

**LACK OF SKILLS HOLDING US BACK AT HOME AND AT  
WORK SAYS LSC SURVEY**

**National Skills Street Initiative To Promote Skills Launches Today**

**Date of issue**

**10 June 2008**

**Embargo until**

**10 June 2008 00:01**

---

New research released today reveals the barriers people feel stand in the way of them learning an additional skill. More than a third (39 percent) of adults blame a lack of time, while nearly a third (29 percent) of adults feel a lack of money is the main reason for them not learning a new skill. Sadly 13 percent of adults even said they felt they were too old to learn a new skill.

Interestingly, while time was the major barrier to learning for men, with over 40 percent of male adults stating they didn't have the time to learn a new skill, over a third of female respondents stated a lack of money as the major reason for them not taking up a new skill.

The research study was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to mark the launch of Skills Street, a campaign beginning on Saturday 7 June 2008 in Skipton near Leeds, which aims to highlight the ever-increasing importance and benefits of improving your skills by taking a typical street and measuring residents' skills levels and offering advice. An expert panel, including television presenter Carol Smillie, will be visiting a number of homes on the street to assess the skills residents have, those which they feel that they lack. The panel will offer advice, highlighting the skills residents may benefit from, and suggesting local training providers – demonstrating how accessible modern learning can be.

One of the main aims of Skills Street is to show people that learning a new skill and gaining a qualification is not as difficult as it may first appear, and to showcase the variety of learning and funding options available: including college courses, Apprenticeships and the Adult Learning Grant. The campaign also aims to highlight the financial benefits of learning a new skill – for example by investing money and time in learning; you could grow your annual salary by £2,000 - £3,000,[1]

The LSC aims to ease concerns that learning a new skill is costly and time consuming. Caroline O'Neill, Partnership Director for the LSC, says: 'Today's findings show that we have more to do to help people recognise the benefits of skills and qualifications, and to break down the barriers preventing people from learning new skills. Two out of three jobs in the future will require a higher level of skills and better qualifications. Indeed, in less than ten years, there will be very few unskilled jobs. Skills Street aims to kick-start the process and encourage people to fulfil their potential.

Carol Smillie, the television presenter and successful author who is helping to launch Skills Street, comments: 'I am delighted to be working on a project like Skills Street. As the world is changing, we all need skills – more so than ever before. People are often worried by the time it takes to learn a new skill, but a small investment in yourself can lead to a great reward, and remember, there may be funding to help with the cost – so check out the "In Our Hands" website.'

Why not visit <http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk> and complete the career assessment tool to get a list of jobs that are just right for you? Alternatively, if you are interested in learning a new skill, more information on different courses and details of funding opportunities can be found at <http://www.lsc.gov.uk>

**ENDS**

For all media enquiries, interview and photography requests, or to find out more about Skills Street, please contact:

---

Natasha Grocock, LSC, T: 02476 823 640 E: [natasha.grocock@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:natasha.grocock@lsc.gov.uk)  
Ann Gill, LSC, T: 02476 823 515 E: [ann.s.gill@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:ann.s.gill@lsc.gov.uk)

## **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 LSC offers a host of support services to help those who are already in the workforce, or are about to enter the workforce, to gain the skills they need to succeed, secure their future or grow their income. For example, you could receive the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) for your decided course, a grant designed as a helping hand for adults thinking about learning but worried about the financial barriers standing in their way. ALG provides low income adult learners with up to £30 a week to help with the extra costs of learning. Since the grant became available, over 43,000 people have received ALG. You could also access training at work through the LSC's flagship programme for employers, Train to Gain. – I think this should be in the Notes to editors

### **Carol Smillie Biography:**

Carol Smillie is one of the UK's most sought after presenters for television programmes, award ceremonies, corporate events, advertisements and charity work. Those who know her primarily from Changing Rooms may be surprised by the range of her work on and off the TV. She has won a NATIONAL TV AWARD, an INDIE award and was nominated for a BAFTA. Carol began her career in show business as the much publicised hostess on ITV's WHEEL OF FORTUNE, a role however, which denied her a chance to speak. She found her voice, and her feet, shortly after as one of the main reporters on BBC2's THE TRAVEL SHOW, and, after two years, she was snapped up as a regular on BBC1's HOLIDAY, often fronting the show. BBC's SUMMER HOLIDAY and HOLIDAY SWAPS, quickly followed, and for three years in succession, she fronted THE NATIONAL LOTTERY.

However, the show she will always be known for is, of course, BBC television's CHANGING ROOMS, the flagship DIY programme which changed the face of British television as we know it today. The programme earned Carol invitations to Buckingham Palace and Downing Street and the big red book on THIS IS YOUR LIFE. She has since fronted shows like Dream Holiday Home (C5) A Brush With Fame (ITV1), took part in Strictly Come Dancing (BBC1) winning 5th place and is currently hosting her own quiz show Postcode Challenge (STV). She is very much in demand in the corporate market as a host for company conferences and award ceremonies, and was chosen to host the Duke of Edinburgh's 80th birthday celebrations at the Royal Albert Hall.