

TRAIN TO GAIN CELEBRATES TWO YEARS OF SUCCESS IN LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE

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A Leicestershire charity for visually impaired people which is celebrating 150 years is also celebrating the anniversary of Train to Gain, as the flagship service marks its second year of helping to boost the nation's skills.

Representatives from Vista, which provides support to many of the 6,000 registered blind and partially sighted people across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland through local support services and six residential homes, joined the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to call on even more employers to take advantage of the training service, which helps firms get the best from their staff by identifying and helping meet skills needs. Seventy eight per cent of employers say that they would recommend Train to Gain to other employers.

Since its launch in 2006, Train to Gain has helped over 900 employers in Leicestershire get training, and almost 12,000 learners have started a qualification with help from funding of over £12.5 million.

An evaluation published this year revealed that some 43 per cent of people who had completed their training reported having received a pay rise, and 30 per cent reported having had promotion. Funding for Train to Gain will increase from £520 million in 2007-08 to over £1 billion by 2010-11.

In the last two years Vista have trained 29 members of staff to enable them to achieve their NVQ awards. Eleven have been trained through the Train to Gain service, and now Vista has signed the Skills Pledge to show its continued commitment to training.

Janice Hayward said:

“Vista is committed to training its staff. We place a high emphasis on ensuring that our staff are able to provide the best possible standard of care, are well qualified and able to deliver to an exemplary standard. Many staff throughout the organisation have achieved professional qualifications which Vista has supported to further its business objectives.

“We have worked with the LSC for some time, as the Skills Brokers helped us to identify the training our staff need and help us to find the right courses that will fit in with their busy workloads.

“We make the best use of staff time and training opportunities. It’s not easy but it’s necessary. Although we have to be conscious of budgets, training is absolutely vital to our organisation and a dedicated training budget is essential for success. I would recommend other organisations to use Train to Gain to assist them in developing their workforce.”

Tony Belmega, Skills Development Director, Train to Gain from the LSC East Midlands said:

“Many Leicester and Leicestershire employers realise the value of up-skilling their workforce and realise it is one of the most important things they can do to raise the value of their business and to ‘future proof’ themselves as best they can against

the potential impact of the current credit crunch. Investing in the skills of their people will make it easier for employers to respond to economic challenges and also ensure they are well placed to take advantage of future growth opportunities.

“Only two years in and Train to Gain has already helped close to 1,000 businesses across Leicester and Leicestershire. Now more than ever, employers need to make sure their staff are highly skilled and ready to face current economic challenges and I would urge other companies to take advantage of the funding, advice and training on offer through the service.”

Employers wanting more information on Train to Gain can either call 0800 015 55 45 or visit traintogain.gov.uk.

- ENDS -

Notes to editors

1. Train to Gain

Managed by the Learning and Skills Council, Train to Gain is the government’s flagship service to support employers in England, of all sizes and in all sectors, to improve the skills of their employees, unlock talent and drive improved business performance. A key element of Train to Gain is the skills brokerage service which offers free impartial advice, and helps find the best training solution from high quality and responsive training providers to meet business needs.

To help ensure that the Train to Gain offer meets the needs of every sector, DIUS and the LSC has developed ‘sector skills compacts’ with employers in key sectors of our economy which tailor the Train to Gain offer to their specific needs and circumstances. Compacts have already been agreed with Sector Skills Councils for five sectors Semta,

ConstructionSkills, People 1st Proskills and Skills for Justice, together worth some £440m over three years.

Train to Gain has supported over 570,000 learners to begin their learning programmes. Over 254,000 learners have achieved a full level 2 qualification. Over 16,000 learners have full level 3 achievements.

To find out more about how Train to Gain can help, employers should call 0800 015 55 45 or visit traintogain.gov.uk. Alternatively, individuals and employers can access the information they need on skills via a dedicated phone line and website. The phone number is 0800 011 30 30 or website: lsc.gov.uk/inourhands

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 and PR. For media interviews or for further information contact Helen Clarke at COI News and PR on 0115 9712787