

Blackpool Council Gains Prestigious Skills Award

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Blackpool Borough Council has become one of the first organisations in the North West to be presented with a prestigious award at a recent celebration event in recognition of its commitment to improving the numeracy and literacy skills of its staff.

The 'Get On North West' Local Government Skills for Life Award is part of a regional strategy to encourage local authorities to take a more proactive approach to Skills for Life. This national strategy, funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) aims to improve adult literacy, language and numeracy skills.

Blackpool Borough Council was one of four organisations to receive the 'Get On North West Award' alongside, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, Merseytravel and Carlisle City Council. The event, held at The Lowry Hotel in Manchester, rewarded and recognised local authorities that have excelled in meeting the basic skills needs of their workforce.

Councillor Peter Callow, Leader of Blackpool Council commented, "We take pride in our staff and understand that by helping with their skills and development we position them to work more efficiently for the council. It is important to support anyone that wishes to better themselves through education and applaud anyone that takes the initiative to do so."

The challenge for local government is huge with more than 27% of local government employees either holding no qualification or being qualified below level 2 (equivalent of 5 good GCSEs). Local government in the North West employs 308,000 people and improving the skills of the workforce will help transform and improve the services the authorities deliver and develop a committed workforce with increased capacity for the future.

Liz McQue Chief Executive Designate at North West Employers (NWEO) the employers organisation for local authorities in the North West said, "We now have 14 authorities that have committed themselves to improving the skills of their workforce and it is a real symbol that the North West as a region is making a commitment to improving the skills and economy of the region. The celebration event was not just about awards it was about changing lives of people who live and work in the North West."

The celebration event also saw Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside and Trafford Salford City Council signing up to the 'Get On North West Award' which has been shaped by NWEO and its regional partners; the LSC in the North West, Campaign for Learning, the Northwest Regional Development Agency, Union Learn (the North West TUC), Move On Up and Unison.

Paul Holme Regional Director of Skills LSC North West comments, "Improving the skills of the public sector workforce is one of the LSC's top priorities, not least because it employs a quarter of the UK's workforce.

"This award is for those local authorities that have recognised the important part that Skills for Life plays within their workforce development strategies. We hope it will also encourage other employers to follow their example and embed Skills for Life into their organisations in a sustainable way."

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.

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