

NEWS RELEASE

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Two years of vital skills in Lincolnshire

One of the largest employers in Lincolnshire is supporting two years of the Skills Pledge.

Lincolnshire County Council were one of the first organisations in the area to sign up to the Skills Pledge in 2007, demonstrating their commitment to their 7,000 staff in roles ranging from Highway Officer to Picnic Site Warden. By signing the Skills Pledge the Council are ensuring staff are skilled and competent to make a full contribution to the success of the organisation and encourage staff to become qualified to a minimum of NVQ Level 2 (the equivalent of five good GCSEs).

Since its launch in June 2007 the Skills Pledge has already helped 29,000 employees as 375 Lincolnshire and Rutland 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.

In the two years since it has been involved with the Skills Pledge, Lincolnshire County Council has continued to invest in the skills of its workforce, opening up new opportunities for staff and improving services to local residents.

Judith Davids, Assistant Director - People and Modernisation said:

“The council has always been committed to the training and development of our staff because we feel that the well-trained, knowledgeable staff help to deliver an enriched customer experience”.

“Our aim is to deliver excellent quality services to the Lincolnshire community through well-trained and committed staff.

“With such a large number of staff doing so many vitally important roles we are keen to ensure that everyone is skilled and more than competent in the work they do.”

Lincolnshire County Council deliver services to young people aged between 13 and 19 years old across Lincolnshire, including Connexions. Connexions offers a support service for employers and all young people living within Lincolnshire to provide practical advice, information and support that will help them in their recruitment, training and staff retention activities.

Lorraine Gresty is now a Personal Advisor at Connexions in Sleaford, one of nine centres across Lincolnshire. She has worked her way up from an Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Assistant at the centre to become a fully qualified Personal Adviser.

She said:

“I have been very privileged to have been offered the opportunity to undertake the Learning Development and Support Services (LDSS) qualification at level 4 as a clear progression route, having completed the NVQ level 3 in Advice & Guidance. This has enabled me to continue my learning and development from starting out as an IAG Assistant with Connexions to becoming a fully-qualified Personal Adviser. I have really benefitted from the work-based learning approach as I have been able to learn and develop my skills through having a live caseload. I managed to study the LDSS whilst working to full capacity, with a huge amount of continual support from the Learning and Development Team and my colleagues, for which I am very grateful.”

Sue Peake, Skills Development Director – Strategy, 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 success of organisations throughout the UK.

“By signing up to the Skills Pledge Lincolnshire County Council have committed to ensuring their workforce receive the training and development necessary to keep their skills up to date in such a vital sector.”

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.

Please find below some additional quotes from staff

- Michelle Hawkes has completed Lincolnshire County Council's employment based qualifying programme to become a qualified social worker. Michelle, 35, worked for LCC for five years before embarking on the four year training programme.

She said:

"The course has helped develop my confidence and skills and through using theory and research it has helped me to understand why we do what we do"

- Diane Simmonds works in Crowtree House Residential Care Home in Louth.

She said:

"Completing the NVQ process has improved my self esteem and confidence, providing me with the opportunity to gain a formal qualification.

"This has given me a great sense of achievement, as I did not get any formal qualifications during my school years."

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