

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Leicester company helps staff improve career potential with Skills for Life training**

Staff from the National Merchant Buying Society (NMBS) in Leicester have been given a career boost thanks to a Skills for Life training programme funded by the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) Train to Gain service.

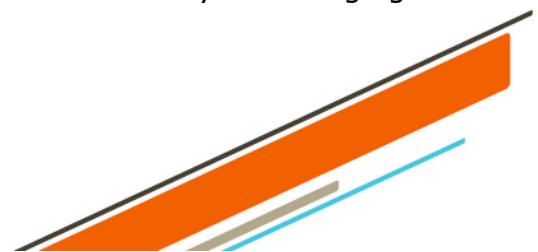
People who do not have literacy or numeracy skills are entitled to Skills for Life training for adult certificates in either subject.

Six members of staff, including administration officers, switchboard operatives and managers, signed up to an Adult Numeracy course (either Level 1 or 2, dependent on experience), which they completed at Easter.

Switchboard operator, Wendy Birch, 49, from Weston Park in Leicester, completed both Levels 1 and 2. She said: "These courses were fantastic for refreshing my maths skills and getting my brain thinking in a different way - it's amazing how much of what you learnt at school you forget! It has definitely encouraged me to look into what other training courses I can go on in the future too."

The Skills for Life courses were delivered by tutors from Leicester College in 10, two-hour weekly sessions.

Another team member, Office Manager, Vicky March, 25, from Wigston in Leicester, completed the Adult Numeracy Level 2. She said: "The course for me was to brush up on existing skills. It's the first time I have done any work based learning but would definitely recommend it as trying to do courses outside of work is difficult with other commitments. It's really encouraging to



know that our company is committed to developing our skills and helping us progress in our careers, and that the Government is behind us with financial support.”

Katherine Coates, Workforce Development Manager at Leicester College, said “NMBS is a perfect example of the college providing professional training in a business environment. The training facilities at NMBS were excellent and demonstrated how the company valued their employees and their professional development.

Lisa Walsh, Skills for Life Skills Development Manager at the LSC said “Train to Gain provides a valuable opportunity for employers to support their employees in developing skills. It provides an excellent platform for future career development.”

NMBS, which also offered Adult Literacy Levels 1 and 2 training to six staff last year, was formed over 40 years ago by a group of independent merchants in the Midlands who wanted to come together to buy better and compete more effectively with their larger counterparts. Today, it is the most successful buying group for independent builders’, plumbers’, hardware and timber merchants in the UK, with approximately 600 members and over 1,400 branches. It has deals with every major supplier to the building industry.

For more information on Train to Gain telephone 0845 015 55 45 or visit

[www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk)

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

- 1. Photographs of the team celebrating their success are available on request. Photo caption L-R: Baljit Singh (Ass. Product Manager), Wendy Birch (Switchboard Operator), Vicky March (Office Manager) and Mandy Griffin (Data Processor). Contact Gaby Hateley at COI News & PR East Midlands on 0115 971 2797.**
2. NMBS is located at 3 Chancery Place, Millstone Lane, Leicester.

3. Train to Gain is a Skills Brokerage service, managed and funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) that helps employers find the training they need for their employees. Train to Gain links employers with skills brokers who work individually with them to find out what their employees' training needs are, work out a training plan, and then help to find the right training for them. The Train to Gain Skills Brokerage service is free and impartial.

**4. What does Train to Gain offer employers?**

These days, making sure your business is more productive and competitive is a real challenge. The Train to Gain service can help you get the right skills to do the best job, through improving access to good quality training. It's a service that does three things:

- It provides a free and independent look at what skills your business needs – now and in the future. An independent Skills Broker who knows your region and your industry works with you to find out what training could make a real difference to your business.
- It helps you pick the right people to do training. Once you and the Skills Broker find out what your business needs are, they then work with you to find the right training provider. It's important that the training is done in a way that meets your business' needs.
- It helps you get the most from your training investment. The Skills Broker can also help find out the best ways to pay for the training, since they know what financial support might be available to you.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL BY COI  
NEWS & PR EAST MIDLANDS. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT  
GABY HATELEY ON 0115 971 2797**