



P R E S S R E L E A S E

Berkshire colleges unveil new project to help local businesses upskill their workforce for free

A group of training providers, led by East Berkshire College, has secured a £900,000 contract from the European Social Fund (ESF) to help small to medium-sized businesses across Berkshire to upskill their employees for free.

Businesses with less than 250 employees* and operating in Berkshire will be able to access the fully-funded training for employees aged over 16 (and resident in the UK/EU). Training will be delivered on a flexible, modular basis and will be specifically tailored to the needs of the individual business and its employees.

The Skills for the Workforce programme is being delivered in partnership with Bracknell & Wokingham College, Newbury College, Reading College, TESS Group and West Berkshire Training Consortium.

Lynette Chadwick, ESF Project Manager at East Berkshire College, explains: “With over 40,000 SMEs in Berkshire, we want to support as many businesses as possible in their growth plans. The focus of the Skills for the Workforce programme is to deliver free workplace training to develop highly skilled employees.

“The training programmes are fully funded and flexible in order to be most effective for businesses. Whether a company is looking to develop senior managers or employees with no formal qualifications, we can deliver appropriate training at a time and place to suit. All the training partners in this project have years of experience of working in a wide range of sectors, and can ensure businesses receive high-quality training to meet their needs.”

The Skills for the Workforce project, which runs until June 2018, is designed to boost the skills of the local workforce and help local businesses to be more productive and

competitive. Employers can access training for their employees in a range of areas including management and team leading, innovation and business development, IT and specific industry-related skills to meet the requirements of their business. Other key sectors include IT, administration, science, health and care, nursing, engineering and hospitality.

Employees can gain accredited units, certificates or diplomas as well as non-accredited training to enhance their knowledge and skills. They will then have the opportunity to go on to complete a full, industry-recognised qualification, such as an apprenticeship.

The Skills for the Workforce programme is part of the Employees Support in Skills project, which is part-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and co-financed by the Skills Funding Agency.

For information on the project and how your business can access free training, contact East Berkshire College on 01753 443855, visit www.eastberks.ac.uk/skillsfortheworkforce or contact any of the partner training providers for this project.

*Businesses who have less than 250 full-time equivalent employees.

Ends

Notes for Editors

Photo caption:

Working together to help SMEs (from left to right): Juliet Holloway from East Berkshire College, Jon Thompson from WBTC, Jo Houghton from Newbury College, Andrew Willis from Bracknell & Wokingham College, Vicky Gale from TESS Group and Lynette Chadwick from East Berkshire College.

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About East Berkshire College

- East Berkshire College has over 40 years of experience in developing and delivering cost-effective training to SMEs and multinationals in a wide range of sectors. With two main colleges in Langley and Windsor as well as a dedicated Business Services team, the College works with over 2,000 employers across the region, helping their organisations grow and succeed through training. From supporting employers in accessing funding to tailoring training to specific business needs, the College offers a comprehensive and personal service. For more details or a free training needs analysis, visit www.eastberks.ac.uk, email business.services@eastberks.ac.uk or call 01753 443855.

About Bracknell & Wokingham College

- Bracknell & Wokingham College has worked with businesses large and small for over 40 years; helping employers get the best from their employees and boost their bottom line. With state-of-the-art facilities and qualified, industry-experienced staff, the college provides a great environment for your training. We offer businesses flexible and tailored modular qualifications in project management, coaching and mentoring, bookkeeping and accounts, electrical installation and much more. For more information, visit www.bracknell.ac.uk email business@bracknell.ac.uk or call 0845 330 3343.

About Newbury College

- Newbury College is skilled in developing training packages to suit the individual needs of the businesses it works with. It offers a range of bespoke Management Workshops, Legal Compliance courses and apprenticeships and is the provider of choice for employers in the local area. The College is dedicated to supporting the success of the businesses it works with and as a result, its work continues to grow. As well as its Monks Lane campus, the College has an additional training centre in Reading, conveniently located off Junction 12 of the M4. For details on how Newbury College can meet your business training needs call 01635 845229 or visit www.newbury-college.ac.uk.

About TESS

- Established in 2009 we flourished in the events and safety training market. Since that moment we've been working on changing the way everyone finds their future. Whether you're a school leaver who wants to find their way in life – or a company who want to develop their staff – The Tess Group will give you the tools to find your way. We are a learning and development focused provider of real training, coming to your place of work to ensure you receive the highest quality training that can be delivered ranging from Higher Level Apprenticeships to units for delivery under the ESF Skills Support for the Workforce contract. We aim to provide you with the learning you need to progress on that next step whether it be further education or promotion in work. To find out more about us give us a call on 01604 210 500 or visit www.thetessgroup.com

About West Berkshire Training Consortium

- West Berkshire Training Consortium have been training local people since 1983, set up as a not for profit organisation, by employers for employers' needs. Our experience means a lot to our businesses and learner and 70% of all WBTC Apprentices either secure promotion, additional responsibility or go to higher learning. If you look at the published reports for outcomes our achievement rates are more than 10% higher than the national average. We prefer to work with employers looking for quality who will work with us to ensure the learners get the best from their training and the opportunity to learn and use new skills. We are able to broker and customise our delivery across a wide range of skills areas. We're lucky to count among our customers some of the best known and established local, regional and national employers, take a look at our website www.wbtc-uk.com