

London's Businesses urged to commit to training their Staff

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The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) today called on businesses across London to commit to training their staff by signing the Skills Pledge. The Government is urging every business across England to sign the pledge in order to ensure that millions more adults have the qualifications they need to get a job and progress in their careers. 305 London Employers have already pledged to train their staff, and the LSC is hoping that many more will sign up this week.

Hundreds of the top HR directors and Learning and Development providers from businesses across London are expected to attend this weeks HRD 2008 exhibition at Excel (15-17 April). The LSC is sponsoring the Learning Zone, which will provide an opportunity for senior HR representatives to meet up with skills brokers and learn more about how training and development can make their business more competitive (stands no 863 and 357).

Advice on some of the LSC funded programmes such as Apprenticeships, and Train to Gain will be available as well as the opportunity for companies to visit the LSC's *Skills Pledge Wall of Fame* and make a public commitment to train their staff by signing the Government backed Skills Pledge. In making the pledge companies commit to supporting their employees to work toward a relevant qualification to at least Level 2 (the equivalent of five GCSEs at A-C grade), including basic skills such as Maths and English.

Research recently carried out by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development stated that although only 13 per cent of the 700 companies surveyed had signed the skills pledge, up to 50 per cent would consider signing up to the pledge or participating in the Train to Gain initiative.

David Hughes, Regional Director of the LSC in London said:

“The Train to Gain programme in London is gathering momentum. To date 12 000 employers have joined the programme, 6 000 of which had not undertaken any training in the previous 12 months, and 45 000 employees have started an LSC funded qualification (Level 2, 3 or Skills for Life). I urge all employers to follow suit and prioritise skills training at every level, to drive their business to a better future.”

According to research from the Learning and Skills Council’s National Employer Service almost 90 per cent of the 201 companies polled said that training had already resulted in demonstrable benefits ranging from increased productivity to better employee commitment and involvement in the organisation and improved employee morale.

Eddie Stride, Chief Executive of City Gateway in Tower Hamlets said:

“We are very proud to make the Skills Pledge. We know the value of training because it’s at the heart of what we do. We see what a positive difference training can make to people who might not have had the best start in life and it’s crucial that those offering this training are skilled individuals themselves. We hope to continue helping people in Tower Hamlets to aspire to and achieve great things for many years to come.”

David Fairhurst, Senior Vice President & Chief People Office of McDonalds said:

“We have committed to the Skills Pledge because we’ve always believed that engaging employees through training produces better customer service and higher staff retention rates, which ultimately have a positive impact on the bottom line of any business.”

For more information about Train to Gain and the Skills Pledge visit www.traintogain.gov.uk.

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Notes to editors

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.

What is the Skills Pledge?

An initiative launch by the government in 2007, the Skills Pledge is a voluntary, public commitment by the leadership of a company or organisation to support all its employees to develop their basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, and work towards relevant, valuable qualifications to at least Level 2 (equivalent to 5 good GCSEs). The purpose is to ensure that all staff are skilled, competent and able to make a full contribution to the success of the company/organisation. The Pledge can be given by the Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, owner/manager or other Board member, on behalf of the organisation. It is a corporate commitment covering the whole company/organisation. For those employees who do not already have a full Level 2 qualification, the Government will provide funding to help them gain basic literacy and numeracy skills as well as their first full Level 2 qualification. The Skills Pledge is open to all employers of all sizes in the private, public and voluntary sectors.

For more information visit: <http://www.traintogain.gov.uk/skillspledge/>

Train to Gain:

Train to Gain is a service from the Learning and Skills Council, helping businesses get the training they need to succeed. The cornerstone of Train to Gain is a Skills Brokerage service that offers free impartial advice, and helps find the best training to meet business needs.

Train to Gain is important because skills shortages continue to have a negative impact on UK productivity and competitiveness in the face of fast-growing economies. Train to Gain aims to encourage all businesses and individuals to value and realise the benefits that learning and skills can bring and to invest appropriately. It is expected that by the end of 2010, over 500,000 learners nationally will have achieved a first full Level 2 qualification through Train to Gain.

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