

**7,000 businesses in London join Train to Gain  
Service engages more small businesses in London than national average**

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As Train to Gain today marks its first anniversary since it was rolled out, figures reveal that thousands of small businesses in London are using the service to train their staff.

In total, 7,060 employers have signed up to the programme, 74 per cent of which are smaller 'hard to reach'<sup>2</sup> businesses that have not previously engaged in training. The London service is leading the way in targeting this priority group.

Train to Gain provides a free impartial brokerage service to businesses to help them identify and access the skills training that their staff need for the business to succeed.

In London the Hotel and Restaurant sector has expressed the highest interest (1,500 employers) followed by Health and Social Work (1,100 employers) and the Wholesale and Retail sector (1,050 employers).

More than 52,000 employers nationally have signed up to date, exceeding the targets set by Government<sup>1</sup>. Latest figures reveal that 20,990 employees in London have begun learning through Train to Gain, while 2,650 have already completed full Level 2 qualifications (equivalent to five good GCSEs).

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<sup>1</sup> Government targets were to engage 33,000 employers from April 06 to March 07. Train to Gain has therefore beaten first year targets by 10%, and is well on track to achieve the second year targets.

Rt Hon John Denham MP, Secretary of State at the Department for Innovation Universities and Skills said: “If we are to succeed in today’s competitive global market, we need to train. The Government recently launched a skills campaign to encourage employers and individuals across the country to take control of their futures by investing in skills, and Train to Gain is the easiest way for businesses to achieve this challenge.”

Train to Gain has been making real differences to employers, with 86 per cent reporting satisfaction with the Brokerage service. The Mandeville Hotel, located in Marylebone Village, has benefited from improved customer service levels. Human Resources Manager Emese Szanti said: “Becoming a four-star deluxe property was an enormous change and challenge that meant we had to raise our standards. Participating in the Train to Gain programme is resulting in improvements right across our business. I would definitely recommend it to other employers.”

Another employer who has benefited from both the Employer Training pilot and Train to Gain programme is Menzies Aviation’s Connect2Work/T5, which specialises in providing bus services right around the clock for passengers, airport staff and airline crew at Heathrow Airport. Jean Drayton, Training Officer at Menzies Aviation said: “The drivers professionalism has increased, and they are more at ease communicating with passengers as well as aware of the Department of Transport regulations.” The training has certainly given the drivers more confidence many of whom said the benefits of Train to Gain had extended into their family lives.

Jaine Clarke, National Director of Skills for Employers at the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) commented:

“One year on, Train to Gain has got off to a great start. The fact that we’re exceeding our targets in employer take-up demonstrates the country’s demand for better skills and training, and we will continue to build on this success. The priority in the first year was to reach small companies not engaged with training. We delivered on this with over 74 per

cent of the employers signed up to Train to Gain within the 'hard to reach' group<sup>2</sup> in London (72 per cent nationally). In our second year we aim to reach a greater number of larger companies. Through the Skills Pledge we are reaching even more employers, as businesses make a firm commitment to training their staff.”

Officially launched by the Government in June, the Skills Pledge is a public and voluntary commitment made by employers to support all their employees to develop basic skills.

Jaine Clarke continues:

“To date, nearly 250 companies nationally have made the Skills Pledge, which directs companies to the Skills Brokerage element of Train to Gain. This is directly benefiting more than two million employees, and is just one way in which the LSC is reaching out to more employers to encourage them to train their staff.”

Susan Anderson, Director of Human Resources at the CBI supports Train to Gain:

“Businesses are committed to raising employees' skill levels and an increasing number of firms are signing the Skills Pledge. Companies, the Government and individuals are working together to raise the bar, and Train to Gain ensures firms can access training that fits their requirements and delivers the skills that are vital to individuals' future employability. We must build on the first year's success and ensure the service continues to develop to meet employers' needs.”

To find out more about how Train to Gain can help, employers should call 0800 634 0262 or visit [traintogain.gov.uk](http://traintogain.gov.uk). Alternatively, individuals and employers can access the information they need on skills via a dedicated phone line and website. The phone number is 0800 011 30 30 or website: [lsc.gov.uk/inourhands](http://lsc.gov.uk/inourhands)

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<sup>2</sup> 'Hard to reach' companies are those who are not a recognised Investor in People and who have not provided training leading to a qualification for their staff in the past year, many of them small companies.

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### **Notes to Editors**

#### **Train to Gain:**

Train to Gain is a service from the LSC, which helps 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.

#### **Skills Pledge:**

Officially launched by the Government on 14 June 2007, the Skills Pledge is a public and voluntary commitment made by employers to support all their employees to develop basic skills. This includes literacy and numeracy, and work towards relevant, valuable qualifications to at least Level 2 (equivalent to five good GCSEs). The Skills Pledge is designed to stimulate demand for training services and support a new culture where gaining skills is taken as a matter of course.

#### **Skills campaign:**

In July 2007, the LSC and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) launched the skills campaign. The campaign - *Our future. It's in our hands* - urges people to take control of their future by investing in skills. It is the most ambitious marketing and communications campaign of its kind, and over a three to five year period aims to bring about the cultural change needed to improve the attitudes and aspirations of employers and individuals to learning and skills across England.

#### **Leitch Review of Skills:**

Published in December 2006, the Leitch Review warned that the UK must become a world leader in skills by 2020 if it is to sustain and improve its position in the global economy.

#### **Learning and Skills Council:**

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. It is responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. It has a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Its 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. It works nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

### **Media Enquiries**

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