

## EUROPEAN BOOST FOR CUMBRIAN BUSINESS

The Johnston Partnership secures £225,000 from the European Social Fund (ESF) for Learning Advocates initiative.

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Cumbria-based training providers The Johnston Partnership are celebrating after securing £225,000 of funding for their Learning Advocates initiative. The initiative is already a success in Cumbria, and the new funding means they will now be able to offer training across the North West.

The initiative gives non-unionised businesses the opportunity to nominate members of staff to train as either Learning Advocates or Learning Supporters. The businesses benefit because these trained members of staff can then source appropriate training, often subsidised or free, for their work colleagues while receiving on-going support and up-to-date information on training opportunities.

The ESF exists to improve employment opportunities and help raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfill their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) operates as a co-financing organisation for the ESF; responsible for allocating funding to learning and skills projects and providers.

Liz Johnston, partner of the Johnston Partnership said: "The funding that we have received will benefit many companies and employees across Cumbria and the North West. Having an in-house learning expert is a real boost to companies and particularly

helps employees who want to improve their maths and English or gain their first vocational qualification. The next course is taking place in Kendal in October so sign up soon.

“Not only is this a fantastic boost for the Learning Advocates Initiative but it is also a great achievement for a small company to receive such a large amount of funding to deliver this kind of project within the North West.”

Emer Clarke, Director of Area for the LSC in Cumbria, said: “It is great to see schemes like the Learning Advocates Initiative in action and the positive results that are being achieved are exactly why ESF investment exists. Through this funding, we are able to tackle long-term issues such as unemployment, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and raising the level of literacy and numeracy amongst Cumbria’s people.”

For more details about Learning Advocates contact Graham Johnston on 07791 639 196.

**Ends**

**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.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**For more information contact**

LSC website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

**All media enquiries please contact:**

**LSC**

**Luisa Pastore on 0161 2610434, [luisa.pastore@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:luisa.pastore@lsc.gov.uk)**

**The Write Angle on 01772 250505**

Stephanie Lord: [stephanie@writeanglepr.co.uk](mailto:stephanie@writeanglepr.co.uk)

Becky Roberts: [becky@writeanglepr.co.uk](mailto:becky@writeanglepr.co.uk)