

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **WESTCOUNTRY TRAVEL FIRMS MAKE A PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO TRAINING**

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AS part of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) vision to create a skilled workforce capable of matching any in the world, three national and two regionally based transport firms, together with Exeter College, made a public commitment to staff training this week.

Representatives from all the companies were invited to an official signing ceremony of the Skills Pledge, in conjunction with Train to Gain, at Exeter International Airport.

The event was hosted by no frills airline, Flybe, a company that signed the pledge last summer and has been fulfilling its commitment to training ever since. Representatives from Flybe, Go Skills and the LSC also witnessed the signing.

Research shows that everyday 1.3 million people go to work without having had the necessary training and skills to do their job proficiently. The LSC believes the key to business success is a skilled and competent workforce. To achieve this the LSC's Train to Gain service offers employers impartial advice on training tailored to their business needs.

The Skills Pledge is the commitment made by a company or organisation to support all its employees develop their basic skills - including literacy and numeracy – and, funded by the LSC, to work towards achieving relevant valuable qualifications to at least NVQ Level 2, the equivalent of five GCSEs at grade A to C standard.

John Tempest, Director of Skills Development (Skills for Life) for the LSC said the signing had been an extremely significant event.

He said: "To achieve a better qualified workforce people need the skills that will allow them to be trained effectively.

“The importance of using the pledge to improve basic skills levels through training is a significant pointer to the priorities of the LSC in making sure we achieve much higher levels of literacy and numeracy in the working age population.

“In terms of what we are trying to achieve with the Skills Pledge I hope the mass signing we witnessed this week will send a positive signal to other regional employers.”

The companies making the commitment were: Stagecoach, First Group - on behalf of First Great Western Trains, taxi firms V Cars from Swindon and The Value Car Group from Salisbury, bus companies Webber Bus from Bridgwater and Chelston Leisure Services' Dial-a-Bus from Torquay, and Exeter College.

All those companies will now be working with Train to Gain, which offers impartial and independent advice on matching a company's training needs with relevant training providers and ensuring training is delivered to meet the needs of individual businesses.

Ends

February 2008

**Photos (by Bernie Pettersen)**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS:** 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