

## PRESS RELEASE

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#### EAST OF ENGLAND BUSINESSES URGED TO TRAIN FOR MAXIMUM GAIN

Businesses in the East of England could be losing their competitive advantage by not providing training for their staff, according to the Learning & Skills Council (LSC).

The National Audit Office has found that skills gaps cost a typical 50-employee business £165,000 in lost revenue each year\*. In addition, it is estimated that one in six employers (16%) in England are experiencing skills gaps in their workforce and of those, nearly eight in ten (79%) say it has had an impact on their business\*\*.

Paul Storey, Skills Development Director at the LSC East of England, said: "Our region does have a thriving business community but we are concerned that perceived barriers to training could be costing businesses much more than they think in terms of competitiveness and lost revenue."

A recent survey of small and medium-sized businesses (SME's) across the country carried out on behalf of the LSC found that 81% recognise that training is the key to success and 43% admit they should focus more on it. However, the survey also found that of these a quarter say they don't have time to search for suitable training options and one in five are bewildered by the range of training available.

Train to Gain is a free and impartial advisory service that helps businesses identify what training they need to improve their business and then helps them find appropriate training providers. By using Train to Gain, companies can also save money on training as the scheme will help with

funding for some courses, while all first Level 2 qualifications (equivalent to five good GCSE passes) are free.

The much-publicised Leitch Report states that the UK is one of the largest economies in the world but its prosperity has been constrained by its relatively poor skills base. Training has been proven to increase both productivity and profit for the business and also to improve the morale and motivation of staff.

Paul Storey continued: “Many businesses claim that there is just not enough time to look into the available options, but Train to Gain cuts both the effort and potentially the cost of providing training to employees so we would urge businesses to make sure they are not falling behind and get in touch.”

With Train to Gain, the training is tailored exactly to your business needs. A Skills Broker will review your business and current skills to assess if any gaps exist that could be restricting your company’s success. This analysis is provided free of charge and will enable the Skills Broker to recommend a range of training solutions, find an appropriate training provider and recommend how the training can be delivered to best suit your business.

A customised training package can then be put together for your employees with the help of your Skills Broker and training provider. It may also be possible to secure funding for the training, which the Skills Broker can explain to you and help you to structure the training in the best way.

With the Skills Broker providing support at every step, even reviewing the progress of the training for you and your employees, Train to Gain finally removes the barriers most businesses see to training their staff.

For more information on the Train to Gain scheme, visit [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk) or call 0800 387326.

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## Notes to editors:

### Train to Gain

1. Train to Gain was launched nationally in September 2006 with the vision that by 2010, young people and adults in England will have the knowledge and skills that match the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce.
2. It is currently being rolled out across the East of England, including Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.
3. The service is administered by The Learning and Skills Council and delivered by The East of England Brokerage Consortium and The Consultancy Home Counties Ltd

\* Employers' perspectives on improving skills for employment, December 2005 (National Audit Office)

\*\* LSC's National Employer Skills Survey 2005

The Survey was conducted by FreshMinds for the LSC during May 2007. A total of 468 SME's in England responded, across a range of sectors.

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