

SOUTH WEST BUSINESSES AMONG ENGLAND'S FIRST TRAINING PROVIDERS TO BE AWARDED TRAINING QUALITY STANDARD

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Nine training providers across the South West have recently been awarded the Training Quality Standard, confirming that their delivery of training to support employers is of the highest standard. This brings the number of training providers with the Standard to 12 in the region.

And now is precisely the time for employers to keep investing in the skills and talents of their people, says the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), as maintaining and building new skills will put organisations in the strongest position to meet their business challenges.

Developed by the LSC in conjunction with employers, the Training Quality Standard is an employer-endorsed mark of excellence in training provision. It highlights excellence in the two areas that employers say are most important: training provider responsiveness to employer needs; and training provider excellence in a particular sector. The standard is tough to achieve and to date just 65 organisations in England have received the accreditation.

The latest organisations to achieve the standard are as follows:

- S&B Automotive Academy (Bristol), which provides motor vehicle training
- Leisure industry training provider Lifetime Health and Fitness (Bristol)
- Truro and Penwith College
- Avon Vale Training (Wiltshire) with excellence in Construction
- Clarkson Evans (Gloucester) with excellence in Building Services Engineering
- Rapido Training Ltd (Gloucester)
- Protocol Consultancy Services
- W&P Assessment and White Horse Training (Bath)

- City College Plymouth have added excellence in Construction, Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism to its Standard accreditation

Other training providers in the region that have already achieved the Standard are: South Devon College; Cornwall College; City College Plymouth; and City of Bristol College.

Skills Secretary John Denham recently announced that small businesses are to continue to be the focus of government funds to help them train their staff. This follows research that suggests firms that invest in staff training were better equipped to survive the current economic downturn.

Malcolm Gillespie, Regional Director of the LSC South West, said: "It is imperative that training given by employers and training providers is directly relevant and addresses the skills gaps in the marketplace. Supporting the region's businesses in the provision of skills training means organisations' ability to compete on a national and international basis will be significantly enhanced.

"These organisations in the South West are to be congratulated on their achievement; we hope that other employers and training providers will recognise the benefits afforded by the Standard and be encouraged to follow suit."

The Standard is an employer-endorsed assessment framework designed to recognise and celebrate the best organisations delivering training and development solutions. It has been designed to reflect employers' priorities and expectations in sourcing training and development solutions, and the practices of the organisations proven to be the best at delivering them.

Organisations that achieve the first part of the Standard are also eligible to seek 'sector excellence' which demonstrates industry-specific expertise and acknowledges the providers' ability to serve the needs of businesses in their respective sector.

The Standard – launched by ex skills minister David Lammy earlier this year – is not attached to public funding or investment and is also open to both publicly and privately funded organisations providing Higher and Further Education.

Supporters of the Standard include the Confederation of British Industry, Regional Development Agencies, the Association of Learning Providers, Sector Skills Councils and Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS).

Ends

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Training Quality Standard

The *Training Quality Standard* is a voluntary quality mark available to any type of training provider. It complements the Framework for Excellence (FFE), the LSC's new compulsory, annual, quality assessment, as it contains an assessment of employer responsiveness.

The *Standard* will feed into National Skills Academies as they will work with providers who have achieved the new standard as their delivery partners.

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:

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