

Breaking the glass ceiling in London

Train to Gain pilot to tackle gender inequalities faced by women in the workplace

Date of issue 23 October 2007
Publication number LSC-PR-LOR-070021

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) revealed their plan to help shatter the glass ceiling by funding more workplace training for women in London to enable them to progress up the career ladder, at an event on Friday 19 October 2007. The UK economy could benefit by between £15 billion and £23 billion each year if gender segregation in the workplace is tackled, according to the Women and Work Commission Report (Feb 2006). In response to this, the LSC is investing £20 million on a Train to Gain Level 3 pilot in London which will offer funding for businesses to train women to the equivalent of 2 A levels in vocational skills.

Train to Gain offers businesses free and impartial advice and funding to match employers skills needs with relevant training to be delivered at a time and place to suit them. This means that more women can train on the job and acquire the skills they need to succeed. It is hoped that the £20 million investment in the pilot will increase the numbers of women in London with higher levels of skills, which will in turn help them to progress in their careers. Key sectors to be targeted will include construction, engineering, business and finance, manufacturing, transport, logistics, ICT and management.

Take the construction industry, where women are currently under-represented, they make up just 10 per cent of the full-time workforce (5 per cent part-time). The pilot will aim to get more women who work in construction and in other industries trained to a higher level so that they can take up more senior positions. Currently,

women represent just 16 per cent of managers and senior officials in full time jobs (just 5 per cent part-time). In business services, less than a third of the full-time workforce is female. There is a clear disparity here that needs to be addressed.

In an Economics report from the Greater London Authority '*Women in London's Economy*' it shows that by 2016, women are projected to take seven out of ten new jobs in London.

Baroness Margaret Prosser, The Chair of the Women's National Commission said:
"With this investment there is real opportunity for both women and their families; for business and the economy of our country in the future, as we will be making use of all our talent rather than just some of our talent."

Philippa Langton, Regional Director for Skills at the LSC said:

"We are one of the most successful economies in the world and London's productivity rate is off the page, yet we have the lowest employment rate in the country, just 69 per cent compared to 74 per cent nationally. A large portion of Londoners not currently working are women, particularly lone parents.

"Londoners need to get some of the really fantastic job opportunities that are taking place in London. Such as Cross rail, where 70,000 – 170,000 high level jobs are predicted, as well at the 2012 Games. With the appropriate training and support, women could move up and take on those high level jobs – there is a lot of wasted talent in our society at the moment."

Skills Minister, David Lammy MP said:

"We need more women to progress into advanced skills jobs; this is good for them and their families, and for their employers and the local economy. I am very

pleased that this innovative women's pilot in London is affording more women the chance to progress and more employers the opportunity to tap an under developed pool of talent."

The business benefits are clear. Employers will receive support and funding to help them train their employees at a place and time convenient to them. By investing in their employees they will be encouraging better business performance, higher levels of staff retention and motivation.

Feedback from the Train to Gain campaign supports the benefits for business: "Since we've started the training, there's been a significant change in managerial approach and performance. It has inspired us to share ideas more and to be more creative in tackling challenges. The average room rate has increased, which is having a knock-on effect on profitability. Train to Gain has re-energised our business"

Emese Szanti
Human Resources Manager
Mandeville Hotel

The Train to Gain Women's Pilot is available to all women regardless of their existing qualifications i.e. they could have no qualifications or a PHD. It responds to the need for everyone to update their skills to meet the new demands of their careers and the business environment.

To access this service, employers should call 0800 634 0262 or visit capital-women.org. Interested employees can visit the web site and download an 'ask your employer' form.

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Notes to Editors

Learning and Skills Council (LSC):

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.

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.

The Pilot is running in London offering part-funded skills training for women to enable them to attain a full level three qualification*. It is aimed at women in under-represented areas such as engineering, transport, construction, finance and agriculture. Additionally women working in management positions or those that have had a career break and have recently returned back to work may be able to access this programme

Unlike the mainstream Train to Gain programme, the pilot can offer funding to women no matter what level of education they may currently have (Train to Gain funds a first full Level 2 qualification*)

* Qualifications: Level 2 = 5 GCSE A*-C (or equivalent); Level 3 = 2 A Levels

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