

Investment in employee skills training is boost for North West businesses

Expansion of trailblazing Train to Gain Service offers training for all

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The Government has outlined how a massive extension of the Train to Gain scheme will offer bespoke skills brokerage and high quality responsive training to enable North West employers to identify and then meet their skills needs.

The doubling of funding in the Train to Gain Service is part of a massive investment programme announced this month by Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills John Denham, which will see more than £11 billion a year invested in education, employment and training.

Since its launch in 2006, Train to Gain has helped more than 7,400 employers and enabled almost 40,000 employees in the North West to undertake training. Just one call to the Train to Gain helpline gives employers access to an impartial and independent skills broker to help them identify their skills and other business needs, and source training from a range of available skills solutions to best meet those needs.

To enable every company to access appropriate training, the following major expansion to the Train to Gain Service has been announced:

- More funding will be offered for a broader range of skills. Part funding will now be available for those doing a second full Level 2 qualification and funding for Level 3 will be increased nationally. Skills for Life training will now be supported as a stand alone offer as well as part of a full Level 2 qualification;

- The funding cap to be lifted for the best providers, enabling them to do more business as their performance improves;
- A massive boost for SME management training – the budget has increased from £4 million per annum to £30 million per annum, which will support some 60,000 key directors and managers in around 42,000 companies over the next three years;
- The LSC’s National Employer Service will be expanded, with additional account managers to help more of the country’s largest national employers, while skills brokerage will also be extended to help provide even more companies with specialist support;
- By working closely with Jobcentre Plus through their Local Employment Partnerships, Train to Gain will support people who have been unemployed to secure employment with training and progression on to higher level skills;
- New compacts with each Sector Skills Council which will tailor Train to Gain to ensure it meets the skills needs of employers in each sector – and joint investment planning so that public and employer funds work together to boost skills and improve.

Skills Minister David Lammy commented:

“Lord Leitch’s report spoke of a partnership between the state, the employer and the individual. Today, in partnership with the business community and training providers, we set out our plans for the expansion of Train to Gain as a vehicle for creating a truly demand-led further education sector. To this end we have cut bureaucracy to make sure that those colleges and training organisations that can best meet employers’ needs are able to expand to meet demand.

“I am delighted to see that businesses are recognising the importance of skills and they are rising to the challenge by investing more in the skills of their workforce. We’ve listened to employers to ensure that this extended programme is even more effective in offering training when and where they need it. In particular, the increased investment in

developing the leadership and management capacity in our SMEs will build a sense of mission at the heart of our communities, making their companies more profitable”.

Paul Holme, Regional Director of Skills, LSC North West added:

“Train to Gain is a revolutionary development in the way that we deliver services to employers and these changes will ensure that even more employers and training providers are able to work with Government to raise the nation’s skill levels. The expanded Train to Gain Service will enable employers of all sizes, in all locations and across all sectors to take the future of their business into their hands through access to high quality training advice and support. In this way, it will play a key role in reaching out to the one in three businesses that still do not offer staff any training – and so will in-turn transform the nation’s skills base, productivity and competitiveness between now and 2020.”

One organisation which has recently enjoyed the benefits of using the Train to Gain service is Schwan’s Consumer Brands based in Leyland. They currently have eight employees completing qualifications in Business Administration and Catering, with the company keen to expand this number in the future.

Elaine Pearson, Learning and Development Coordinator at Schwan’s comments “From our experience, Train to Gain is a must for businesses that want to encourage growth through training. The service provides structured, flexible and customised training that is delivered with minimum disruption to the day-to-day life of a business. We have been really impressed with what Train to Gain has delivered for the business as a whole and we are looking forward to helping more staff to develop new skills with the support of Train to Gain.”

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

Level 2 qualification is equivalent to 5 GCSEs A* - C

More investment in learning and skills:

A major investment programme announced by John Denham on 16th November includes a major expansion of apprenticeships, a right to basis skills training where needed and the provision of over 500,000 full Level 3 adult training places.

Train to Gain:

Train to Gain is a service from the Learning and Skills Council, helping businesses get the training they need to succeed. An important element of the Train to Gain Service is skills brokerage that offers free impartial advice, and helps find the best training solution from high quality and responsive training providers to meet business needs.

Train to Gain is important because skills shortages continue to have a negative impact on UK productivity and competitiveness in the face of fast-growing economies. Train to Gain aims to encourage all businesses and individuals to value and realise the benefits that learning and skills can bring and to invest appropriately. It is expected that by the end of 2010, over 500,000 learners will have achieved a first full Level 2 qualification through Train to Gain.

To find out more about how Train to Gain can help, employers should call **0800 015 55 45** or visit **traintogain.gov.uk**. Alternatively, individuals and employers can access the information they need on skills via a dedicated phone line and website. The phone number is 0800 011 30 30 or website: lsc.gov.uk/inourhands

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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