

NO NEED TO COMPROMISE ON TRAINING: NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ORGANISATIONS' STAFF INVESTMENT PAYS OFF

Date of issue 22 October 2008
Publication number em-93NorthantsSkillsPledgecompact.doc

Some of Northamptonshire's largest employers have urged others to follow their lead and invest in their staff and local communities to improve performance, staff retention and efficiency and help beat the potential impact of the credit crunch.

At a skills breakfast at the Sunley Management Centre in Northampton, Connexions Northamptonshire, Corby Borough Council and the Tresham Institute, who have signed up to the Government's Skills Pledge, urged other organisations to make the Pledge and benefit from the funding and advice available through the Train to Gain service and to ensure their staff and local communities are "future proofed" during difficult economic conditions.

Corby Borough Council, who employ 494 people, are committed to increasing jobs, prosperity and public services for the Borough

By making the Skills Pledge the Borough has been able to reduce training costs and encourage further employees to improve themselves and help the Council offer better services.

Cllr Mark Pengelly, Corby Borough Council's lead member for Leadership, said:

"These are difficult times but by investing in our staff we know we have a highly skilled and qualified workforce who can help us contribute to our vision of a

superior quality of life for the people of Corby, and public services that rank with the very best.

“Our ambition is to regenerate and grow and by 2013 we aim to be the fastest growing Borough in the country; we also aim to be the fastest improving, with rising levels of skills, income and public satisfaction with the quality of life and delivery of public services.

“By making the Skills Pledge we have been able to cut costs in training but have been able to increase the training we provide, to take a vital step towards reaching our ambitions.”

Connexions Northamptonshire, who have access points across the county, made the Skills Pledge to invest in their 190 staff and ensure they can offer high quality guidance, advice and support to young people across Northamptonshire. By making the Skills Pledge, Connexions Northamptonshire, have publicly demonstrated their commitment to training and development.

Adrian Bell, Chief Executive of Connexions Northamptonshire, said:

“The staff of Connexions Northamptonshire is its most valuable resource and we recognise the vital contribution that they make to the provision of effective services and support for young people. We are committed to a comprehensive programme of training and development to enable us to achieve our vision: The best start in life for all young people.”

Tresham Institute, a college of further and higher education with campuses in Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough and The Rutland College in Oakham, made the Skills Pledge in November 2007 to ensure their nearly 3,000 full time learners and 13,000 part time learners benefit from an environment where they can achieve their maximum potential. Since then Tresham has invested in 520 of its staff who have been able to study for more than 360 qualifications in a total of 11,924 total training hours. By investing in its staff, Tresham has seen increased morale and job satisfaction from its employees, which in turn benefits students who attend the college and are the main focus of the organisation.

Mark Silverman, Principal at Tresham Institute said:

“Tresham strongly supports this pledge and would urge others to get involved and sign up to provide skills training for their employees.

“As a lead provider of Train to Gain, Tresham is making significant changes to support the skills development of the local community, already more than 300 new learners have benefited from this scheme. Last year our Business Solutions Centre, which specialises in providing bespoke skills training directly to employers, worked with 246 employers in the workplace or at our Business Centre, improving the knowledge and skills of the workforce.

“By helping to drive up the level of skills in our workforce we are also helping to safeguard other local businesses against knocks they could face during the economic downturn”.

Liz Searle, LSC area director for Northamptonshire, said:

“By making the Skills Pledge these organisations have made a commitment to their employees, their prosperity and their communities. Investing in the skills of their people will make it easier for them to respond to economic challenges and also ensure they are well placed to take advantage of future growth opportunities.

“We are delighted that Connexions, Corby Borough Council and the Tresham Institute have benefited from committing to ensure their workforce receive the training and development necessary to keep their skills up to date in such vital sectors for Northamptonshire. It gives a clear message to industry and the wider community across Northamptonshire that skills are important at all levels within an organisation and particularly important during difficult economic times.

“Now more than ever, employers need to make sure their staff are highly skilled and ready to face economic challenges and I would urge other organisations to make the Skills Pledge and take advantage of the funding, advice and training on offer through the Train to Gain service.

“We would encourage all employers across Northamptonshire to make the Skills Pledge. By making this commitment employers will also have access to a Skills Broker, part of the LSC’s Train to Gain service, through whom they can access free literacy, numeracy and first full Level 2 qualification courses as well as a range of partially subsidised activities.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Photographs available. Visit <http://nds.coi.gov.uk> or call Helen Clarke at COI News and PR on 0115 9712787
2. The Sunley Management Centre, University of Northampton Park Campus, Boughton Green Road, Northampton, NN2 7AL
3. The Leitch Review of Skills, published in December 2006, warned that the UK must 'raise its game' on skills at all levels if it is to sustain and improve its position in the global economy. The Skills Pledge fulfils a key recommendation made in the review, at the heart of a new 'deal' where employers will be able to shape the skills system to meet their needs, in return for prioritising skills training at all levels.
4. The Skills Pledge is a voluntary commitment by employers to increasing the skills of their workforce for the benefit of the business.
5. For more information about the Skills Pledge visit www.traintogain.gov.uk/skillspledge

**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**