

## **TRAIN TO GAIN CELEBRATES TWO YEARS OF SUCCESS IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

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A Northampton firm which is bucking the economic trend and increasing profits is supporting the anniversary of Train to Gain, as the flagship service marks its second year of helping to boost the nation's skills.

GCS construction recruitment agency 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 1,700 employers in Northamptonshire get training, and over 6,700 learners have started a qualification with help from funding of over £6 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.

GCS construction recruitment agency, which supplies temporary staff to a wide range of companies on various construction projects around Northampton and

Wellingborough, have been successfully running a series of NVQ training courses for its plant operators through Keith Cook Training Services to ensure all plant operators are licensed under the Construction Plant Operator Scheme and are 'competent operators'. This is essential in order to qualify for a CSCS licence, a comprehensively recognised qualification in the industry that will enable the employees to get work in their chosen field. As a result GCS are benefiting from a larger workforce better able to gain employment.

Steve Coogan, GCS Construction Consultant, said:

"With the invaluable financial support of Train to Gain and the flexibility of Keith Cook Training Services, we are able to provide the NVQ training to our plant operators for free. Not only has this helped us keep good workers on our books, it has also improved our reputation for being committed to safety and training."

Sharon Eason, NVQ Centre Co-ordinator at Keith Cook Training Services, said:

"You have to salute GCS for being far sighted enough to recognise the importance of having accredited workers and for giving them the opportunity to achieve qualifications at no cost."

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

"Many Northamptonshire employers realise the value of up-skilling the workforce and know 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 can take advantage of future growth opportunities.

“Only two years in and Train to Gain has already helped over 1,700 businesses across Northamptonshire. 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](http://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 Sema,

ConstructionSkills, People 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://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](http://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**