

## EUROPEAN CASH BOOST FOR WARRINGTON BUSINESSES

*Six figure fund to provide free training for local workers.*

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Warrington businesses are to get new help to beat the economic downturn, thanks to a £225,000 grant from the European Social Fund. The 'Learning Advocates' initiative will help workers at local firms access the training they need to move up the career ladder.

The initiative, which has already been a success in Cumbria, trains employees as Learning Advocates; giving them the skills to be able to help colleagues access the education and training that is vital for career success.

The Learning Advocates training is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), and delivered by North West training provider The Johnston Partnership. The course is completely free to non-unionised companies who do not have Investors in People status and are keen to invest and develop their workforce through training and personal development.

ESF aims to improve employment opportunities and help raise standards of living through increased skills and better job prospects. Particularly in the current economic climate it provides valuable assistance to ordinary communities as Andrew Fawcett, Economic Development Director for the LSC in the North West explains:

“ESF makes a real difference to people’s lives, and across the North West thousands of people have improved their skills and opportunities thanks to ESF-funded projects.

“Companies across Cumbria are already discovering the business benefits of training their staff, thanks to the success of the Learning Advocates initiative in their area. I’m extremely

pleased that the initiative is being launched in Warrington, giving local companies the opportunity to benefit too.”

Liz Johnston from The Johnston Partnership said: “Advocates’ are trained to interview colleagues and promote learning opportunities to people who want to learn new skills and develop, while the shorter online course enables ‘Supporters’ to publicise learning opportunities to their colleagues. In the current economic climate it is particularly important to have a skilled workforce and having a trained advocate or supporter is a real asset to any organisation.”

To attend the course or for more information contact Liz Johnston, tel/text: 07791 639 146, email: [liz@learningadvocates.co.uk](mailto:liz@learningadvocates.co.uk) or log on to [www.learningadvocates.co.uk](http://www.learningadvocates.co.uk)

## ENDS

### **Warrington courses are being held on:**

Thurs 30th April  
Thurs 7th May  
Thurs 14th May  
Thurs 21st May

Time: 9.30-3.30 each day. Note each course is one day only; attendance is not required for all the days.

A two hour online course is also available for anyone unable to attend in person.

Venue: Warrington Business Park, Long Lane, Warrington, WA2 8TX

### The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) 2007-2010 ESF Co-finance Plan

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.

The LSC in the North West has secured £185million of ESF funding for 2007-2010 which is matched with an equivalent amount of Government funding. This overall package of £370million is being used to:

- Up-skill unemployed people so that they can secure sustainable employment.
- Support young people who are not currently in employment, education or training.

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- Support employers to up-skill their workforce.

In the North West over 130 colleges and training providers are contracted to deliver projects to achieve those objectives.

#### European Social Fund (ESF)

The European Social Fund is investing in jobs and skills – especially for people at a disadvantage in the labour market.

Over the past seven years from 2000 to 2006, the ESF has helped over four million people in England. In 2007, the EU launched a new round of ESF programmes for the next seven years to 2013.

The new programme will invest £4.6 billion in 2007-2013 of which £2.3billion will come from the ESF and £2.3billion will be national funding.

#### **For further information:**

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

ESF website: [www.esf.gov.uk](http://www.esf.gov.uk)

Learning Advocate website: [www.learningadvocates.co.uk](http://www.learningadvocates.co.uk)

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