

TRAIN TO GAIN – LIVE ACROSS THE SOUTH WEST!

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www.traintogain.gov.uk

INTRODUCTION

THIS NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON SOME OF THE IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS AND HAS SOME KEY MESSAGES FOR STAKEHOLDERS AND PROVIDERS INVOLVED IN THE DELIVERY OF TRAIN TO GAIN.



It is now the eighth month of Train to Gain in operation and we are now seeing a real momentum in employers engaged and learners enrolled in learning. By the middle of October, over 3000 employers had been contacted by Train to Gain brokers and over 1700 decided to take up training to develop their competitive edge.

Of all those employers, over 53% are termed as 'hard to reach' because they had not previously considered training as a key benefit to their business. As a result of this activity, over 5700 learners have now been referred into learning.

This a very good start, but there is more to be done to reach even more employers and employees to encourage them into training and to make a difference to the productivity of business across the south west region.

The LSC has run three events for providers in the last month which feature in this newsletter, but to reiterate from those events:

- A clear priority for Train to Gain is for Providers and Brokers to continue to work together to engage 'hard to reach' employers.

- The LSC relies on the ILR information from providers for evidence of learner starts and completions. This month will be the start of a regular review of provision to see where we may need to move funding between providers to ease pressure points, and the ILR data from Training Providers.
- The Employers' Guide to Training is the principal means by which training providers can list their provision for employers and brokers to use. Employers are now listing their feedback onto this guide and this will increasingly act as the primary route for employers and brokers in sourcing provision.

Skills brokers across the region have engaged employers to take up training and other important business programmes, funded and non funded such as Leadership and Management and Investors in People which are all part of the flexible offer to employers.

We have also had the results of the first independent survey of employer satisfaction with the brokerage service.

(continued overleaf)

We have also had the results of the first independent survey of employer satisfaction with the brokerage service. The South West is leading the way with some excellent statistics.

90% of employers were satisfied with the overall service provided

34% of employers rated the service 10 out of 10

90% of employers were satisfied with the impartiality of the advice given

93% of brokers understood the training and development needs.

The survey will continue throughout the year to measure

the impartiality and independence of the service for employers.

There is also an important role for regional partners in Train to Gain and we have now signed protocols with Jobcentre Plus and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and their Union Learning representatives. These give us a real opportunity to reach more employees and employers. We will continue to work with key regional partners to access hard to reach employers and employees.

Chris Minett
Skills Development Director Train to Gain



TRAIN TO GAIN PERFORMANCE

April – (20th) October 2006

	Actual	Target to March 2007
Employers contacted by a Skills broker	3052	
Employers who have been offered and accepted a training solution	1732	4025
Number of these employers who are 'hard to reach'	907 (53%)	53%
Numbers of learners referred to providers for a first full Level 2.	5764	
Number of learners who have started Training (ILR submitted)	1707	16,660



PROVIDER SEMINARS

Nearly 200 people representing providers attended the LSC Train to Gain provider seminars across the South West during October.

Delegates heard the latest updates on Train to Gain from the LSC's Train to Gain team and were able to discuss with the delivery of the new service to employers.

Feedback from the seminars highlighted how beneficial the events were in terms of addressing questions covering key issues with the additional benefit of having the LSC, Business Link and providers all sharing the agenda. We are currently finalising written answers to the questions collated during the 'Question and Answer' sessions and these will be published to you.

Material from the provider seminars can be found on:

Train To Gain Contracts

Provider contracts were sent out from the week beginning 23rd October 2006 to all of our providers.

As you will see from the contract your success is our success. The regional delivery requirements for the South West state the key delivery parameters. These aspects were explained and outlined at the provider seminars as below.

If you require more discussion on these please contact your Partnership Manager who will be pleased to help.

- At least 80% of all learners are expected to successfully complete their training.
- At least 55% of all learners who have started training since April 2006 will have successfully completed by the end of July 2007

- The average completion time for a learner will be between 3 and 7 months
- No more than 55% of all learners are expected to be at the higher level of funding
- At least 53% of all employers engaged in Train to Gain will be 'hard to reach'
- At least 50% of employers will be from the LSC priority sectors of construction, engineering, retail and health and social care.
- Train to Gain learners will not already have a level 2 qualification

These are the performance factors that will be taken into account when discussing success within Train to Gain

Thank you for your support for the implementation of Train to Gain in the South West and we look forward to successful delivery of the Train to Gain service.

Train To Gain Systems And Processes

All Train to Gain systems and processes are now fully operational. Please ensure you are fully aware of the checks and action needed to be taken by you so you can take advantage of the processes and realise the benefits of the information technology infrastructure to support your delivery.

ILR data is the most important piece of information that you need to give to the LSC through the ILR on line process. We will not be able to pay you for your work without it and more importantly we will use the data to inform decisions on changes to provider allocations. Please try to ensure the data you send us is up to date and accurate.

THE NEW STANDARD FOR EMPLOYER RESPONSIVENESS AND VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Background

The White Paper set the LSC a goal of creating a new single standard for providers, which will accredit: responsiveness to business needs, excellence in delivering training, commitment to continuous improvement and sector specialisation.

The role of the New Standard in accrediting these factors is to:

replace the previous work on the Quality mark and CoVE Reassessment, become the LSC's recognised quality requirement in distinguishing the best employer-facing, sector-specialised provision and consequently, serve as the quality threshold for those providers seeking to become Next Generation CoVES, as described in the White Paper.

It will be marketed to build trust and recognition among businesses and will be available to providers from within the LSC network and beyond. Work is already underway to look at branding and communication, and to draw in the support of larger companies for participation.

Over the summer, the LSC has been engaged in an intensive process of consultation, research and development to design the New Standard and its assessment process. The proposed model will be published shortly, and from then until the end of January 07, the LSC plans to test the New Standard with a range of colleges and providers. The testing will involve early CoVES within the footprint of CITB, SEMTA and E- Skills and other providers with a proven track record in employer engagement activity.

The CoVES/providers from SW region taking part in the testing:

Provider	Contact	Type	Specialism
City of Bristol College	Keith Elliot	College	ENG
Cornwall College	Barrie Atkinson	College	ICT
Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology	Angela De Gandy	College	ENG
JHP Training	Maureen Wheeler	Private	Construction
North Devon College	Barry Poole	College	Construction
Plymouth College of Further Education	Alan Crooks	College	ENG
Somerset College of Art and Technology (SCAT)	Kevin Dowdy	College	Construction
South Devon College	Adele Dawson	College	Construction

The next stage will involve each provider attending an assessor training day. This will equip providers to carry out the self assessment which is the first part of the mock-accreditation process. Latest information is available through the following link

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/CoVEandNSA/newstandard.htm>

PROVIDER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Training Providers can take advantage of a national development programme recently launched by the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA), which will enable them to take more of a demand led approach to meeting the training needs of employers.

A large number of South West based Training Providers attended the regional launch of the programme in October which took place in Bristol.

The programme is being delivered by the Learning and Skills Network in partnership with the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (Ashridge), BDP Learning and Sales Insight. It offers free comprehensive support for providers large and small through a variety of workshops, seminars and action learning groups targeted at senior managers, operational staff and administrators.

Three workshops are planned for the south west, they are: **'How to create flexible delivery and focus on the customer'**

Concentrating on diagnostics, programme design and planning, delivery and assessment and accreditation

'How to develop responsive people, organisations and business partnerships'

Customer strategy, sales operations, management team leadership and leading business partnerships

'How to develop appropriate systems to support flexible delivery'

Intelligence gathering and management, customer focused approaches, organisational change.

The Train to Gain Development Programme is open to all providers and more information and workshop registration instructions can be found via: www.traintogaindevelopment.org.uk



TRAIN TO GAIN IN ACTION – CASE STUDY

RLBS in Plymouth

In 2004, RLBS a small Mechanical and Maintenance Engineering Company began trading in Eggbuckland, Plymouth. In two years the business has gone from strength to strength and in April 2006 the company's Office Manager Lorraine Griffiths heard about a new service, which helps businesses gain access to and funding for training called Train to Gain.

"I am responsible for the general day-to-day management of the company and I wanted to develop and enhance my skills, especially in bookkeeping and accountancy. I wondered what accredited training courses were available locally and approached Train to Gain for help" said Lorraine.

Lorraine discussed her training needs with Skills Broker Janet Powell, who researched Lorraine's course options. After weighing up different courses Lorraine decided to embark on NVQ Level 2 in Accountancy with Accountancy Plus and spends a day a week on the course in Plymouth.

Lorraine said: "I cannot thank Janet and Train to Gain enough, the service was a real lifeline. I wouldn't hesitate to go back to Train to Gain to ask more information or advice, it's great to get a helping hand and we are definitely reaping the benefits of training."

Janet said: "We were really pleased to help Lorraine access the right NVQ Level 2 course.

We not only provided the full funding for the NVQ, but when Lorraine completes the course she will be able to claim contribution to wages for her time spent training,

"I cannot thank Janet and Train to Gain enough, the service was a real lifeline. I wouldn't hesitate to go back to Train to Gain to ask more information or advice, it's great to get a helping hand and we are definitely reaping the benefits of training."

Lorraine Griffiths
Office Manager

which is perfect for smaller businesses like RLBS who want to develop staff but are concerned about the investment of time and money."

Lorraine also found that the brokerage service could help her to research and access an Apprenticeship for the business' new 16-year-old recruit Scott Curan.

"We really wanted to develop Scott's skills and knew that an Apprenticeship in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration would be perfect. The skills brokers secured an apprenticeship at Plymouth College for Further Education, which was fully funded through the Learning and Skills Council. This has helped Scott's development and we hope that he goes on to become a qualified engineer which would be a big asset to the business," said Lorraine.

When asked about her experience of Train to Gain, Lorraine said: "I cannot thank Janet and Train to Gain enough, the service was a real lifeline. I wouldn't hesitate to go back to Train to Gain to ask for more information or advice, it's great to get a helping hand and we are definitely reaping the benefits of training."

TRAIN TO GAIN PROTOCOLS

Trades Union Congress and the Learning and Skills Council

This protocol sets out how Train Unions will work with Train to Gain.

It has been developed by national and regional LSC office colleagues with TUC representatives and builds upon the successful contribution of Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) to the Employer Training Pilots

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) are strategic partners equally committed to maximising the contribution each

organisation makes to promoting learning and skills and raising the demand for skills development among young people, adults and employers.

<http://teams.lsc.gov.uk/traintogain/unionlearning/default>

Provider/Broker Protocol

We have also reached agreement on the provider/broker protocol within the region. This sets out the relationship between providers and brokers to make sure employers receive a seamless quality service with a minimum of delay or confusion.

EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO TRAINING

The Employer's Guide to Training helps employers identify training schemes through an easily accessible web based handbook. The Guide is also a great search tool for Train to Gain Skills Brokers who are able to source development opportunities from a single national learning directory.

Over the last year the LSC has been working with employer groups and experts to develop the Employer's Guide, to encourage employers to search for learning opportunities and then rate their satisfaction with the training they have undertaken.

The LSC has been piloting a system of employer feedback in the south west, working with employers and Training Providers to test the guide before it is available nationally.

Would you like to get involved?

If you are an employer who wants to provide feedback, or if you know people who have accessed training in the last two years, the feedback mechanism can be accessed from the Employer's Guide website <http://www10.employersguide.org.uk/feedback/step1.jsp> and is simple to use.

For further information on the Employer's Guide

For additional support in using the Employer's Guide or for further information please email Anjie Winter, via Anjie.winter@lsc.gov.uk.



LATEST NEWS – REGIONAL PRESS LAUNCH



(l-r) Enoch Showunmi, Chris Weale (Bristol City footballers) and Paul Lucken with Ben Fogle on the 13th October

“...training is essential if you want to create a skilled workforce which will ensure your company stays ahead of the competition and offers the best possible service to your clients”

Ben Fogle
TV Presenter

The South West launch of Train to Gain took place at Ashton Gate football stadium in Bristol on the 13th October, where Paul Lucken, Regional Director of Skills, explained the wide scope of the scheme to local business representatives.

TV presenter and adventurer Ben Fogle also attended the event and spoke on the vital role training has played in his many sporting endeavours:

“When James and I rowed across the Atlantic, training was key to our success. We had to follow a regime tailored specifically to the challenge to ensure we were at our peak performance levels.

The same simple rule applies to business: training is essential if you want to create a skilled workforce which will ensure your company stays ahead of the competition and offers the best possible service to your clients.”

LATEST NEWS – PHIL HOPE VISIT



Phil Hope and student in Exeter College's new facility

The Minister visited the college's new vocational and skills facilities and met Train to Gain Skills Brokers who will be working closely with local employers to help them find the best training for their staff and for the organisation.

The Minister then visited Education Training and Skills, the Exeter-based training organisation a Train to Gain

Training Provider and Greenfield Engineering, a local company.

The Minister praised the success of the Government's major new employer service Train to Gain when he saw the service in action in Exeter.

STAKEHOLDER NEWS AND INFORMATION

Investors in People

The LSC continues to support the Investors in People (IiP) standard and it will be marketed through Train to Gain. The LSC recognises the business benefits that Investors in People brings to committed employers. In order to provide the support employers require as well as reflect the changing structure of advice and guidance, IiP has become one of the flexible offers within the Skills Brokerage service.

In the South West a collaborative approach has been established between Business Link (BL) and the Regional Quality Centre, Quality South West (QSW). In combining BL's expertise in employer engagement with QSW's excellent record in Broker training and development, as well as client support on the IiP customer journey, we have developed a true Brokerage intervention for IiP clients within Train to Gain.

Jointly the organisations are working effectively and creatively to promote IiP and deliver a support package that will appeal to new and existing clients. The organisations are particularly focused on providing targeted activity to support the specific requirements of employers within the region's priority sectors.

QSW and BL hosted an event in the South West to celebrate 15 years of IiP accreditation and as part of Investors in People Week. Tim Smit, CEO of the Eden

Project was just one of the speakers who addressed 140 clients at different stages of their IiP journey.

We are confident that the South West Region has a major part to play in tracking the investment and impact of IiP, particularly how it supplements and complements Train to Gain activity.

If you would like to find out more about Investors in People, please contact the Train to Gain Brokerage Team on 08456 047 047.

Information, Advice and Guidance

The South West region recently piloted an Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) workshop which will form part of the suite of training materials for Skills Brokers. The IAG module has been designed, alongside a series of other titles, to underpin key knowledge about the subject and help prepare towards the competencies in the Skills Broker Standard.

The workshop was attended by 14 Brokers from across the SW region and covered features and benefits of IAG, roles within IAG and provided practical help in dealing with a number of employer and learner issues using case studies. Feedback has been very positive, particularly from new Brokers. LSC National Office will post the full set of modular training materials on the Skills Broker website.

HOT TIP

Notice to all Providers

As part of the delivery of the Train to Gain service, Training Providers have to give information, advice and guidance to every Train to Gain learner. Can we remind you that it is a contractual obligation to attain the Matrix Standard by August 2007. Whilst working towards accreditation you must offer IAG via a Matrix endorsed Contractor –nextstep or one of its sub-contractors.

If you need clarification, help or training towards Matrix accreditation, please contact your LSC Partnership Manager.

Learner Eligibility

To be eligible for Train to Gain, a learner must not hold an existing Level 2 qualification already. In order to establish this, providers are required to check with potential learners whether they possess level 2 qualification by first explaining what this means and whether they have a qualification equivalent to level 2 –no matter how long ago this was attained. The learner is then required to sign a self declaration form.

Evidence from Employer Training Pilots shows that not all learners understood 'level 2' and therefore made an inaccurate declaration at the start of their training. This will be an important issue in Train to Gain and LSC auditors will be working closely with providers to ensure learners have been informed appropriately before making a self declaration.

How to contact Train to Gain:

The Train to Gain design hotline designtraintogain@lsc.gov.uk has proven to be a very useful resource both internally, for LSC staff, and externally for Skills Brokers, providers and partner organisations looking for quick answers to design queries. This service is now managed by the COI on our behalf so all queries should now be sent direct to the COI at designtraintogain@coi.gsi.gov.uk