

## **POST-16 OPTIONS PLAYED OUT IN "CELEBRITY" THEATRE TOUR**

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Celebrities such as Danni Minogue, Justin Lee-Collins and Gary Lineker are being caricatured by actors to help promote further and higher education options among 15-16 year olds in schools across Bristol.

The innovative project, called **Stay In Learning**, is being rolled out by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and tells the story of three characters facing life-changing decisions against a backdrop of confusion led by peer group and parental pressure.

Firmly steeped in comedy, the theatre production uses scenes from popular TV shows such as Match of the Day, X-Factor and The Friday Night Project. These are used as platforms to communicate different post-16 options and to raise awareness about the LSC's Education Maintenance Allowance which offers bonuses and weekly payments of up to £30 for good attendance and commitment.

Students can opt to continue onto further education to gain extra qualifications, take an apprenticeship and work towards an NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) or seek to go straight to work – ideally in a job with training. Course information and support are available via Connexions and careers advisors.

Malcolm Gillespie, regional director of LSC, said: "The production looks at issues such as taking charge of your life, facing up to parents and taking advantage of resources.

"It also looks at making better use of free advice available through Connexions and careers advisors – all through the arena of comedy, which makes it easier for young people to understand.

"Our aim is to highlight that people have different learning styles and also to provide information on financial support offered through the Educational Maintenance Allowance which was introduced to help remove the financial barriers to staying on post 16."

*Stay In Learning* is delivered by specialist presenters, Theatre *and*.

Russell Watters, business development director, Theatre *and*, said: "We give students information they need in a presentation they enjoy. We aim to empower them and give them confidence to take control of their futures. Post 16 education offers flexible learning for all types of people, be they practical, academic or a mix of both."

Two production teams will tour schools across the South West concurrently for three weeks from March 3 with each running two presentations each weekday.

- Ends -

**Note to Editors:**

1. Actors names:

Production team one: **Chris** is played by Anthony Costa, **Jason** by Chris Mack and **Mel** by Jeanette Percival.

Production team two: **Chris** by Leon Sullivan, **Jessica** by Chrissy Denham and **Mel** by Claire Wilson.

2. Information about EMA can be found here: [www.direct.gov.uk/ema](http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema).

3. 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.

**About Theatre and**

Founded by HR, business and theatre professionals who bring over twenty experience to the **Theatre and** Ltd is an innovative training, development and creative presentation company.

After consultation with clients, they design and develop a variety of learning and communications interventions, which incorporate drama-based training techniques in order to effectively, deliver clients' desired outcomes.

Their experience of training and drama-based training techniques incorporates working with blue chip organisations through to SMEs and public sector bodies including educational organisations at national, regional and local level.

**All media enquiries, please contact:**

**Catherine Fischer, Regional Communications Adviser on 0117 372 6411** or email [Catherine.fischer@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:Catherine.fischer@lsc.gov.uk).

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**Or for more information about *Theatre and* contact:**

Russell Watters, business development director

Tel: 0870 458 6464

Fax: 0870 458 6465

Out of hours: 07917 518 71

Email: [russell@theatreand.com](mailto:russell@theatreand.com)

[www.theatreand.com](http://www.theatreand.com)

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