

## **Salford City Council Leads The Way And Commits To Skills Pledge**

**Salford City Council is the first local authority in the North West to sign up to the Skills Pledge, and make a public commitment to improving the skills of all its staff with a particular focus on those who don't have a level 2 qualification.**

**Date of issue** 19 November 2007  
**Publication number** NWR - 126

The Skills Pledge encourages private and public sector organisations to make a commitment to support all their employees develop themselves and work towards a relevant, valuable qualification to at least NVQ Level 2 – the equivalent of five GCSEs at A – C grade, including basic skills such as numeracy and literacy.

Salford City Council Leader John Merry signed the Pledge at a recent event organised by North West Employers, the regional employers' organisation for local authorities, and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The event, held at The Lowry Hotel in Manchester, was attended by local authorities from across the region to highlight the benefits of boosting workforce skills by getting on board with the Pledge.

One of the first businesses in the UK to sign the Skills Pledge, Merseytravel, has reaped substantial business benefits as a result of a renewed focus on employee training and development. Chief Executive Neil Scales says that by improving staff skills and motivation, the company has seen an average two days per person reduction in sickness absence levels since committing to the Pledge.

Merseytravel, attended the event to share with delegates the business benefits they have reaped as a result of implementing the Skills Pledge.

“Merseytravel is a powerful example of how businesses can experience tangible benefits by investing in their people” said Paul Holme, Regional Director of Skills, LSC in the North West.

With 308,000 people employed in local government across the North West, Mr Holme pointed to the dramatic impact that similar results to those experienced by Merseytravel could have on the region’s local government organisations – with significant cost savings to be made.

“At a time when public services are coming under increasing pressure to boost efficiency, the Skills Pledge is an excellent way for local authorities to improve productivity and ensure that each and every member of the workforce achieves their true potential” he said.

Speaking at the event, Salford City Council Leader Councillor John Merry commented: “I am delighted that Salford City Council has been able to champion the Skills Pledge by being the first North West council to sign up. Developing the skills of all our workforce is critical to the economic and social future of our City. We will support our staff to achieve their ambitions and empower them to improve services to our communities.”

Vic Hewitt, Chief Executive at North West Employers added: “The event was an excellent platform on which to launch the Skills Pledge and a symbol of our commitment, along with the LSC, to working together to build a better North West. I hope that other local authorities across the region now follow Salford City Council’s lead by pledging their support to this excellent initiative.”

**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:**

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