

## Press Release

### **YOU'RE HIRED! TOP COMPANY GIVES APPRENTICES A BOOST**

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**One of Somerset's biggest companies has joined the national campaign to "grow your own talent" by taking on its first apprentices.**

Taunton-based WPA, one of the UK's leading health insurers, is to recruit three local apprentices.

WPA's Chief Executive Julian Stainton said today: "Over the years, we have employed hundreds of school leavers and, through the 'grow your own talent' initiative, we are exploring a more formal Apprenticeship programme.

"Working closely with the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), the initial in-take will involve three apprentices; a concept that we hope to expand in the future"

The Apprentices are being supported by the NAS, with funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

Jack Fleming, Employer Services Manager for the NAS in Somerset, said more and more companies in the county were seeing the value of employing apprentices.

He added: "We are delighted that WPA has come on board. They, like many companies, are seeing the obvious benefits of recruiting apprentices."

The three apprentices will receive training on-the-job and in the classroom at Richard Huish College in Taunton. And they'll earn money at the same time.

Jack Fleming added: "Apprenticeships are designed to be flexible and responsive to employers' needs and WPA has been able to benefit from this by recruiting apprentices in IT, business administration and finance. Apprenticeships add real value to business and with the Apprenticeship vacancies online service employing apprentices is really easy."

Companies interested in recruiting apprentices in Somerset can contact Jack Fleming on 01823 – 226075 or by email [jack.fleming@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:jack.fleming@lsc.gov.uk)

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## **Notes to editors**

**Further information from: Sue Bradbury (LSC public relations) on 01872 863863.**

### **National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)**

The NAS was announced in January 2008 and officially launched in April 2009. Reporting to the Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the service will drive forward the Government's ambition for Apprenticeships. The service aims to bring about a significant growth in the number of employers offering Apprenticeships.

The NAS will assume total responsibility for the delivery of Apprenticeships that includes: Employer Services; Learner Services; and a web-based vacancy matching system. This online system enables individuals to search and apply for live vacancies and allows employers, and their training providers to advertise their vacancies to a wide range of interested applicants.

The service has ultimate accountability for the national delivery of targets and co-ordination of the funding for Apprenticeship places. It will act to overcome barriers to the growth of the programme and assume responsibility for promoting Apprenticeships and their value to employers, learners and the country as a whole.