

## ***NORTH EAST COLLEGES AND TRAINING PROVIDERS RECOGNISED FOR EXCELLENCE***

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The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has celebrated the achievements of 22 providers in delivering high quality training to employers, including North East organisations Newcastle College, City of Sunderland College and NETA Training Group.

At an event in London these providers were recognised as being the first to achieve this new voluntary accreditation.

The new standard highlights excellence in the two areas that employers have told us are most important to them:

- Part A - provider responsiveness to employer needs
- Part B - provider excellence in a particular vocational area.

All three providers based in the North East achieved both Part A and Part B accreditations, and were among only a handful of training organisations to reach this double standard. Each was recognised in their specialist area, with NETA Training Group acknowledged in the Engineering category, City of Sunderland College in ICT and Newcastle College in Construction.

David Lammy MP, Skills Minister, said: "Training is essential to any successful enterprise and we are determined to make high quality skills training accessible for all. The new standard highlights excellence in provider responsiveness and will be a mark that employers can trust."

A key development of the standard from previous accreditation schemes is that it is not attached to public funding or investment and will be open to both publicly and privately funded organisations providing higher and further education. In addition, accreditation is verified by employers, meaning that the criteria for achieving the standard reflects their needs.

Chris Roberts, Regional Director, LSC North East, said: "It is fantastic that all three North East providers have achieved the full accreditation in this new standard. This is a positive sign for the further education sector as training organisations aim to improve their offer to respond to the needs of employers.

"There are numerous benefits of this new standard to both employers and providers such as increasing the quality of training provision, while encouraging employers to invest more in training. I hope this motivates others to follow suit and work towards achieving the new standard."

The standard has been extremely well-received to date by the sector, with over 50 training providers having applied, including colleges, universities, commercial and publicly funded training organisations, and several large employers. Feedback from training providers involved in the testing phase of the standard has also been very positive. Almost all reported that the process of going through the standard had sharpened their approach to working with employers and demonstrated to them where they need to make changes to better meet the needs of employers.

Frank Ramsay, Chief Executive, NETA Training Group, said: "NETA Training Group is delighted to be one of the first providers in the country to achieve this new voluntary accreditation. We are proud to be associated with the Learning and Skills Council's ongoing campaign because it underpins our ongoing commitment to training and development."

Jackie Fisher, Principal and Chief Executive at Newcastle College, said: “We are absolutely delighted to have been awarded the new standard. The college is committed to genuinely engaging with employers and businesses, understanding what their needs are and building our development programmes and facilities around those needs.”

Angela O’Donoghue, Principal at City of Sunderland College, said: “This is fantastic news for City of Sunderland College. We are delighted to be one of the first providers to achieve the new standard, with no conditions, as it demonstrates the strength of our business to business work. Our team has worked hard to build a reputation for providing genuine business solutions through skills development.”

- ENDS -

#### **Notes to editors**

Recognised providers are:

- Basingstoke College of Technology
- DC Training & Development Services Ltd
- Hadlow College
- Hospitality Training Partnership (HTP)
- London College of Beauty Therapy
- Newbury College
- Newham College
- Reaseheath College
- South Devon College
- Sutton Coldfield College
- Thatcham Training
- Uxbridge College
- Chichester College
- Cornwall College
- Happy Computers
- Leeds College of Building
- NETA Training Group
- Newcastle College
- City of Sunderland College
- West Suffolk College
- Norwich City College
- Further accreditation providers:
- Derby College
- Lewisham College
- Tameside College
- Wakefield College

**CoVEs and the new standard:**

CoVEs increase the provider's capacity to deliver vocational or sector based training. They often involve a partnership between LSC funded providers. The CoVE Programme will run until 2010.

The new standard however, is a voluntary quality mark available to any type of provider. It complements the Framework for Excellence (FFE), the LSC's new compulsory, annual, quality assessment, as it contains an assessment of employer responsiveness.

The new standard will feed into National Skills Academies as they will work with providers who have achieved the new standard as their delivery partners.

**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.

**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.