

APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INCREASED IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND

Date of issue 1st February 2008

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) South West has welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement this week that the number of Apprenticeships available in the West of England is set to increase.

The LSC, in partnership with the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, DIUS and DCSF, carried out The Apprenticeship Review, which announces plans to greatly expand the number of Apprenticeships.

Gordon Brown is asking employers to offer training courses so that even more employers and apprentices can benefit from development. The plans will be delivered through a new National Apprenticeship Service, which will be launched by the LSC in April 2009.

In the West of England the number of Apprentices has risen from around 3,500 to almost 4,000 in the last five years.

Malcolm Gillespie, Regional Director LSC South West, said: "The announcement is great news for learning and development in the West of England. The planned initiative will mean that hundreds more Apprenticeships will be available throughout the region.

"By 2010 fewer jobs will be open to people without at least five good GCSEs or their equivalent, therefore gaining skills has never been more important.

"Programmes like Apprenticeships offer young people the opportunity to gain a qualification that will open up work opportunities."

In the last ten years the number of Apprenticeships in the UK has risen from 75,000 to nearly 240,000. Currently one in fifteen 16-18 year olds is on an Apprenticeship programme. Gordon Brown has said he wants to see this figure increase to one in five within the next ten years.

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Note to Editors:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational 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 by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

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