

## **£1 BILLION COMMITTED TO TRAINING UK EMPLOYEES**

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An announcement that the Government is putting more funding and flexibility into skills support for businesses is set to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) survive the current economic difficulties.

Thanks to the extended funding, The Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) Train to Gain campaign has launched a new initiative that includes a more flexible training and development package for SMEs. Companies across the South West can benefit from the free service which provides help for businesses of all sizes and sectors to train and develop their employees.

Train to Gain now offers SMEs funding for bite-sized chunks of training in business-critical areas including amongst others: business improvement; business systems and processes; team working and communications; sales and marketing; IT, customer service; new product design; finance and credit; cash flow and profit management; and risk management.

Chris Minett, Skills Development Director at Train to Gain says: "Businesses need to keep a tight rein on costs, yet research shows that businesses that do not train their workforce are 2.5 times more likely to fail than those that do. This is why the Government is putting more funding and flexibility into skills support for businesses through Train to Gain. Investing in training for your people is an investment in your business both now and in the future.

"Investing in skills and training offers many direct business benefits. Staff are more efficient and motivated, cutting waste and boosting profitability. A typical 50-employee company could save £165,000 every year by filling the gaps in its employees' skills. Training can also help you stay ahead of the competition, whether that means mastering new technology, making the best use of IT,

improving your customer service, more success in competitive tendering, reducing waste, higher staff retention rates, improved productivity or diversifying to generate higher returns.”

Train to Gain provides businesses quality advice on their skills requirements. The advice comes from a skills broker, training provider or college working with you on a dedicated, one-to-one basis. They'll help you identify the skills that are right for your business, create a tailored package of training and support, find funding and evaluate the training and support you receive to ensure real results.

Leadership and management support is also offered as part of the service. Up to £1,000 is available for businesses with 5 to 250 employees to fund leadership and management training and development, such as coaching and mentoring, or working towards a qualification. Businesses with less than 50 employees can also receive a contribution to wage costs to cover the cost of working time spent training.

Other support that is available for all employers includes:

- Fully funded training at Level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs) for employees, even if they already have qualifications at this level, and more funding for training to Level 3 (equivalent to 2 A-levels).
- Funding for Apprenticeships. Apprenticeships provide businesses with a source of motivated, skilled and loyal staff who have completed a programme of structured training and work experience. For 16 -18 year olds, full training costs are covered for employers. For higher age groups, employers pay part of the cost. For up to date information, please go to [apprenticeships.org.uk](http://apprenticeships.org.uk)
- Working with Sector Skills Councils, Train to Gain is being specifically adapted to meet the needs of each sector.

To find out more about Train to Gain, visit [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk). To get in touch with a skills broker call 08457 046 046 or contact your local college or training provider.

**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)

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