

PRESS RELEASE
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Train to Gain Ad Campaign Signposts Skills Training for Businesses

A high-profile Government advertising campaign has kicked off to promote the benefits of training to businesses, particularly during tougher economic times.

Throughout November, peak-time television and radio adverts will say that it is now quicker and easier for companies to get the training they need to keep their businesses moving by accessing the Train to Gain service.

Train to Gain offers free, impartial advice, support and funding to help companies of all sizes train and develop their employees. It has helped more than 570,000 people improve their skills since 2006 – but the Government wants to make it easier for small businesses in particular to benefit. Last month Skills Secretary John Denham announced that small businesses will be the focus of £350m of Government funds to help them train their staff.

The £2.4 million advertising push runs from November 10 for three weeks and includes slots during major TV series such as *Coronation Street*, *The Bill* and *Emmerdale*. The television advertisement - part of the Learning and Skills Council's ongoing campaign, 'Our future. It's in our hands' – features a "hand ballet".

Janet Meenaghan, Director of Operations for Train to Gain at the LSC East of England said: “Since its launch, Train to Gain has helped more than 8,000 organisations in the East of England with over 30,000 employees getting training and over 17,000 learners have achieved a qualification.

“Investing in training is essential to any business but it is more important than ever in the current economic climate. Research shows that companies that don’t train are 2.5 times more likely to fail than those who do. Employees who are better skilled enable employers to stay competitive, achieve maximum growth and realise the full potential of their business.”

Janet Meenaghan goes on to say: “Historically training and development is not a priority for some business during an economic downturn, with the training budget often the first budget to be cut.”

She added: “Small businesses are important to our economy, but don’t always have the time or resources to find out about the support that is available to help them thrive. The advertising campaign will now highlight that it is now easier to build the skills and expertise of people in the small business community.”

The key elements of the new Train to Gain package for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are:

- Funding for "bite-sized chunks" - small units or modules of qualifications in subjects known to be important to SMEs, such as business improvement, team-working, customer service, and risk management;
- Extending the successful leadership and management programme so that more SMEs can benefit from it, including companies with just 5-10 workers;

- Relaxing the rules to allow workers to get relevant training at GCSE level (level 2), even if they already have a previous qualification at this level; and more funding for training to level 3 (equivalent to two A-levels);

By contacting Train to Gain directly, employers can access their local skills broker, local college or learning provider to find out more about training available for their staff.

So far, over 100,000 businesses in England have benefited through the Train to Gain service. The recently launched new, more flexible Train to Gain package will enable even more employers to get support for training at this difficult time. The LSC urges employers large or small to get in touch so they can take full advantage of the help available.

Notes to editors

For media enquiries please contact Sarah Leith Russell, Regional Press Officer on 01234 420076 or e-mail sarah.leith.russell@lsc.gov.uk.

1. To see a copy of the television advert, visit:
<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=X9dlwZlWrRY>
2. For more information on Train to Gain call 0800 015 55 45 or visit
www.traintogain.gov.uk
3. Since its launch in 2006, Train to Gain has helped over 570,000 employees in England get training, and over 291,000 learners have achieved a qualification. 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. The overall budget for Train to Gain, which is available free to all employers, is set to rise to 1bn by 2010-11.

4. The Secretary of State announced a new package of support for SMEs on Tuesday 21 October. Only private sector SMEs (i.e. with up to 250 employees) will be able to access the new flexibilities described above. The press notice can be found on the DIUS website at:

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=381864&NewsAreaID=2&NavigatedFromDepartment=False>

CONTINUATION SHEET

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