



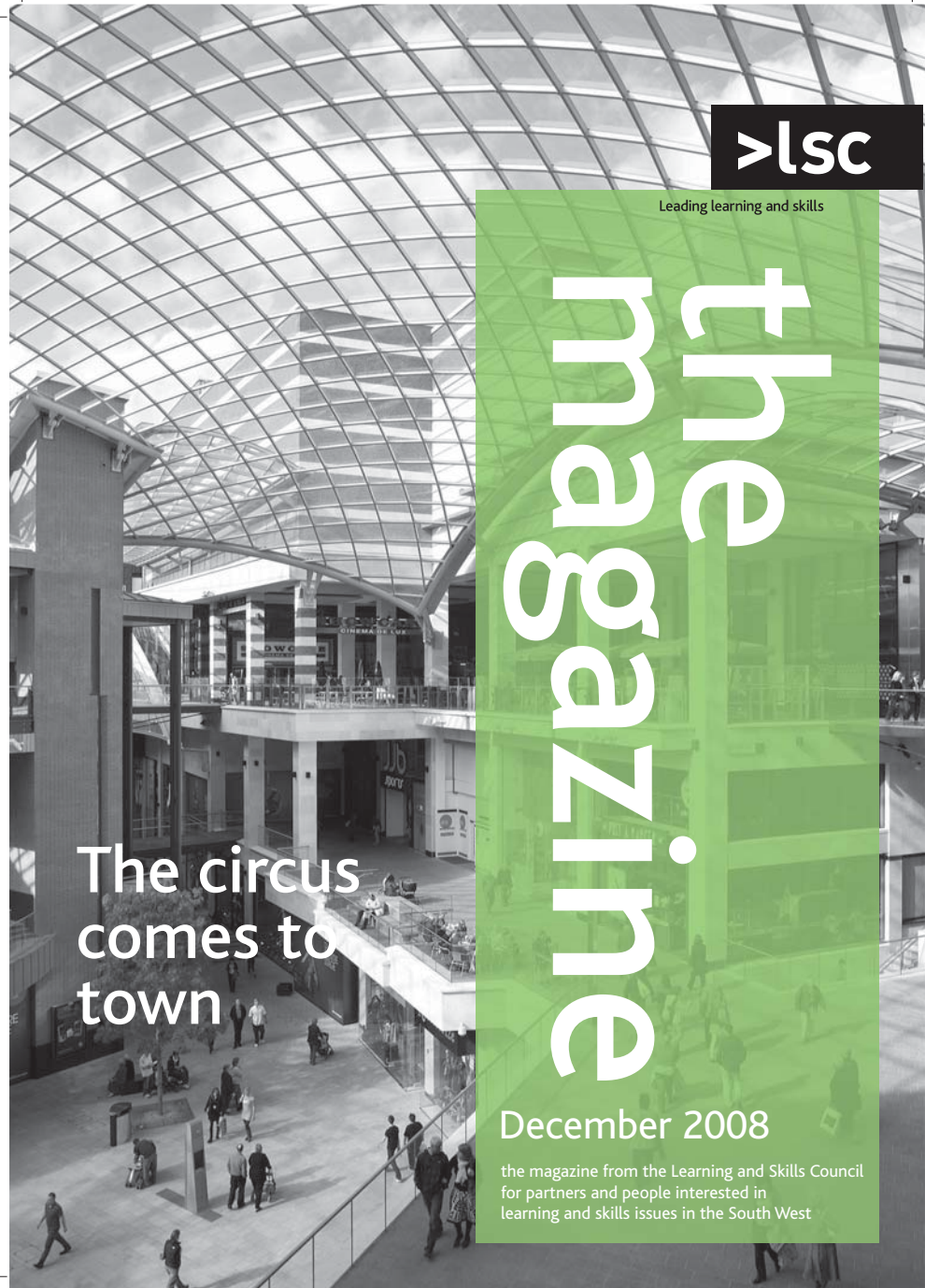
Leading learning and skills

the magazine

The circus
comes to
town

December 2008

the magazine from the Learning and Skills Council
for partners and people interested in
learning and skills issues in the South West



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Cover Photo – Cabot Circus, Bristol

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Malcolm Gillespie
Regional Director - South West

Welcome to the fourth edition of the magazine, the newsletter for stakeholders throughout the South West.

This edition highlights Bristol's £500 million Cabot Circus retail and leisure development, which has created over 4,000 jobs. The West at Work team have been central in supporting the development and ensuring that local people benefit from the opportunities on offer.

We also have news on Train to Gain's second birthday as well as an update on the Skills Pledge.

As I am sure you are aware, the LSC is undergoing some major changes and more information about this can be found in this issue.

We hope that you enjoy the magazine and look forward to hearing your ideas for future editions.

Malcolm Gillespie
Regional Director
South West



The search is on for the region's skills stars

Do you know a skills star? The LSC is searching for learners and companies who have achieved great feats in learning or development to shine at the 2009 South West Skills Awards.

Application forms are now available at the LSC website: www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest, and National Apprenticeship Awards application forms are available via www.apprenticeships.org.uk/awards. The deadline for entries is Friday 27 February.

Apprentices and companies who run Apprenticeship programmes will automatically qualify for the awards by entering the National Apprenticeship Awards at www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/awards. Over forty individuals and companies were recognised at last year's event from across the region and the 2009 awards promise to be bigger and better.

Individual awards categories at the 2009 awards will be sponsored by Rolls Royce, Flybe and the European Social Fund.

For further information please contact Catherine Fischer on 0117 372 6411 or catherine.fischer@lsc.gov.uk
www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest
www.apprenticeships.org.uk/awards

LSC South West improving the skills of the region

The LSC South West aims to improve the knowledge and skills of young people and adults to world class standards, making them a part of a truly competitive workforce. In the last two years the LSC South West has dramatically helped to improve the skills of the region and has recently published a booklet highlighting their achievements.

To view the booklet and read a summary of the work the LSC has done in the south west, click on the following link:
www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/Publications/

Changes ahead for LSC

The recent Machinery of Government announcements/paper outlines changes that will alter the structure of the LSC.

Two new bodies will be set up to drive forward the LSC's agenda of making England better skilled and more competitive. The bodies are:

- **The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)**
This will support local authorities in their new role in commissioning and funding 14-19 provision
- **The Skills Funding Agency (SFA)**
This will oversee the distribution of funds to the adult skills sector and manage the performance of Further Education colleges. The Agency will also house the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), the National Employer Service, and the Adult Careers and Advancement Agency

In 2010 some LSC staff will transfer to local authorities and others will move across to the two new organisations. The Train to Gain brokerage service will transfer to Regional Development Agencies in April 2009.

The LSC is working to ensure smooth transition and stakeholders will be updated as further announcements are made.

Train to Gain grows and grows



Having recently celebrated its second anniversary, the LSC's Train to Gain service is going from strength to strength. More than 13,000 companies across the South West have signed up to the service, which advises on training to develop the skills of their employees and improve productivity and competitiveness. Train to Gain looks set to grow further thanks to the Government's recent announcement to enhance the service.

Train to Gain is a key part of the Government's plans to build the nation's skills and helps to identify and match workforce training needs with training providers. Across the region, Train to Gain has helped businesses and organisations from a wide range of sectors since its launch in 2006. Businesses from the construction, manufacturing and health and social work sectors lead the way with over 1,200 businesses from each sector having accessed the Train to Gain Brokerage service. In addition, more than 1,100 hotels and restaurants in the South West have signed up.

The Government recently announced a massive extension of the Train to Gain service as part of a wider drive to upskill the UK's workforce. The increase in funding to over £900 million by 2010/11 is part of a larger investment programme that will

see more than £11 billion a year invested in education, employment and training over the next three years.

It is expected that by the end of 2010 more than 500,000 learners in England will have gained a first full Level 2 qualification (equivalent to five GCSEs A – C) with the help of Train to Gain, with many of these leavers in the South West, businesses across the region are now better equipped with the skills needed to attain growth and commercial success.

Chris Minett, Skills Development Director at LSC South West, said: "The take up of the Train to Gain service in the South West reflects the business demand for better skills and training and recognition of the impact this can have on productivity, employee engagement and company reputation.

"Many of those who have signed up are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that do not have the luxury of a HR or training resource. Most appreciate the importance of a skilled workforce, but in many cases they don't know where to start or are often too busy to take necessary action. Looking forward we aim to get more companies on board and encourage employers to take control of their future by investing in skills through Train to Gain."

Here we look at the successes of the first two years, showcasing companies and employees who have already benefited from the Train to Gain service.

Cheltenham Town FC



League One football club Cheltenham Town FC certainly scored with Train to Gain when the club's Health & Safety Manager Andy Dalgetty enquired about making the job of crowd safety easier. Following an organisational needs analysis of training from the broker and advice on available courses and funding, Andy decided to enrol his stewards on the new Level 2 in Event Stewarding at the City of Bristol College.

Andy comments:
"The help Train to Gain has given has been wonderful and the training itself has made a huge difference. Some of our stewards travel from as far away as Swansea, so for them to get up even earlier to attend the training before a match shows a real commitment on their part. We are already noticing a difference in the confidence and abilities of the stewards."

South Devon Women's Aid

Christine McKenna contacted Train to Gain when she was appointed as General Manager at South Devon Women's Aid (SDWA). Currently several members of the SDWA team are preparing to embark on a NVQ Level 2 in Advice and Guidance, aimed at practitioners who work directly with clients, disseminating information, advice and guidance.

Christine says:
"I recognised that investing in training was key to safeguarding the charity's future. The trouble was that I hadn't had time to complete a skills audit, so approaching Train to Gain seemed to make perfect sense."

"The entire Train to Gain experience has been outstanding from start to finish. I've been particularly impressed with the level of knowledge shown by the skills broker. Her ability to recommend the most appropriate and convenient training has been extremely useful."

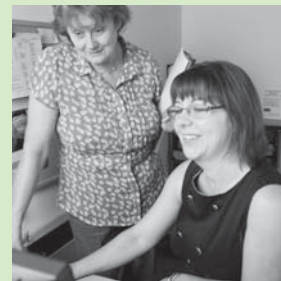
1st Choice Stairlifts



The business fortunes of Wiltshire's only independent stairlift company, 1st Choice Stairlifts, have undoubtedly been boosted since Company Director Coral Affleck was visited by a Train to Gain skills broker. Whereas previous training had been privately financed, the Train to Gain broker was able to advise on the government funding that is available and identify local training providers who could deliver the training needed.

Coral comments:
"The initial conversations I had with the Train to Gain broker proved to be inspirational, with information about how both NVQs and Apprenticeships could have a positive impact on the business and our nine-strong workforce. We have many customers from Local Authorities, and in the future I believe that holding an NVQ accreditation will become essential to doing business with them, something which Train to Gain has helped to facilitate for our company."

Independent Financial Consultancy



Bristol-based Independent Financial Consultancy (IFC) took control of its own fortunes when Director Judy Werrett contacted a Train to Gain skills broker through her Business West membership after recognising that her business needed a new junior office administrator. **Judy says:**
"Train to Gain helped us find a suitable candidate by putting us in touch with several training providers. Following this success, we took up their suggestion that some of our other staff could undertake a

three-day Leadership Management course on how to supervise more junior members of the team. Being a small company means that it's not always possible for the Directors to oversee the development of staff in terms of their managerial capabilities, so this was ideal for us. The beauty of work-based training is that the business is not inconvenienced by losing staff to off-site courses. The Train to Gain brokers are helpful, knowledgeable and, most importantly, very much in touch with business' needs."

Councils pledge to train thousands of employees



"This is an outstanding commitment by these four Local Authorities which will undoubtedly help to boost the overall skills of the region. Enhancing the skills of their employees will help to improve their future career prospects and will boost the efficiency of the organisations."

Malcolm Gillespie



Since it was launched last year by the LSC, the Skills Pledge has seen hundreds of businesses across the South West committing to bridge the skills gap and help improve the skills of thousands of employees. Now even more employees from the region will be covered by the pledge as four Local Authorities commit to training their staff.

The Skills Pledge is a public, voluntary commitment by the management of an organisation to train all employees to at least Level 2 standard (equivalent to 5 GCSEs grade A-C).

The latest and most high profile commitment to the pledge has been by four Local Authorities in the West of England area: Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Their action will mean that thousands of council employees have the opportunity to undertake further training.

By making the Skills Pledge, each authority is committing to increase the skills of their workforce. In return, the LSC provides each authority with a training plan which looks at all business practices and how working practices and customer service can be improved through upskilling staff.

The unique joint pledge involving these Local Authorities reflects an increasingly close working relationship between the organisations to help key areas in the West of England where individuals with limited or no skills in literacy and numeracy are most likely to be located.

Helen Holland, Chairman of the West of England Partnership, commented: "The West of England Partnership is committed to working more effectively together to support the economic growth and prosperity of the region – and developing our skills base is at the heart of this. The Skills Pledge means that, as major employers, we are taking on our responsibilities in increasing skills levels and at the same time improving the quality of service we offer to the public."

For more information on the Skills Pledge, please visit www.traintogain.gov.uk/skillspledge

The LSC celebrates the region's colleges

>lsc

Leading learning and skills

10 - 16 November 2008 saw the first ever Colleges' Week - designed to celebrate the role that colleges play in unlocking talent in communities and transforming the lives of learners across the South West.

In the UK almost three million learners study in further education each year and three quarters of a million young people aged 16-18 study A levels or vocational qualifications in a sixth form, tertiary or further education college.

The week of celebration focused on five themes that demonstrated the impact colleges have on individuals, communities and businesses:

- Colleges develop skills - the spotlight focused on personal skills and the remarkable journeys that some college students have made to achieve their goals
- Colleges deliver excellence - demonstrating the excellent standards set by colleges
- Colleges help build strong communities – examining the economic and social impact of a college on its immediate geographic area
- Colleges help businesses to succeed - the focal point of the country's 'Biggest Business Breakfast', which saw employer meetings taking place throughout November
- Colleges transform lives - colleges carried out skills challenges designed to see what can be achieved in a day and demonstrated how learners can transform their lives by learning skills

Success rates are rising year on year and over 90 per cent of full time students go on to university or straight into work following their college programme. The Government has pledged to rebuild the whole sector by 2015 and is investing £2.3 billion over the next three years.

The initiative was led by the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills (DIUS), in partnership with the LSC.

For further information on Colleges' Week go to www.collegesweek.org

New South West Council is formed

In July the LSC South West announced a new Regional Council to inform the LSC's decision making at a regional level in line with the Further Education and Training Act 2007.

One of nine in England, the Regional Council was set up to guide progress of the Government's strategy for education and skills.

The eleven council members, a mixture of business, education, training and community experts, were appointed via a formal recruitment process. Members faced stiff competition for their positions as a significant number of applications were received from many leading business people in the region.

Malcolm Gillespie, Regional Director of LSC South West, said: "The Act has enabled us to simplify our non-executive structure and create a more fluid system of decision making, which will undoubtedly help to best meet the needs of local and regional of learners and employers."

John Savage, who was also re-appointed as the Regional Chair of the LSC South West, commented: "I am delighted that we have been able to attract such a high calibre of membership to our new Regional Council.



The Regional Council will provide challenge, support and leadership to the LSC's work, and in doing so will help shape a world class education and skills system for the South West region."



South West financial services face skills shortages

Research shows that skills shortages, lack of applicants and an ageing workforce could seriously damage our future financial services. That's the message from the National Skills Academy for Financial Services (NSAFS) and with large numbers of financial services in the region, the South West is taking action.

Their latest report shows that although more than two-thirds of the workforce in the financial services sector are currently aged 25-49, the future working population will be dominated by older workers. Up to 4,000 new entrants will be required by the industry every year to 2014, yet recent figures show a drop in the number of applicants.

The NSAFS for the South West is a joint venture between the LSC and the Finance Sector Skills Council. Set up to enhance the quality of training for the industry it aims to increase the number of skilled people going into financial services and improve training for existing employees. It also works with a range of learning providers to drive up quality in terms of delivery and achievement.

Nigel Benton of the NSAFS, said: "The UK is ageing and although this drives growth in demand for the services provided by the sector it also presents fundamental skills problems. Concern over the number of skills shortages has been voiced by

two-thirds of employers questioned who are finding it difficult to fill vacancies. "Skills shortages most likely to be experienced in the South West are in relation to customer care, technical skills, written communication and management skills. Although new entrants will need support in developing business and interpersonal skills, existing skills gaps are already appearing amongst managers, sales and clerical staff."

Bill Adshead, Skills Development Manager at the LSC, said: "There are a wide range of training opportunities and providers which can prove confusing for employers who are generally time short and cost-focused. The NSAFS acts as a key source of information on the training landscape and, with its focus on the development and delivery of quality skills education and training, it will prove itself to be invaluable to the sector going forward."

Further information about the National Skills Academy for Financial Services can be found at: www.nsafs.co.uk

LSC programme to break down gender stereotypes



Research by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) shows that despite an increasing number of young people expressing an interest in a career traditionally dominated by the opposite sex, for example engineering or plumbing, very few actually pursue these careers. As a result of this research the LSC has implemented a radical training programme for young apprentices in the South West, designed to alleviate traditional career gender stereotypes.

The Young Apprenticeship Programme has been created to target teenagers between the ages of 14-16 years old who want to achieve vocational qualifications alongside their academic schooling.

Schools and colleges across the region have signed up to take part in the programme in a bid to help young people make the right choices at the start of their careers. A good example is Yeovil College, who is working with secondary schools in the area to run Young Apprenticeship programmes to develop tomorrow's top engineers, chefs and hotel managers.

Twenty four students, from secondary schools in the South Somerset area, are currently taking part in Young Apprenticeship programmes in Engineering and Hospitality at Yeovil College. Dramatic results have already been seen at the

programme - more girls have expressed an interest in engineering and more boys have said they would like to become a top chef.

Alongside their schoolwork, students spend one day a week in the college working towards Level 2 qualifications in their chosen area. They will also spend 50 days of the two-year Young Apprenticeship programme working with local employers, giving them real experience of their potential future career.

Dave Bassett, Programme Area Co-ordinator for Engineering at Yeovil College, said: "It has been really interesting to see how the programme has helped to break down gender stereotypes, certainly more girls have been encouraged into the engineering programme since the programme started.

Young parents in Devon trained for success

When young people become parents it can often mean they miss out on vital education and training opportunities. However, thanks to LSC funding, over 50 young parents in Devon are on the path to success after completing a course designed to improve their life skills and employment prospects.



The "Young Parenting" Course, developed by the LSC, is aimed at 16-19 year olds who are pregnant or have young children and not in education or training. It delivers basic qualifications in paediatric first aid and food hygiene and develops skills in literacy, numeracy, parenting and child's play development. The course also improves employability skills, letter and CV writing, and financial planning. The pilot programme began in December 2007 targeting 50 people in the North Devon area and aiming for 47 to pass the course and 34 to finish with a qualification.

However, the results of the course have far exceeded the expected targets with 52 students enrolled and all but one of those gaining a useful qualification. Now over 30 per cent of them are either in employment or enrolled at university or college.

The success means that the course has now been extended so that more young parents in Devon can help them to get suitable employment or further education.

Hilary Bussell, Project Co-ordinator at Torrridge Training, the local community organisation based in Bideford dedicated to providing training that supports individual needs whilst benefiting the wider community.

Dr John Chudley, LSC Area Director for Devon and Cornwall, commented: "The pilot has been extremely successful in that it has engaged with hard to reach learners and has such great results. The course fits a niche in the market place by providing support to young parents, enabling them to gain confidence and empowering them to make decisions for themselves. I am delighted with the programme's success and congratulate everyone involved."

The circus comes to town



Bristol's £500 million Cabot Circus retail and leisure development opened its doors this September, creating 4,000 jobs and welcoming thousands of visitors to the heart of the city.

West at Work is an LSC partnership initiative which supports the economy by helping to ensure that local people have the skills needed by employers. They have worked alongside the developers (Bristol Alliance) to provide training and job opportunities at Cabot Circus.

West at Work organised the Cabot Circus Jobs Bus, which toured local communities offering advice and support about training and jobs. The bus aimed to reach disadvantaged communities and groups and was very successful attracting more than 10,000 visitors.

The partnership was praised at the opening ceremony for successfully offering a joined up, city-wide approach to large-scale investment projects. The efforts of West at Work were also rewarded with a top prize at the Bristol Evening Post Recruitment Awards. The project picked up first place in the Best Training Development Scheme category for the bespoke training courses designed specifically for the Cabot Circus development.

Will Cookson, West at Work Project Manager, said: "We are delighted with the Best Training Development Award as it highlights all the hard work that has been put in to improving the skills of local people. It also outlines how we can really make a difference through effective successful partnership working across public and private sector agencies."

David Draycott, West at Work Director, commented: "The opening of Cabot Circus is the culmination of a lot of hard work from a great number of people across the partnership."

"We have worked very successfully with Bristol Alliance to deliver a variety of support for both employers and local people - with a particular emphasis on our most disadvantaged areas."

By the end of the year around 1,400 local people will have undertaken dedicated Cabot Circus training courses and over 80 per cent of participants will have been from disadvantaged communities or groups.

Delivering jobs and skills in Gloucester



Residents and businesses in Gloucester are set for a huge boost to their skills thanks to a £2.5 million investment from the LSC European Social Fund (ESF).

The initiative, called 'Gloucester Works', is the first of its kind in the South West and has been developed to ensure that local people have the best chance of benefiting from anticipated growth in the job market.

Stimulated by Gloucester's regeneration, 'Gloucester Works' will run for an initial three

years, with the potential to continue longer, and signifies the importance of Gloucester to the county's economy. Mark Williams, LSC Development Director, said: "The Gloucester Works project will help transform the lives of people in the area by helping them achieve better skills and better job prospects. There is a huge amount of regeneration work going on in Gloucester and the ESF funding will enable thousands of local people to get the qualifications and skills they need to take advantage of the employment prospects on offer, therefore expanding and enhancing the available workforce."

Managed by Gloucester First, the country's business-led economic partnership, the programme is a collaboration between Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire

County Council, Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company, LSC, JobCentre Plus, Gloucestershire PCT and the South West Regional Development Agency.

The LSC's ESF programme is investing £2 billion in jobs and skills – especially for those who are unemployed or at a disadvantage in the labour market. The South West has £83.7 million, which will be invested in projects to help develop a skilled workforce across the region.

For further information about the free ESF courses, please email: info@glosfirst.co.uk

Cornish training body triumphs at regional awards

Cornwall Marine Network (CMN), has been recognised as one of the best in Britain after scooping three awards at the regional finals of the 2008 National Training Awards.

The network, which is the body behind the major revival of training opportunities for Cornwall's marine industry, won the Partnership and Collaboration regional award and will progress to the UK finals in December.

Paul Wickes, CMN's Chief Executive Officer and Training Director, who picked up the network's two other awards, was also invited to become a National Training Awards 'ambassador'. This will involve sharing with other regional and national organisations the best practice that has led to CMN's success.


The National Training Awards aim to raise awareness and inspire others to invest in learning and development as a route to becoming world-class competitors in today's global economy. Winners of the awards are exemplars of training and development in the UK and have demonstrated that they are committed to exceptional training that has real benefits for business, communities and individuals.

CMN representatives were presented with awards at the Bristol event by special guest, Olympic athlete and former 110 metres hurdles world record holder Colin Jackson.

Paul Wickes said: "We are immensely proud to be honoured at the regional finals of the National Training Awards. It speaks volumes for our achievements to date in pursuing the employers' agenda and developing partnerships that create the best possible support programmes for companies and learners alike."

Paul Lucken, Regional Director of Skills at LSC South West, commented: "Cornwall Marine Network's win is a fantastic celebration of the commitment they have made to training staff. It is also a wonderful example of how the ESF programme can benefit businesses in the region. We now wish CMN every success at the London finals."





the magazine is produced quarterly and aims to celebrate the achievements of young people, adults, employers and training providers across the South West.

We hope that you have enjoyed this edition of the magazine and we look forward to continually developing it to ensure that each issue represents the hard work and success stories that are happening across the region and providing a useful insight into the LSC and our plans and activities.

You can also find this document on our website:
www.lsc.gov.uk/southwest

If you would like to be included in the mailing list for future editions of the magazine please email your contact details to catherine.fischer@lsc.gov.uk

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