

# Press Release

July 2009

em-53SPLEBCleics

## **Skills Pledge celebrates two years in Leicestershire**

A Leicestershire company that creates successful links between business and education is supporting two years of the Skills Pledge.

Since its launch in June 2007 the Skills Pledge has already helped over 75,500 employees as 488 Leicestershire employers have made the public commitment to invest in the skills of their workforce. Nationally more than 17,000 employers have made the Skills Pledge, which means almost 6.5million employees 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) engages with companies and organisations so that young people can experience the world of work by taking part in work experience and other work related learning opportunities. During the year approximately 11,000 students were placed with nearly 5,000 companies and organisations for a work experience placement and over 1,500 employee volunteers supported other work related activities for young people in school.

LEBC made the Skills Pledge to confirm it's commitment to raising skills within its own company and young people across Leicestershire. The Skills Pledge is a commitment to encouraging staff to become qualified to a minimum of NVQ Level 2 (the equivalent of five good GCSEs).

Barbara Chantrill, Chief Executive of LEBC said:

“Our role is to influence and persuade the business community that investment in young people whilst they are at school or college will pay dividends. It helps companies from a

recruitment perspective and enables employees to put something back into the local community and gain skills at the same time. Many companies have not been able to award salary increases this year, but have continued to show their commitment to employees by investing in their development.

“Our staff play an important role in setting up links between schools, colleges and companies. I will continue to invest in their development so that they feel valued and empowered to achieve their business goals.”

Susan Ellis, 20, an LEBC Apprentice, has been with the company for two years and is studying for her NVQ Level 3. Susan said:

“Having left school with two A levels, I have developed and improved many skills since being at work, including IT and the ability to take responsibility. LEBC also allows me to volunteer one hour per week at a school, where I listen to children read. This has helped my confidence and developed my communication skills, as well as broadening my horizon.”

Sue Peake, Skills Development Director, Learning and Skills Council East Midlands, said:

“We are delighted that so many employers have made the Skills Pledge. Skills are vitally important to any organisation but it’s more important than ever in the current climate for individuals, for their future employability and for the success of organisations throughout the UK.

“By making the Skills Pledge LEBC have committed to ensuring their workforce receive the training and development necessary to keep their skills up to date.”

Louise Harrop, a Business Link Advisor, who has worked with LEBC, said:

“The work LEBC have been doing with young people across Leicestershire to help them gain valuable work experience will be a real help to them when they come to seek employment, particularly in hard times. The more experience young people can get under their belt and

the more training they can undertake the more successful they will be in a competitive job market.

“By signing up to the Skills Pledge LEBC have committed to ensuring their workforce receive the training and development necessary to keep their skills up to date in such an important sector.”

Barbara Chantrill, Chief Executive of LEBC added:

“If you would like to discuss how your company could engage in your local school please contact Maria Gamble at LEBC on 0116 240 7000 or email [maria.gamble@leics-ebc.org.uk](mailto:maria.gamble@leics-ebc.org.uk).”

**To find out more about the Skills Pledge call 0800 015 5545 or visit**

**<http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk/employers-pledge.html>**

## Notes to Editors

1. **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**. It is a promise that, through training, they will work to boost the productivity and efficiency of their organisation and realise the potential of their employees by developing their basic skills and working towards relevant, valuable qualifications. Level 2 is the minimum standard, however as understanding skills needs and priorities is the key to an organisation's success, employers are encouraged to upskill their people to the level required by their industry and their specific organisational needs.
  - Research shows that one of the most significant benefits from making the Skills Pledge is the public demonstration of an organisation's commitment to valuing employees
  - Employers see the Skills Pledge as a valuable way to increase productivity, retain and develop their staff and enhance their reputation
  - By developing tailored action plans, the Skills Pledge enables organisations to take control of training and focus on the skills that they need to succeed
  - Making and implementing the Skills Pledge enables organisations to drive forward one comprehensive, strategic training programme for the entire workforce, resulting in cost and time efficiencies
  - By making the Skills Pledge, employers are driving a culture change in the workplace, which improves morale and provides staff with the opportunity to improve their wider careers and life prospects

## **2. 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.

**Issued on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council by COI News & PR East Midlands.**

**T: 0115 9712787. E: [Helen.clarke@coi.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.clarke@coi.gsi.gov.uk)**