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## **Justice Minister Advocates Benefits of Employing Ex-Offenders at Free Business Conference**

The Government's Justice Minister will champion the benefits of employing ex-offenders at a free conference targeted at employers from across the region, organised by the Learning and Skills Council East Midlands.

**Committed to Work – The Business Case for Employing Ex-offenders** takes place at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2008. David Hanson, the Justice Minister is joined at the conference by a number of high profile speakers, including Dianah Worman OBE, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development; Dr Mary Harris, National Grid; Linda Jones CBE, National Offender Management Service; and Ann Height OBE, Apex.

Jane Peacock, Skills Development Director, Learning and Skills Council East Midlands (LSC), says: "Skills shortages means employers have to develop new strategies to fill vacancies. This conference is an opportunity for employers to discover the very real business benefits that ex-offenders can bring in terms of filling skills gaps."

Dianah Worman OBE from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, says: "The Committed to Work event is incredibly important in raising the awareness and

challenges employers are facing in moving beyond the issues surrounding employing ex-offenders.

“The wider issues affect more people of the population than is generally realised. Employers cannot afford to miss out on these pools of talent. There are agencies to help and work with employers to address and understand all aspects, so that this can be a positive step forward in helping to fill employment gaps, providing benefits across society and for the ex-offender themselves.”

Dianah will address matters concerning risk management and legal implications, combined with other key note speakers who will present the case for recruitment and ongoing mentoring and training.

The conference focuses on sectors with known skills shortages including Construction, Hospitality, Logistics, Rail Track Engineering and Utilities. Delegates will hear from employers about their experience of employing ex-offenders in meeting their business needs and examine the case for and against employing ex-offenders.

Linda Jones CBE, National Offender Management Service and key note speaker, comments: “The National Offender Management Service is committed to supporting offenders into employment and appreciates the impact that having a job has on reducing re-offending and crime. We know too, as an employer, what commitment an offender can bring to a job, if only given a chance, and our long term belief is that it can be extremely beneficial for business.”

The conference is funded by the European Social Fund, EQUAL and the Learning and Skills Council East Midlands. If you would like to attend the complimentary event please request your delegate place online at [www.hollandalexander.com/committedtowork](http://www.hollandalexander.com/committedtowork).

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**Notes to 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. Visit [www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands)