

LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL LAUNCHES LONDON AMBASSADOR NETWORK FOR SKILLS

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London, 22 April: Today, the Learning and Skills Council launched an Ambassador network for skills in London. The *Skills for London Ambassador Network* brings together over 30 London business and public sector leaders, including representatives from the likes of BAA, The Wates Group and The O2 Arena as well as smaller employers such as Fifteen, Crussh and Coffee Snobs Ltd (see full list in notes to editors).

Faced with the current challenging economic environment, the *Skills for London Ambassador Network* is an effort to raise the profile of skills and training as a key part of business survival for the capital's employers. The network was launched this morning at the group's inaugural meeting which took place at The Imagination Gallery in central London.

Ambassadors, drawn from a wide array of industries, gathered to talk about the positive impact that investing in skills and training has had on their organisations, discuss the wider skills challenge facing the capital and look at new ways of meeting the skills gaps faced by their organisations.

Jill Lowery, LSC Acting Regional Director for London, commented: "*Companies that don't invest in training are two-and-a-half times more likely to fail than those that do, so the launch of the Skills for London Ambassador Network has never been timelier. It's a great way for us to showcase the leadership many London businesses have taken in advancing*

the skills agenda within their sectors, and we hope that by sharing the experiences of business leaders who have seen first hand the benefits of investing in skills, we can inspire other organisations to make a similar commitment of their own.”

As part of the London Skills and Employment Board’s (LSEB) strategy to tackle the skills challenge faced by London employers, the Ambassador network is supported by a media campaign and events programme as well as an online LinkedIn Group.

Lucy Adams, HR Director, Eversheds LLP, London Skills and Employment Board, commented: *“The launch of the Skills for London Ambassador Network marks the fulfilment of an important part of LSEB’s strategy for skills in the capital – the need for an employer sales force which can talk to other employers in a way that makes sense and that people can relate to. We’re faced with some stark economic challenges, but we can’t lose sight of the importance of skills and training if the city is to stay competitive, innovative and successful.”*

Speaking at the launch event, Mark Biffin, Apprenticeship Programme & Strategy Manager at BT, said: *“It is a difficult time for many companies, which is why it is more important than ever to highlight the case for long term investment in skills and training. I’ve spent a lot of time talking to other London businesses about the success of our training programmes at BT so it’s great to finally have a network like this where we can share our collective experiences with other organisations in the capital and make sure London businesses are in a position to take advantage of opportunities when we turn the corner in the current downturn.”*

ENDS

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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.

The SkillsForLondon Ambassador Network

The names of the Ambassadors are as follows:

1. **Wendy Albutt**, Learning and Development Manager, Dollond & Aitchison
2. **Graham Bann**, Director of Skills & Talent, Business in The Community
3. **Clive Barker**, Managing Director, CSB Logistics
4. **Kay Bedford**, Headteacher, Swiss Cottage School
5. **Jonathan Brookes**, Community & Development Manager, Lakehouse
6. **Tim Davis**, Director of Learning for the London Region, The Fire Brigades Union
7. **Tromie Dodd**, Apprentice Programme Manager, Fifteen
8. **Terry Eleftheriou**, Recycling Operations Administrations Manager, Haringey Council Recycling Centre
9. **Toby Fosh**, Lettings Manager, One Stop Estates
10. **John Griffin**, Chairman, Addison Lee
11. **George Kessler CBE**, Deputy Chairman, Kessler's International
12. **Sue Kidd**, Head of Organisational Development, Natural History Museum
13. **Juliet McGuigan**, Director, Coffee Snobs Ltd
14. **Paul Messenger**, Director, Coffee Snobs Ltd
15. **Harry Niazi**, Business Owner, Olley's Fish Experience
16. **Abim Olabinjo**, Chief Executive, Portobello Business Centre
17. **Chris Oliver**, AJC Wilson Bodyshop
18. **Sylvie Parcot**, HR Manager, Crussh
19. **Claire Parry**, Managing Director, Croydon College
20. **Mike Passey**, Training Manager, Rail Gourmet UK Ltd
21. **Pauline Puddicombe**, Business Manager, New Rush Hall School
22. **Allen Roberts**, Training & Development Manager, O2 Arena
23. **Penny Robinson**, Union Learning Representative, Barking & Dagenham Council
24. **Dame Ruth Silver**, Principal and Chief Executive, Lewisham College
25. **Gabby Smith**, Managing Director, Chatsworth Care
26. **Peter Swordy**, HR Director, Wembley National Stadium Ltd
27. **Ben Todd**, Director, Arcola Theatre
28. **Cyrus Todiwala**, CEO, Café Spice Namasté
29. **Nick Turner**, Partner, Monitor Group
30. **Dave Walsh**, Head of Apprenticeships, BT
31. **James Wates**, Deputy Chairman, The Wates Group
32. **Lee Wickens**, Training Manager, Addison Lee
33. **Colin Wiggins**, Director of Technical Training, BAA