

## **LSC celebrates helping 11,000 people across Cambridgeshire develop vocational skills**

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£13 million of investment from the European Social Fund (ESF) has helped more than 11,000 people across the county into work, learning or to develop their skills in their existing jobs, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Cambridgeshire announced today (Thursday, 20 September).

The current six-year European Social Fund (ESF) programme is coming to a close during which time 32 projects have been allocated funding by LSC Cambridgeshire (for examples of these projects, see Notes to editors) with a further 26 projects currently targeting 13,000 beneficiaries due for completion in March 2008.

To mark the success of the funding programme, LSC Cambridgeshire celebrated with a 'fun day' event at the East of England Showground near Peterborough today. Around 200 people attended, including learners and project providers who have benefited from the funding programme. Designed to recognise the hard work and achievements of all involved in the funded projects, fun activities were available for all attendees to take part in, including a bungee run, gladiator jousting, giant Jenga and even toilet racing, which saw participants racing around on motorised toilets!

Amy Abbott, ESF Contracts Manager for LSC Cambridgeshire, said: "ESF helps people throughout the UK who need additional support to enter jobs, improve skills, and develop their potential at work. Unfortunately, many people often face a disadvantage in the labour market, including the long-term unemployed, lone parents and those with a lack of basic skills.

“This event celebrated the achievement of the projects in Cambridgeshire with the support of ESF money and provided an ideal opportunity to thank and congratulate all those who run and have taken part in the projects.

The current ESF programme is drawing to a close, but the Learning and Skills Council is working with other key agencies in the East of England region to plan for the next round of funding that will cover the period 2008 to 2010. The focus of the new programme will continue to be helping people get the local skills they need to enter work, as well as improving the skills needed by local employers. Co-financing organisations including the Learning and Skills Council will be issuing invitations to tender in the autumn of this year.

For information on ESF projects in Cambridgeshire call the ESF Co-Financing Team on 01733 895233 or e-mail [ESFCoFinancingTeamCambridgeshire@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:ESFCoFinancingTeamCambridgeshire@lsc.gov.uk).

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**Caption for image 7374: 16-year-old Amy Weston, who has been ESF-funded through NACRO in Cambridgeshire, gets to grip with the giant buzz wire**

**Caption for image 7932: Eileen George, who has taken part in the ESF-funded Outreach – Developing Essential Skills Project from the CP Learning Trust,**

**Caption for image 7505: Carla Caffell, 16, one of 11,000 learners who have benefited from £13m of ESF money brought into the county by the LSC**

#### **Notes to editors**

**Case studies of learners are available to the media. For further information or an interview with a spokesperson, please contact Susie Lockwood at Band & Brown Communications on 01603 417722 or email [susie.lockwood@bbpr.com](mailto:susie.lockwood@bbpr.com).**

#### **ESF funded projects**

##### **Nacro East Anglia**

Nacro is a national crime reduction charity. There are currently two Nacro projects running in Cambridgeshire and the main aim of these is to reduce the amount of young

people that are not in employment or education or to prevent young people falling into this category.

The Summer School project is focused on keeping learners' interests at an optimal level so they can return to education instead of losing interest, by incorporating a mix of fun and educational activities. The second project is an alternative Entry to Employment programme helping the learners who are not in education employment or training into work and learning.

### **New Horizons, Cambridge Housing Society**

This project focuses on 'Skills for Life' (SfL) such as numeracy and literacy and incorporates a unique way of reaching SfL learners. Through the social housing organisation learners with SfL needs can be contacted in their own homes and encouraged to undertake learning that will improve their confidence and work prospects.

### **Young Apprenticeship, Peterborough Regional College**

The project ran from April 2005 to June this year and was designed for young individuals aged 14 – 16 who have dropped out of education or are at risk of doing so. It was delivered by four FE colleges offering level 1 or 2 qualifications.

### **The Castle Project, Cambridgeshire**

This project targets disadvantaged groups of unemployed 16 to 25-year-olds throughout Cambridgeshire including the homeless, ex-offenders and drug/alcohol abusers. They are assisted through rehabilitation services that are provided by the Castle Project. Help is given to compile detailed assessments and work plans in order to remove barriers into the working world.

The Castle Project has run since April 2005 and will continue until December 2007.

### **What ESF does**

The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of four Structural Funds designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union.

The current programmes run from 2000 to 2006. ESF will provide about £4.5 billion in Great Britain (£3.5 billion in England) in this period.

### **ESF aims**

ESF's main purpose is to support the annual UK Employment Action Plan, which sets out how UK policies and initiatives take account of the Employment Guidelines established within the European Employment Strategy. ESF is channelled through three Structural Fund Objectives and the EQUAL Community Initiative.

**The European Social Fund aims to:**

- help unemployed and inactive people enter work
- provide opportunities for people at a disadvantage in the labour market
- promote lifelong learning
- develop the skills of employed people
- improve women's participation in the labour market

**LSC**

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational 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 by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.