News Release

Leading learning and skills

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Local Businesses tell TUC
Train to Gain is on the Right Track

Senior trade union officials were in the region yesterday to take a closer look at the success of two Nottinghamshire businesses committed to developing the skills of their staff in the workplace.

The visit was organised jointly by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and unionlearn (Midlands), the TUC's learning and skills organisation. It included a formal review of the success of the Government's work-based learning service Train to Gain across the region.

Delegates met at the Midland Mainline Academy in Derby, which was followed by a regional protocol signing between Unison Vice Chair of the Midlands TUC John Freeman and Verity Bullough, Regional Director, LSC East Midlands, committing the LSC and TUC to advance the cause of learning in unionised workplaces.

Whilst in the region, the delegation also visited two companies committed to Train to Gain work-based training. The companies are Watnall-based British Bakeries and Beamlight Automotive in Eastwood.

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Verity Bullough, Regional Director, LSC East Midlands, said: “Learning in the workplace is an efficient and effective means of updating the skills of your workforce. What today has shown unionlearn and the TUC, is how we are working with the trades unions to impress upon employers the importance of ongoing staff skills development at work and the very real benefits this brings.

”In addition, the signing of the regional skills protocol is good news for employers and employees of unionised organisations. It recognises the excellent work that is being carried out and formalises our commitment and that of the TUC.”

Frances O’Grady, TUC Deputy General Secretary, a member of the LSC, who chairs its Adult Learning Committee said: "Everyone in the Midlands has to take skills more seriously to keep business competitive and protect jobs. Signing this protocol today sends a strong message that everyone can win from bringing the benefits of learning to all. We need more employers to follow the lead of British Bakeries and Beamlight Automotive and work with trade unions to up-skill their employees. Helping workers improve their skills gives them confidence to move forward in their lives and careers, and can encourage families and neighbours into learning too."

Simon Clarke, Nottingham Site Manufacturing Manager for British Bakeries added: “Here at the Nottingham site, we are keen to introduce National Vocational Qualifications into our internal training programmes as a way of improving the skills of our workforce and providing opportunities for personal development. We are currently discussing with the BFAWU (Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union) the infrastructure that needs to be put in place to make this achievable.

“unionlearn and the TUC have been instrumental in setting this up and we are exploring the possibility of providing our workforce with opportunities to develop

and enhance their skills in the workplace. We hope shortly to make a formal commitment to the employer training service Train to Gain, incorporating as it does an impartial brokerage that will make it so much easier to identify the best value training solutions for our company."

The regional protocol signing was undertaken by Verity Bullough, Regional Director, LSC East Midlands and John Freeman, Unison Vice Chair of the TUC Midlands Region. The delegation from the TUC included Frances O'Grady, TUC Deputy General Secretary, Liz Smith unionlearn Director, Judith Swift, Union Development Manager unionlearn and Gail Cartmail, Amicus Assistant General Secretary.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

LSC
The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

Unionlearn
Unionlearn is the TUC's learning and skills organisation which together with unions, has trained over 15,000 union learning reps. Through this network, over 100,000 people accessed training courses over the past year. See www.unionlearn.org.uk for further information.

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