

## COLLEGE'S NATIONAL FIRST

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**\*\*\*\*\*WITH PICTURE ATTACHED\*\*\*\*\***

**Bridgwater College is pioneering a new national training programme aimed at improving the skills of workers in the country's laundry industry – from dry cleaners to prison launderers!**

The programme is being backed by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) which will give financial support for much of the training through the government's Train to Gain service.

Those employed in the industry will be able to work towards brand new National Vocational Qualifications at Level 2. The qualifications have been developed by Skillfast-UK, the Sector Skills Council for fashion and textiles, and by PAA\Q-Set, the awarding body.

New qualifications will be offered in:

- Laundry Operations
- Dry Cleaning Operations
- Laundry Service Support
- Dry Cleaning Service Support

Already companies across the country are lining up to take advantage of the new training programmes.

In the first pilot project about 20 workers employed by laundry companies in Exeter, Bristol and Bath are undergoing training, which is taking place in-house.

When the programme is fully operational it is hoped that around 150 workers a year will achieve NVQs.

Theresa Holden, Contract Development Manager with Bridgwater College, said: "There is a tremendous appetite within the laundry industry for training like this.

“Traditionally laundry industry workers have received training on a very ad hoc basis. This formalises it and sets a standard which we hope everyone will aspire to.”

The college has been working with some of the biggest cleaning companies in the country to develop the new training programmes. Training and assessment is delivered entirely in-company and is flexible to meet the needs of the business.

Bridgwater College has taken the lead role in the development of a training model for the industry and is working closely with Skillfast-UK and a number of other colleges and training providers to offer the new qualifications across the country.

Trish Taylor, Area Director with Dorset and Somerset Learning and Skills Council (LSC), said many companies could access financial support for the training through the government’s Train to Gain service.

“This allows us to fund training for people who have yet to achieve Level 2 qualifications, which could apply to many employees in this sector. We can also contribute some funding to support employees undertaking a level 3 qualification”

“Train to Gain is a very exciting initiative which is improving the working life of thousands of people across the country and will be of enormous benefit to companies within the laundry sector.”

Companies wanting more information can telephone **0800 015 55 45** or view online at [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk)

**ENDS**

**PICTURE CAPTION: The attached picture shows Jonathan Ayres, Bridgwater College Trainer/Assessor for Laundry & Dry Cleaning, with trainees from Johnsons Apparelmaster in Bristol**