

AWARD-WINNING NETWORK SIGNS UP 20 NEW ASSESSORS



Date of issue November 2008
Embargo until Immediate release

Hot on the heels of its success at the regional finals of this year's National Training Awards scheme, Cornwall Marine Network (CMN) has announced it will be expanding its training provision with the appointment of 20 new workplace assessors.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) South West has also given the employer-owned organisation approval and funding to add a further 45 qualifications to its current list – making it one of the most effective sector-based, not-for-profit training providers in the region.

CMN's success is all the more remarkable given that it only began seriously developing its training arm three and a half years ago. In that time more than 900 learners have benefited from work-based training that is specifically tailored to meeting employer and industry need.

The network was established in 2002 and is owned by 300 Cornwall-based marine businesses – more than 90% of the county's marine sector. 86% of those have

less than 10 employees – making it very difficult for employers to find either the time or the resources required to develop workforce skills.

Led by Chief Executive Officer Paul Wickes, CMN's team of four full-time training staff resolves this problem by establishing what each business needs, developing a training plan, sourcing funding and taking care of all necessary paperwork.

Assessors, funded by the LSC, are recruited from within the network's member businesses – giving learners ready access to the experts who work alongside them and who can help them develop their skills.

The announcement of the twenty new assessors will bring the total number available to 36 – about halfway to CMN's target of about 70.

The network operates on a not-for-profit basis so all money is ploughed back into the member businesses. Training success rates are extremely high – with learners regularly achieving qualifications within months rather than years. Little wonder, then, that CMN is being hailed as a national model of good practice.

'I'm absolutely delighted that our work has gained national recognition and that we're being asked to share our expertise with other regional and national organisations,' said Paul Wickes, who has been invited to become a National Training Awards 'ambassador'.

‘Developing skills is key to being commercially competitive and no company can afford not to invest in training. In my experience, most employers do want to improve workforce skills but there are often too many barriers for them to be able to do so. Our job is to remove those barriers and get more staff learning on the job.’

‘The LSC has been immensely helpful in providing the advice, guidance and funding necessary to turn CMN into a real training success story. Thanks to them and SEMTA, the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies in the UK, we have got a number of different training programmes in place that are making a real difference to the marine industry in Cornwall.’

Mark Williams, LSC Skills Development Director – ESF, said: ‘The Cornwall Marine Network team has worked very hard to ensure skills development lies at the heart of the marine industry’s competitiveness strategy.’

‘Their success rates are outstanding and the LSC is very pleased to be able to support them in a number of different ways.’

Far from being complacent, CMN, which has already received more than £1.2m of funding from the LSC, is hoping to substantially increase their training and recruitment output with a further £1.25m of funding from the LSC’s European Social Fund (ESF) Convergence programme.

Ends

Public Document

Notes to Editors:

In 2007-2013, the European Social Fund will invest £2 billion in England and Gibraltar, which will be matched to £2 billion of national funding. The new European Social Fund programme will support two key priorities:

1. extending employment opportunities to people who are unemployed or at a disadvantaged in the labour market, including disabled people, lone parents, older workers, ethnic minorities, low skilled people, and young people not in education, employment or training; and
2. developing a skilled and adaptable workforce, with a particular focus on employees who lack basic skills and good qualifications.

The new projects are the first to start under the 2007-2013 England and Gibraltar ESF programme, following the launch of tendering rounds in autumn 2007. The tendering rounds were organised by DWP, the Learning and Skills Council and other ESF Co-financing Organisations.

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 more information visit: www.lsc.gov.uk/southwest

Working Links

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