

## **COUNCILS PLEDGE TO TRAIN THOUSANDS OF EMPLOYEES**

**Date of issue**            12 September 2008

Thousands of Council employees will now have the chance to be trained to a minimum of Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE standard), thanks to all West of England Local Authorities making the Skills Pledge.

Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire Local Authorities will all make the Skills Pledge on Friday 19 September at BAWA, Filton, Bristol.

The Skills Pledge, which was launched in June 2007 and is led by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), is a public, voluntary commitment by the management of an organisation to train all employees to at least Level 2 standard (equivalent to 5 GCSEs grade A-C). The pledge by the local authorities will double the number of potential employees which will be covered by the Pledge in the West of England area.

By making the Skills Pledge each authority is committing to increase the skills of their workforce to realise the potential of individuals, thereby improving working practices and enhancing customer service.

The LSC will provide support to plan and train the local authority staff through the services of Business Link and the Government funded Train to Gain scheme, by developing a training plan with each authority which will look at all its business processes and how these can be enhanced through up-skilling staff.

The Pledge reflects an increasingly close working relationship between the authorities in helping to profile key areas in the West of England where individuals with limited or no skills in literacy and numeracy are most likely to be located.

The West of England partnership will be submitting a proposal (Multi-Area Agreement) to national government that will enable the four authorities to work more effectively together to support the economic growth and prosperity of the area – specifically in relation to developing the skills of employees.

Malcolm Gillespie, Regional Director of the LSC South West, said: “This is an outstanding commitment by these four local authorities which will undoubtedly help to boost the overall skills of the region. Enhancing the skills of their employees will help to improve their future career prospects and will boost the efficiency of the organisations.”

Helen Holland, Chairman of the West of England Partnership, said, “The West of England Partnership is committed to working more effectively together to support the economic growth and prosperity of the region – and developing our skills base is at the heart of this. The Skills Pledge means that as major employers we are taking on our responsibilities in driving up skills levels – and at the same time improving the quality of service we offer to the public.”

ENDS

**Note to Editors:**

**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](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/southwest)

The Skills Pledge reads:

Public Document

'On behalf of ..I,..make a commitment that we shall:

- Actively encourage and support our employees to gain the skills and qualifications that will support their future employability and meet the needs of our business/organisation;
- Actively encourage and support our employees to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, and with Government support work towards their first level 2 qualifications in an area that is relevant to our business/organisation;
- Demonstrably raise our employees' skills and competencies to improve company/organisation performance through investing in economically valuable training and development.  
Signed....'

More information on the Skills Pledge can be found at  
<http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk/employersSkillsPledge.html>

The West of England Partnership was set up to address jointly matters that need to be dealt with by the sub-region as a whole in the best interests of its communities.

The partnership aims to:

- Realise the potential of the sub-region and deliver improvements in infrastructure, environment and quality of life.
- Set a vision and clear long-term direction to support the delivery of key sub-regional strategies.
- Promote the interests of the sub-region regionally, nationally, and in Europe.
- Add to the confidence in the sub-region that attracts public and private investment.
- Work more strategically in the interests of the sub-region.

The West of England Partnership is made up of four unitary authorities – Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire councils, plus a range of social, economic and environmental partners.

For more information contact:

B&NES

Bristol City

Public Document

North Somerset

South Gloucestershire

**All media enquiries, please contact:**

Lindsay or Jenny at JBP on 0117 9073400 or email [lindsay@jbp.co.uk](mailto:lindsay@jbp.co.uk) or  
[jenny@jbp.co.uk](mailto:jenny@jbp.co.uk).

Public Document

4 of 4