

## **APPEARANCE BOOSTERS NO MATCH FOR QUALIFICATIONS WHEN IT COMES TO CONFIDENCE**

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New research from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has shown that while losing a few pounds or getting a new haircut might provide you with a short-term boost, it is gaining qualifications and passing exams that can deliver a more long-term positive impact on your confidence.

In the South West, 76% of women questioned said that passing an exam or gaining a qualification was most likely to give them long-term self-confidence. This opinion was shared by 67% of men. Losing weight, getting a tan or a new haircut, however, were seen by less than half of respondents in the region as having a positive impact in the long-term. And buying new clothing or receiving a compliment was cited by under a third of those surveyed as helping to build lasting confidence.

The research coincides with the launch of a new Government campaign to boost the nation's math skills. The 'Get On' campaign kicked off with nationwide advertising targeting the 6.8 million adults in England who have maths skills below Entry Level 3. The campaign moves away from the well known 'gremlins' advertising and instead reminds everyone that it may be a simple case of lack of confidence that is holding them back and that better maths skills are within their reach.

The new research from the LSC also showed that the maths challenge is not confined to the workplace. In the South West, 43% of people surveyed admitted to sometimes struggling with maths with the worst three problems being converting recipes (23%), working out foreign currencies (16%) and helping children with homework (9%).

John Tempest, Director of Skills Development (Skills for Life) at the LSC South West, said: "Through the new awareness-raising campaign we want to encourage people in the South West to confront their numeracy fears. More than 1.75 million adults in the region have literacy and numeracy skills below Level 2 – the equivalent level to a C grade at GCSE.

"The 'gremlins' campaign was a huge success and has played a key part in getting 4.7 million people back into study since 2001. Building on its success, the focus now turns to numeracy as we look to boost millions of people's confidence with a free maths qualification."

The LSC is aiming to hit 2.25 million literacy and numeracy qualifications by 2010 with initiatives such as the 'Get On' campaign and ensuring that people have access to a free education.

"We are hoping that even more adults in the region take up the free maths and English courses available through 'Get On' by phoning 0800 66 0800 and talking to an adviser," added John. "Anyone who takes this first step to improving their skills could be opening up a whole raft of opportunities for themselves as well as helping the UK to become a prosperous economy and a confident nation."

Call free on 0800 66 0800 to talk to confidentially to an adviser about the 'Get On' course options in their area.

## **Ends**

### NOTES TO EDITORS:

The LSC Maths Confidence Report 2008 was conducted by The Survey Shop and polled 1,004 adults across England. Findings for the South West were as follows:

- 76% of women in the South West region said that passing an exam or gaining a qualification was most likely to give them long term confidence.
- 48% of women in the region said that getting a tan on holiday increased their long term confidence and 45% said that having a new haircut increased their long term confidence.
- 33% of women said that buying new clothing or lipstick improved their long term confidence.
- 67% of men in the South West region said that passing an exam or gaining a qualification was most likely to give them long term confidence.
- 45% of men in the region said that losing a few pounds would increase their long term confidence.
- 28% said that receiving a compliment from their partner or friend would increase their long term confidence.
- 49% of people in South West said that gaining a qualification would boost their confidence.
- 43% of South West people admitted to sometimes struggling with maths
- 80% of those in the region without a maths qualification were less than very confident in their maths skills
- 67% of those in South West with a maths qualification were less than very confident in their maths skills

- 12% of those in the region with a maths qualification believed they could do with a brush up course in maths

## LSC

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. For more information visit: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/westofengland>

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