National Employer Skills Service, part of the Skills Funding Agency, Train to Gain is meeting the demands of employers from all sectors to improve the skills of their employees as a route to improving their business performance.

t: 0845 600 9 006
www.train2ogain.gov.uk

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus is an Executive Agency of the Department of Work and Pensions and aims to provide work for those who can and support for those who cannot. It achieves this by working with employers and partners to increase employment and by addressing inequalities of opportunity.

t: 0845 601 2001
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk