



## News from the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, West Midlands for SSCs, partners and stakeholders

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### People1st: Cherie Blair supports woman in leadership initiative

People 1<sup>st</sup>, has launched Women 1<sup>st</sup>, a major leadership development programme for women working in the HLTT sector. Key note speaker Cherie Blair will highlight the aims of the Women 1<sup>st</sup> initiative which seeks to address the significant under-representation of women in senior management positions within hospitality and leisure businesses. The programme's long term aim, supported by leading employers including McDonald's, Sodexo and Whitbread, is to double the number of women in board-level executive positions by 2015.

> [Click here to find out more](#)

### Manufacturing Skills Alliance plans to make skills access easier for employers

Five sector skills councils have launched an initiative to improve access to quality training and development for manufacturing employers in the UK. As the Manufacturing Skills Alliance, Cogent, Improve Ltd, Proskills, Semta and Skillfast-UK revealed their plan at a House of Lords event with Business and Regulatory Reform Minister Ian Lucas MP.

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> [Click here to find out more](#)

## Proskills: Top Apprenticeship Awards for West Midlands Skills Alliance plans to make skills access easier for employers

- Gary Parton from Istock Brick takes apprentice of the year accolade -

The UK's brightest new talent from across the process and manufacturing sector were recognised by sector skills council Proskills, at its 2009 Apprenticeship Awards ceremony held in the West Midlands. Run by Proskills and its Academy, the Awards celebrated the achievements of apprentices and their employers.



Commenting on the Apprenticeship Awards, Terry Watts, Chief Executive of Proskills UK said, "There is nothing more inspiring than to see bright new talent entering our industries as a result of the apprenticeship programme.

We have again been amazed by the quality of achievement of these young apprentices who have shown what exceptional talent we have within the UK workforce and it is encouraging to see that employers are investing and committing to apprenticeship training. "

Gary, an advanced mechanical / electrical engineer is the first apprentice in several years at Istock, believes his apprenticeship has given him hands on training experience, confidence to do his work as well as enhancing his communication skills.

> [Click here to find out more](#)

## Skills for Justice: Learning to Listen: Michelle's Experience of Action Learning

Michelle Ugwueze from West Midlands Police has recently finished her Action Learning Set facilitator training with Women and Work, and "loved every aspect of the course". Having worked for the police for six years, she wanted to improve her problem-solving skills, but was surprised at the effect it had on her personal development.

ALS training taught her the importance of proper listening, and how to direct others to their own solutions. In turn, she is now better at solving her own problems – "I'm a better person in dealing with my issues and issues of other people brought to my attention. I'm better able to think of options at the spot when faced with immediate challenges". This has made her a better officer, and an ambassador for the course itself -

"The programme has definitely showed me that there's always a way out of or around issues, there's no need giving up. It will improve your listening skills and expand your knowledge on dealing with issues brought to you without having to think long and hard about how to deal with it. You'll never regret going on the course. It was very enlightening and days well spent, could not have asked for a better way to spend my time".

Michelle's glowing recommendation for the course shows the incredible personal benefit, and indeed the advantage to the organisation also.

> [Click here to find out more](#)

## A First for Alliance of Sector Skills Councils and the National Apprenticeship Service in the West Midlands

The Alliance of Sector Skills Councils and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) in the West Midlands has become the first region to agree a protocol aligning their employer engagement activities.

The protocol sets out clear ways of working between the Alliance and the NAS to drive up employer participation and investment in skills, including Apprenticeships. It was signed on 17<sup>th</sup> September by Stephen Lilley; Regional Director of the NAS (West Midlands) and Keith Marshall; Chair of the West Midlands Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, and CEO of SummitSkills.

The NAS was formally launched in April 2009 and is the organisation responsible for the delivery of Apprenticeship provision. It was established to deliver an end to end service to support employers wishing to take on apprentices.

Jane Peters, Employer Services Director for NAS in the West Midlands feels the joint protocol will be extremely beneficial to NAS in the region:

“NAS has a crucial role to play in working with employers and employer intermediaries to provide high quality Apprenticeship places.

“Developing a protocol for working together with the Alliance in the West Midlands will be invaluable in helping us make this happen.

“We see this as a very positive step, allowing us to develop a joined approach to the regional skills agenda, and in particular to facilitate greater take up of Apprentices.”

Ayesha Rees, Manager for the Alliance of SSCs in the East and West Midlands said:

“We welcome the opportunity to work closely with the NAS in the West Midlands. We are committed to working together to promote a skills offer to businesses to encourage them to see the benefits a better skilled workforce can bring.

“This agreement will have a positive impact on the regions employers, and will increase their understanding of Apprenticeships.

“NAS and the Alliance are committed to making this Protocol effective within the West Midlands and we are hopeful that this way of working will be adopted by other regions.”

The protocol includes objectives on building stakeholder relationships, developing marketing opportunities, capacity building and data intelligence. Representatives from the NAS in the West Midlands will attend the quarterly SSC forum meeting to take forward the agreed activity.

> [Click here to find out more](#)

## Royal Assent Is Through: Statement from Peter Lauener, Chief Executive Designate, YPLA

We have reached an important milestone in the changing learning and skills landscape. Parliament has voted approval for the [Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill](#) (ASCL), it has now received Royal Assent and the Bill has become an Act of Parliament. This now paves the way for the dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council and the creation of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) in April 2010.

Commenting on Royal Assent, Peter Lauener, Chief Executive Designate of the YPLA said: "This is an important milestone for the setting up of the Young People's Learning Agency which now has the green light from Parliament to come into being from April 2010. The YPLA will be established as a non departmental public body and will be sponsored by the DCSF. Our organisation is designed to enable and support local authorities in fulfilling their new duties for 16-19 learners. We will also fund and manage the performance of open Academies and provide support for learners, in particular the Education Maintenance Allowance for 16-19 year olds.

"Our work will focus on helping every young person achieve their potential by continuing to improve the quality of learning and support for all young people. I am looking forward to working with local authorities and all our partners to make a success of these new arrangements.

**"I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff for their incredible efforts so far and I looking forward to working with you all in the future'.**

> [Click here to find out more](#)

### Useful Links:

BIS "Skills White Paper" > [Click here to out more](#)

UKCES "Towards Ambition: 2020 skills, jobs, growth" > [Click here to find out more](#)

Skills Investment Strategy 2010-11 > [Click here to out more](#)

BIS: Higher Education - "Higher Ambitions" > [Click here to find out more](#)

Sector Skills Councils "Speaking for UK Employers" > [Click here to find out more](#)

AWM: Economic Update Oct 2009 > [Click here to find out more](#)

Federation of Awarding Bodies: Appoints new Chief Executive > [Click here to find out more](#)

SKILLS ACTION PLAN Refresh> [Click here to out more](#)

NIACE: Courses 2009/2010> [Click here to find out more](#)

PEOPLE 1<sup>ST</sup>: "People 1<sup>st</sup> & Business Link Employer Masterclass in Customer Services & Marketing"  
> [Click here to find out more](#)