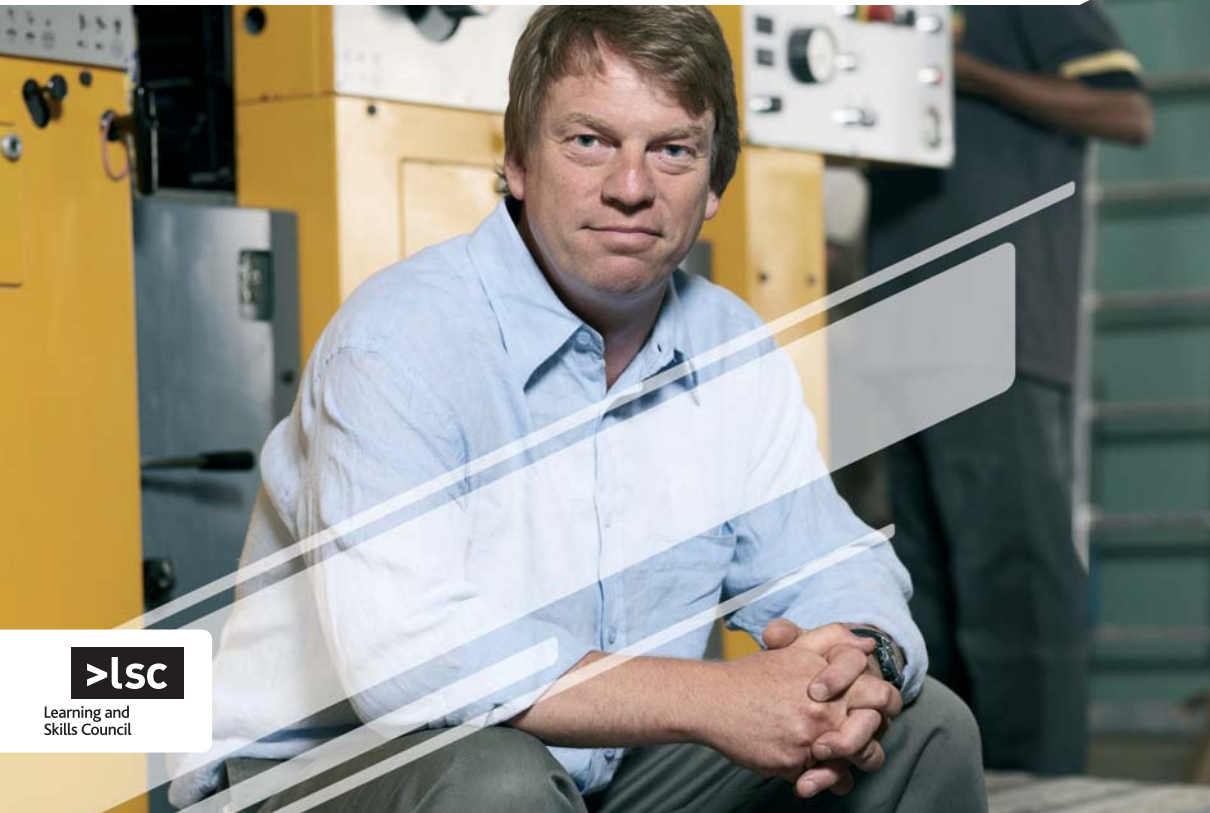


Our
future.
It's in
our hands



A GUIDE TO SKILLS AND TRAINING SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS IN THE NORTH EAST



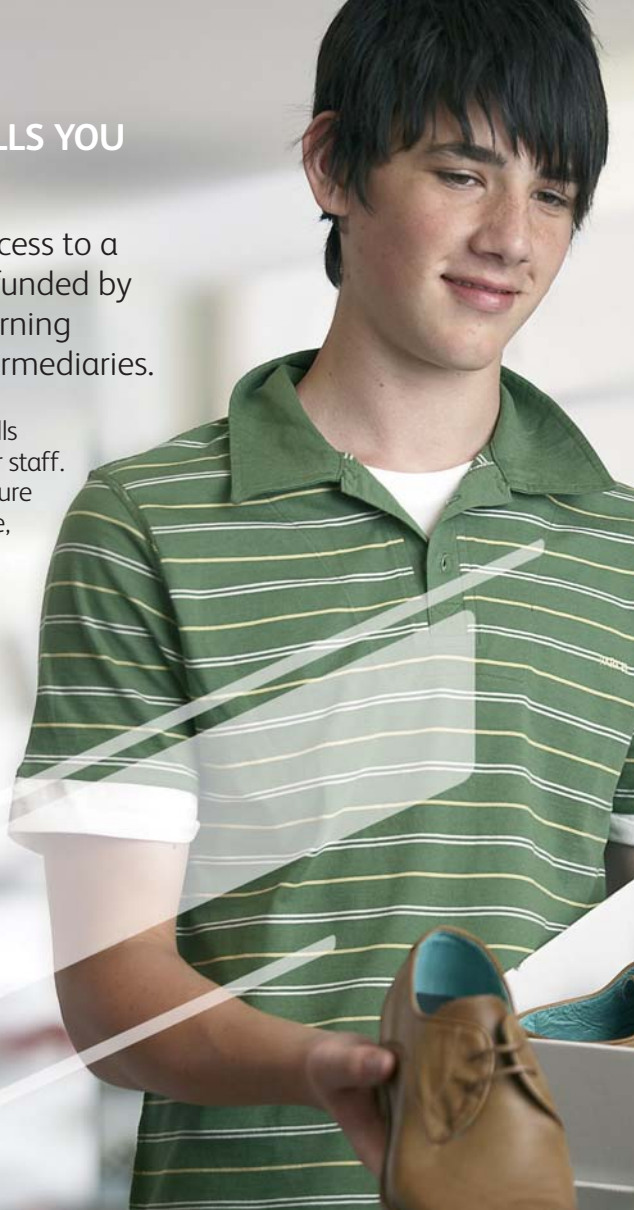
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Learning and
Skills Council

INTRODUCTION – GET THE SKILLS YOU NEED FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS!

In the North East, employers have access to a wide range of products and services funded by the Government and delivered by learning providers, skills brokers and other intermediaries.

This guide outlines the range of training and skills development support available for you and your staff. It also signposts you to relevant contacts to ensure you get the help you need from the right people, in the right place, at the right time.



WHY TRAIN YOUR WORKFORCE?

Training has many business benefits. It is proven to boost competitiveness, productivity and staff motivation, and reduces your recruitment costs. Through investing in staff development and training your business could benefit by having:

- **Efficient, motivated staff**

A large number of employees say that they'd feel more motivated if their organisation invested in their skills. Training gives your employees the skills and awareness to do their jobs effectively, and the initiative and ambition to drive your business forward.

- **Enhanced profits**

Getting the right skills in place, cuts waste and boosts profitability. A company employing 50 staff could save £165,000* every year by filling the gaps in its employees' skills.

- **A competitive business**

Training can help keep your business competitive. Whether you're mastering new technical developments in your sector, making the best use of IT, improving your customer service or boosting your internal efficiency, training keeps your skills up to date and makes sure you stay ahead of the competition.

- **Staff retention**

By supporting your employees' development and helping them gain valuable qualifications, you strengthen their commitment to your company. They'll stay longer-term, cutting your recruitment costs.

- **Fewer unfilled positions**

In 2007, 130,000 jobs remained unfilled because no suitable candidate was available. By training your existing staff you can be sure that you always have the right person for the job.

*Employers' perspectives on improving skills for employment, National Audit Office, 2005.

TRAIN TO GAIN – WHAT'S IN IT FOR MY BUSINESS?

Everyday, 1.3 million people go to work without the skills they need to do their jobs well. With help from Train to Gain you can invest in skills, giving your employees the ability, confidence and motivation to deliver real business results.

Train to Gain is a joint investment – you and the Government working together to boost your business by improving the skills of your individual staff members.

Train to Gain can help your business:

- get the essential skills to boost your business performance
- improve your business efficiency and increase profits
- help your staff grow in motivation and confidence

Training needn't be a challenge. Through Train to Gain you'll meet a skills broker, college or training provider, who'll offer expert skills advice at no cost to your business and guide you every step of the way.

Saving you time and money – with expert advice and support

Organising and implementing training can be challenging and time-consuming for employers. A skills broker, college or training provider takes on much of the hard work, identifying quality courses, provision and business support, helping you schedule your training and support to minimise disruption to your business.



Train to Gain works in five simple steps

Step 1. Identifies the skills that your business needs, now and in the future

Step 2. Creates a tailored package of training that fits into your employees' work schedules

Step 3. Ensures training is planned to meet your business needs and helps you find reliable local training providers

Step 4. Helps you find funding to complement your investment

Step 5. Helps you monitor progress every step of the way and evaluates the training to ensure real results

How do I access Train to Gain?

Call the helpline **0800 015 55 45** or fill in the online enquiry form on the website **www.traintogain.gov.uk**. You will then be put through to a skills broker who will work with you to develop a training plan to suit your business.

Alternatively, you can work with any college or training provider directly. If you already have an established relationship with a college or training provider or if there is a training provider that you would like to work with, you can find out more about them and how to get in touch by going to the regional training provider search website

www.employertraining.co.uk

Will the Train to Gain training be funded?

Yes, the chosen training provider's training costs will be met. Your skills broker, college or training provider will be able to help you source this.

If Train to Gain funded training has already been accessed, can additional courses be funded?

Yes, there are no restrictions on the number of times you can access the Train to Gain service. Contact the skills broker, college or training provider who assisted you initially to find out more about further opportunities for Train to Gain support.

Who do I contact?

Call the Train to Gain employer helpline:

0800 015 55 45 or visit:
www.traintogain.gov.uk



LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Skills development in a successful business doesn't just apply to your staff. Every successful business requires effective leadership to get the most from the skills of its staff and to achieve the aims of the business.

This requires a distinct set of management skills and the confidence to carry them out. You have to be able to motivate and develop your team, to communicate well with them and to build a business strategy that allows each individual to perform to the best of their abilities.

For organisations with 2 to 250 employees, the Train to Gain service offers an in-depth skills analysis for owner/managers, plus grant support of up to £1000 to develop leadership and management skills.

A number of managers from each organisation can access the funding, though the first beneficiary should be the owner/top manager.

Funding can be used to access any support or training identified in the leader/manager's personal development plan. This can include:

- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Qualifications
- Non-qualification based training

Who do I contact?

Contact Joy Gair, Northumberland Business Service (NBS):

01670 813322



APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships are a tried and tested way of developing skilled individuals with real experience in the workplace. They are popular with both young people and adults looking for skills and a career, and with employers looking to develop the brightest talent.

Designed by employers for employers, an Apprenticeship is a work-based learning programme that allows you to fill vacancies and to up-skill your existing staff. They are an ideal programme for training staff in your sector, but are equally a great way to train staff who work in support functions within your business such as IT, administration and finance.

There are now over 180,000 individuals starting Apprenticeships each year in England, and 180 different Apprenticeship ‘frameworks’, covering everything from aviation to customer service, meeting the needs of every sector.

All apprentices follow an Apprenticeship framework. There are two framework levels; an Apprenticeship and an Advanced Apprenticeship. They include the following elements listed in the table below.

Apprenticeship Framework

NVQ (Level 2 – equivalent to 5 GCSEs; or Level 3 – equivalent to 2 A-Levels)	A qualification that develops practical job-related skills and knowledge
Key Skills	Essential transferable skills such as communication; working with others and; problem solving
Technical Certificate	Theoretical training
Employment Rights and Responsibilities	Employment law and policies



A key benefit of an Apprenticeship programme is how flexible it is. They are designed to fit around the needs of the individual and the employer.

Most apprentices will be required to attend some off-the-job training which, where possible, will be arranged to suit your business. For the remainder of the delivery, a learning provider will visit the apprentices at regular intervals in the workplace and will involve you in reviewing the progress being made.

Apprentices are employed by you from day one, so they are a member of staff just like your other employees. Apprentices over the age of 19 are subject to the National Minimum Wage legislation. Those under 19 they should be paid a minimum of £80 per week (increasing to £95 per week from August 2009). If you need guidance on rates of pay, a representative from the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) or your learning provider can give you help and advice.

Employees who have already carried out training through Train to Gain can also progress on to an Apprenticeship/Advanced Apprenticeship and carry out the additional elements of the framework to gain the full qualification. They are also a great route for individuals in your organisation to progress onto higher level (including degree) qualifications.

Who do I contact?

To find out more about how Apprenticeships could work for your business call the National Apprenticeship Service helpline on **08000 150 600** or visit **www.apprenticeships.org.uk**

THE SKILLS PLEDGE

Making the Skills Pledge is your commitment to increasing the skills of your workforce. It's a promise that, through training, you'll work to boost the productivity of your business and realise the potential of your employees.

Since its 2007 launch, the Skills Pledge has helped thousands of companies to get the skills they need to succeed. It includes a commitment to support all of your employees to develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills and work towards relevant, valuable qualifications to at least Level 2 (broadly equivalent to five good GCSEs).

The Skills Pledge is open to employers of all sizes in the private, public and voluntary sectors.



The Skills Pledge

STAGE 1

Statement of
Intent / Skills Pledge
Commitment

As an employer you will provide a formal statement to your employees that you intend to make the Skills Pledge. You will formally make the Skills Pledge by signing the Pledge certificate.

STAGE 2

Diagnostic/Analysis

You will assess your skills and training priorities, and choose whether you want to commit to the core Skills Pledge or extend it to meet your wider business needs. This assessment will be supported by an organisational needs analysis or a “training needs” diagnostic. A skills broker can help with this stage if you wish.

STAGE 3

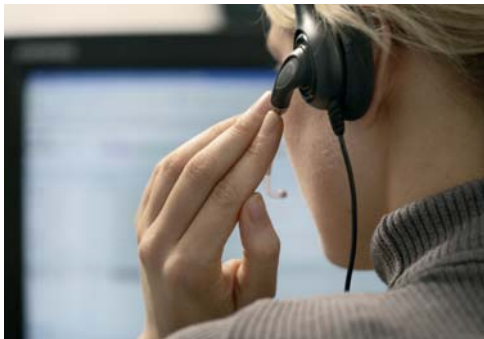
Action Plan

You will develop an action plan for your organisation to deliver the Skills Pledge. This sets out the priority skills and qualifications, numbers of staff to be involved, timescales and a broad schedule of activity, and how progress will be monitored and reported. A skills broker can help you identify which of your staff are eligible for public funding for their training, which qualifications will add most value, and which training provider can best meet your needs.

STAGE 4

Fulfilment

You will have completed the implementation of the Action Plan, and will review your future priorities for training.



LOCAL EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIPS (LEPs) – Ensuring new recruits have the skills and training to do the job

Jobcentre Plus and the LSC have been working together to develop a seamless process for employers who are looking to fill vacancies and recruit new members of staff. The aim is to help you find suitable employees and provide support to help them gain additional skills and training if they need it.

Through your Local Employment Partnership, you can work with Jobcentre Plus to recruit from a pool of job-ready candidates. A key benefit is saving you both time and money compared to using traditional recruitment methods (for example saving the cost of advertising in local newspapers and subsequent time sifting through hundreds of applications).

Who do I contact?

Call the Skills Pledge Employer helpline **0800 015 55 45** or make the Pledge online at: www.lsc.gov.uk/skillspledge and click on the section 'How do I make the Skills Pledge?'

You can either complete the process yourself using the online registration, or a skills broker can help you think through your training and business needs. They'll find the right training and training providers for your needs and budget. Together, you'll come up with an action plan. When you're ready, the skills broker will take you through the Skills Pledge process.

You can also access additional support including:

- Pre-employment training – flexible and tailored training to ensure your new employee has any additional skills needed for the job
- Work trials – a risk free way to try out potential employees for up to 30 days at no cost to the business
- Access to the wider Train to Gain service (see page 4) so your new employee can continue to get relevant job-related training

Who do I contact?

Contact Jobcentre Plus:

0845 600 8192 or email

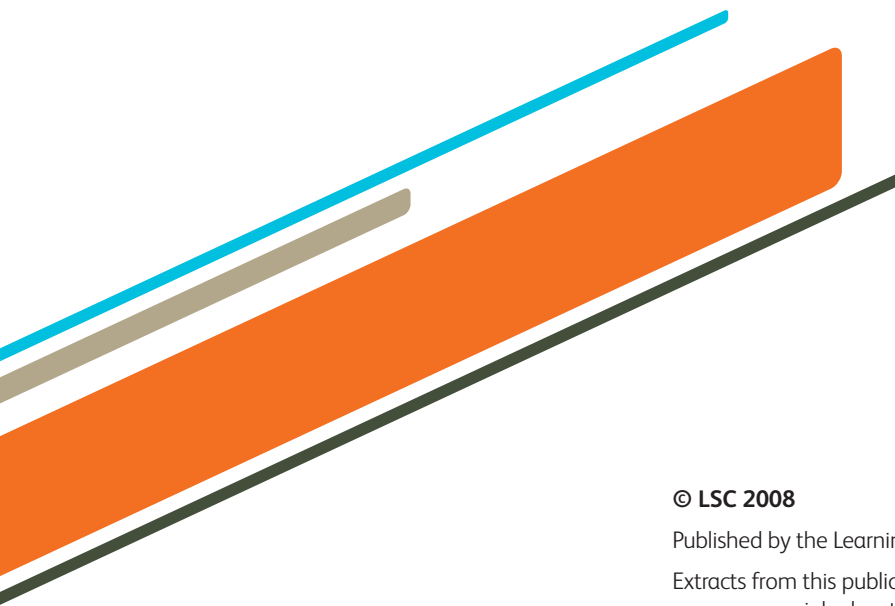
lep.enq@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

KEY CONTACTS:

- **Train to Gain**
0800 015 55 45 or visit
www.traintogain.gov.uk
- **Leadership and Management**
Contact Joy Gair, Northumberland Business Service (NBS), **01670 813322**
- **Apprenticeships**
08000 150 600 or visit
www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- **Skills Pledge**
0800 015 55 45 or visit
www.lsc.gov.uk/skillspledge
- **Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs)**
Contact Jobcentre Plus
0845 600 8192 or email
lep.enq@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk



It's never been easier to improve your business performance through skills, call **0800 015 55 45** for more information.



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