

**The Learning and Skills Council responds to concerns about its government-funded 'Train to gain' scheme.**

Over the last year, demand from employers seeking new skills to help them through the recession increased dramatically. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people started 'Train to gain' courses to equip them with skills to help their businesses. Now, as economic conditions improve, people are completing their qualifications with new skills, ready for new challenges in the new recovering economy.

Overall we will deliver 100,000 more starts and learners over the two years 2008/09 and 2009/10 than planned. This investment means that employers are receiving support to invest in training, so that they have the skilled staff they need to survive the economic downturn and emerge stronger in the upturn.

Train to gain has been instrumental in making workplace training more responsive to the needs of employers. The flexibilities on offer have helped to increase learner numbers rapidly so more employees benefit.

The recent increase in demand is very encouraging, especially during the economic downturn. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills and the Learning and Skills Council are considering ways to make even more support available to employers while ensuring that we remain within the budget available.

The LSC is committed to funding the very significant number of 'Train to gain' learners that were in place prior to April 2009, with new starts being taken on where they can be accommodated within the budget thereafter.