

**Date of issue 12 February
2009**

**Publication number
em19AWpreviewNorthants.doc**

LSC PREPARES TO LAUNCH APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

All employers in Northamptonshire are the target for the second national Apprenticeship Week from 23 to 27 February 2009, organised by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) – and one Northampton firm is a shining example.

The week is a national celebration of the success of Apprenticeships across England. The event seeks to raise the profile of Apprenticeships and encourage more employers to take on apprentices.

There will be a variety of events going on through the East Midlands – from visits to schools from employers advocating the Apprenticeship programme, to Sir Alan Sugar’s former “apprentice” Saira Khan visiting the region and spreading the word about the campaign which aims to get apprentices into jobs.

Company managing directors will be “going back to the floor” to turn back time and try out the work of an apprentice. Meanwhile, East Midlands MPs will be having a go at being an apprentice for the day – and regional journalists will be given the chance to sample courses like brick laying and stable management at local colleges and training providers.

The LSC - who fund Apprenticeship programmes - is charged with raising the number of Apprenticeship placements offered by employers by matching them with approved training providers who can support them and their new apprentice throughout their period of training.

Nick Rashley, LSC director of Apprenticeships for the East Midlands, said: “Our aim is to let local employers know just how beneficial an apprentice can be to their continued business success. We have many success stories where businesses

have taken on apprentices and those people have gone on to senior roles in the organisation. It is essential that this type of investment is made to develop the future, skilled workforce that the East Midlands needs.”

Apprenticeships can help businesses across all sectors by offering a route to harness fresh new talent. The programmes provide on and off the job learning so that apprentices achieve the right mix of practical skills and qualifications to suit them and the needs of their employer.

Nick added: “A business can benefit greatly from the ideas an apprentice can bring to it and, at the same time are training their workforce of the future. Apprenticeships offer cost-effective recruitment leading to a well-trained, motivated workforce and contribute to increased productivity and performance.”

Northampton-based print specialists Belmont Press Ltd has been in operation for over 50 years. They became involved in the scheme when they noticed a shortage of workers with the relevant skills in the industry. During the seven years the programme has been running it has gone from strength to strength.

Trevor Thomas, managing director at Belmont Press said: “Our Apprentices follow a structured work based learning programme which gives them the opportunity to develop their skills using a range of technology. The majority of our learners have progressed within the company to become skilled operators, supplying us with a strong workforce.

“As the apprentices have been involved in the production process from first principles it has created a greater understanding of the company’s products, giving them more than just a range of skills. The very fact our apprentices are competent in the operation of a range of equipment gives us flexibility of deployment throughout the factory.”

Belmont Press Ltd has helped 26 learners complete Apprenticeship programmes over the years and currently employ six apprentices. Richard Dalton, personnel manager said: “Apprentices are thoroughly assessed over a three-month period prior to course enrolment, introducing them to the processes in which they will be trained.

“Belmont Press has shown great determination in making a success of work based learning. We have had excellent support from Leicester College and Kettering Borough Training both in setting up and running the scheme. Kettering

Borough Training visits us regularly to talk to the trainees and their feedback is invaluable.”
Ends

Pic caption: L-R HR manager Richard Dalton & apprentice printer Ashaur Rahman.

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Notes for Editors

Learning and Skills Council: 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. www.lsc.gov.uk

Apprenticeships: Apprentices follow a framework, which consists of a NVQ qualification, key skills qualifications, and, where applicable, a technical certificate. Two levels are available – an Apprenticeship Framework and an Advanced Apprenticeship Framework, offering qualifications at either NVQ Levels 2 or 3* (equivalent to add GCSE and A level equivalent). There are over 160 occupational frameworks on offer including business administration; information technology and customer services and many sector specific frameworks such as chemicals and pharmaceuticals through to tourism and hospitality.

Level 2 is equivalent to five GCSE passes

Level 3 is equivalent to two ‘A’ level passes or one vocational ‘A’ pass.

www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Apprenticeship Awards: The LSC East Midlands Apprenticeship Awards 2009 will be held at East Midlands Conference Centre on 2 June 2009. The national awards event will be held in London on 16 July 2009. All regional winners will be automatically entered into the national awards. The closing date for entries is 27 February 2009. For more information please email:

realsuccess@headstorm.co.uk or call 0845 058 0490.

