

PROVIDER NEWSLETTER

June 2007

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In this edition

- The Skills Pledge is here!
- LSC Skills Awards
- Employer satisfaction is **91.4%** in the South West

Skills Broker accreditation amongst the first in the country.

14 Train to Gain Skills Brokers, employed by Business Link, are amongst the first in the country to have successfully completed their Broker Standard qualification. This is the new nationally recognised award for Skills Brokers.

All Brokers will have to achieve this nationally recognised standard to show that they can fully and effectively advise Employers on the spectrum of training needs.

Pictured are four of the South West Brokers

Caroline Murphy, Linda McLean, Nanette Wale and Hilary Herring receiving their certificates. They completed their rigorous year long assessment process four months ahead of schedule.



Train to Gain Brokerage Manager, Ingrid Purse said, "We are absolutely delighted that these Brokers are amongst the first in the country to achieve this important recognition of their skills and knowledge which was introduced at the beginning of the year.

"This shows our continuing commitment to high standards in the South West and we expect many more of our Brokers will achieve this qualification in the months to come."

The candidates were assessed against the specialist criteria agreed by the LSC, Quality South West, SFEDI and Investors in People UK.

Great Results! South West Brokerage leads the way

Results from the recent Train to Gain Employer Evaluation Report on satisfaction levels with the Skills Brokerage Service provide some good news for the South West region.

Independent research carried out across 9 LSC regions showed that overall Employer satisfaction is **91.4%**. In some of the other measurement criteria such as Brokers 'understanding of Employer training and development needs' and 'speed of agreed follow up actions', the South West region is the top performing Brokerage service in the country.

LSC Skills Awards April 2007

The first South West LSC Skills Awards held at Sandy Park in Exeter was a great success and received positive feedback.

The awards celebrated and acknowledged the outstanding individuals, Employers and Trainers from the region who have excelled in learning and training in the past year.

The 15 winners, who were announced on the night, were presented awards by Gold metal athlete Jason Gardener. Jason, one of the UK and Europe's top sprinters, said "Training hard to achieve great feats has been a focus of my career and I can really appreciate the hard work people put into achieving their goals."

There were categories for both Train to Gain Employers and Leadership and Management.

The winners were:

Train to Gain Employer

- **Small Employer**
Nightingale Roofing
Newton Abbot
- **Medium Employer**
Teddington Group
Cornwall
- **Large Employer**
Stagecoach
Devon

Success in Leadership and Management

- Cornwall Glass and Glazing
St Austell



Stagecoach Devon receiving their award from Jason Gardener

The Skills Pledge has arrived!

On **14th June**, the Skills Pledge was launched in London by Gordon Brown, Alan Johnson and Sir Digby Jones, as the centrepiece of the Government's response to the Leitch report.

The Skills Pledge is a voluntary, public commitment by the leader of an organisation, to enable all Employees to develop their skills to achieve **the minimum of a first Level 2 qualification in the workplace**. This commitment can be made by an Employer of any size from any sector.

Once the Employer has made their commitment they will need to develop an Action Plan for fulfilling their pledge showing what they will do, when they will do it, and how they will demonstrate to their

staff the progress they have made.

In the LSC, our role is to respond to Employer interest in the Skills Pledge through our Train to Gain service. Information packs for Providers, Brokers and all other parties will be available shortly.

The contact number for enquiries will be the national call centre for Train to Gain on **08000 15 55 45**.

The regional Broker teams and Providers will convert the enquiries into Skills Pledge commitments, and those commitments into Train to Gain learners and achievements will be registered on the ILR.

Performance

We are now 75% of the way through the contract year but the total number of starts to the end of April amounts to only 43% of the overall total to be achieved. This is despite repeated assurances from a number of Providers that their performance would improve!

- 38% (3371) of starts are in Devon & Cornwall
- 19% (1675) in Wiltshire & Swindon (both of these were ETP areas)
- 17% (1472) in West of England
- 10% (905) in Somerset

- 9% (775) in Gloucestershire
- 8% (673) in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.

In April an update was sent to all Providers setting out a number of flexibilities that have been introduced, with immediate effect, to support the recruitment of learners. All Providers, whether or not their performance is on profile, are urged to take account of these flexibilities and make a final push to improve overall performance across the region.

There are still too many learner referrals not converting to starts. As part of the overall service improvement for 2007/08, the Skills Brokerage Organisation has agreed to provide reports which will allow Providers to identify individuals as well as Employers, so that their final destination can be tracked.

Contracting 2007 /08

All Providers should have, by now, entered their proposed activity for 2007/08 into PaMS. The regional Train to Gain team is currently working with local Partnership Teams to agree allocations. This will be confirmed to Providers

shortly. At this point it is probably worth noting that a number of Providers will have over estimated their activity for next year, however, the level of allocation they receive for 2007/08 will depend very much on current performance -another good reason to make a final effort to increase performance before the end of the contract year on 31 July 2007!

Mainstream Providers will be aware that they did not have to go through the recent tendering process, since they hold two year contracts and therefore will be receiving a contract amendment for 2007/08. We know that contracts were late being issued last year and we will be making every effort to ensure that the amendments are sent out in good time this year. However, if for any reason there is a delay, we will keep you updated of progress.

It is our intention to build into the contract amendment the majority of flexibilities we have introduced this year.

Regional Response Fund Requests

This year some mainstream Providers have requested additional allocations which been routed through Regional

Response. In future this will not happen and these requests will be handled through mainstream provision via Partnership Teams. This will leave the Regional Response fund to be used solely for funding learners through Providers not holding a Train to Gain contract and which are either providing learning in an occupational area not already covered, or that has been specifically requested by the Employer.

Contribution to wage costs

Nationally, there have only been three claims for contributions to wage costs. Providers with completions attracting a contribution to wage costs should inform the Brokerage Service as a matter of urgency and follow this up with the relevant signed paperwork.

NIL. NADA. NOWT. ZERO. ZILCH. ZIP. DIDDLY-SQUAT... NOT A SAUSAGE.

A Skills Broker identifies your business training needs for FREE

08456 047 047 www.traintogainsw.com Train to Gain

Newsflash

The Employees of public prisons are now eligible for Train to Gain funded provision alongside their private sector counterparts.

Provider Events

It is planned to hold four events for Providers, both current and new, across the region to provide comprehensive information about the new contract year and how LSC and Providers might work more closely together to ensure the success of Train to Gain in the region. Further information about the events, which are planned for early September, will be available in due course.

Skills for Life

Concerns have been raised about the lack of Skills for Life activity within Train to Gain and work is taking place to understand more clearly the current situation and the necessary action to improve the situation in the future.

Working together to bridge the Skills gap

The LSC has been working closely with Jobcentre Plus in the SW to design a working protocol to streamline the Train to Gain referral process

between Business Link/ Jobcentre Plus and the Employer.

Jobcentre Plus and the LSC are strategic partners equally committed to helping people achieve sustained and productive employment. A protocol has been agreed which sets out how we can use Train to Gain to join up the skills services that we offer. It will allow us to expand upon the excellent work that we already do together at all levels – local, regional and national.

The key to this is the *vacancy referral process* which will connect local Employers with skills shortages to local job seekers and the training that they need to succeed. This will enable the Skills Brokers to signpost the Employer to the most appropriate Training Provider whilst developing the capacity of Training Providers to meet the needs of businesses.

For the Training Provider this brings a potential new market where Employees will be seeking to achieve their first Level 2 as part of their transition into the workplace.

Matrix Accreditation

We are pleased to announce the continuation of a package of support for organisations for both pre

and post Matrix Standard accreditation.

The objective of this support will be to:

- Provide support and advice for organisations in preparing for Matrix Standard Accreditation within the context of Employer demand and Employee development.
- Support currently accredited organisations with their Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).
- Provide ongoing support to Accredited organisations with their Continuous Quality Improvement on a bespoke basis as required.
- Deliver a 'menu' of support for organisations on a bespoke basis as required.

The contracted organisation, ENTO, will shortly be making contact with all the SW Train to Gain Providers to determine the appropriate support required.

For further details contact Marion Sweet (01793 608057) or Pat Vickers (01793 608071).



TOP TIPS FOR PROVIDERS

Higher and Lower Learner Rates

We are picking up that some Providers are claiming for an increasing number of high rate learners. Please may we remind all Providers that decisions on whether a learner needs more than 20 hours contact time and the higher rate of funding claimed for them, should be based on individual need identified through initial advice and guidance and individual training needs analysis. This is particularly important, not only in terms of providing the appropriate amount of support for learners based on assessment of their need, but also because accurate audit information needs to be maintained to support all claims (Paragraphs 18 - 20 of the Requirements of Funding).

Light Touch Referrals

There is no need to wait for the Brokerage Organisation to provide the URN before commencing training with the learner. However, please remember you will need to have all the relevant paperwork in place to comply with contractual requirements.

Referrals

Please remember the Broker only sees the Employer so is not able to validate the individual

learner's eligibility. Providers should look on their Employer visit as a business opportunity to market their range of learning solutions for those Employees not eligible for public funded training.

MARKETING UPDATE – JUNE 07

Please find below details of the Train to Gain marketing activity and sector focus timeline for 07/08.

Sector focuses

- June - Care
- July / August – Public sector and large businesses
- September / October – Retail
- November – Tourism
- January / February – Manufacturing & Engineering

Sector focused activity will include a combination of the following:

- Mailing
- Emailing
- Telemarketing
- Newsletter
- Events

In addition to the above we will be updating the website www.traintogain.gov.uk to include sector information, case studies and an online diagnostic.

Please direct any marketing enquiries to

leanne.lidstone@bldc.co.uk or call 0845 600 9966.

Also if you have any suggestions for joint opportunities please let us know.

GOOD PRACTICE TO SHARE

Develop a briefing pack for Brokers and Providers to share information on the Employer – summary of previous meetings, phone calls and learning solutions agreed could offer useful background regarding the Employer's training needs.

Why not share your good practice with the Provider Newsletter... contact the Train to Gain team on 01452 450053.

