

Welcome to the eleventh issue of the Skills Newsletter. I am always keen to highlight the work that the Department is doing and explore new ways in which to get our messages across. As a result, I am pleased to say that since the last edition we have had a further 200 people sign up to receive this electronic newsletter!



Whilst recent investment announcements such as Intune and Eircom provide us with glimmers of hope, there is no doubt that Northern Ireland has taken some hard knocks over recent weeks.

The high number of redundancies in major companies, especially in the manufacturing sector, is of great concern and my Department has been working tirelessly to support all those who have been made redundant.

In addition to this work, I have been actively considering a number of proposals to help those people who have been placed on short time working patterns. The first of these, which will initially be rolled out in the manufacturing sector, will allow those people training as Apprentices to use this downtime to complete their training whilst receiving a training allowance. In the current climate I am very proud to see the hard work of our Apprentices being rewarded and I was delighted to have been able to join them at a celebration event in May held in the Hilton Hotel, Belfast.

I have said before that it is important that employers continue to invest in their staff so that they can avail of the opportunities presented by the eventual upturn. I am therefore encouraged that the Department continues to see a rise in the numbers of businesses and organisations who are undertaking to follow the Investor in People standard. I would encourage you all to find out more about Investors in People by calling Jillian Gilmore on 028 9044 1794 or by emailing jillian.gilmore@delni.gov.uk

SIR REG EMPEY MLA – Minister for Employment and Learning

Minister urges employers to seek recognition for their training

The Minister has announced a pilot support programme for employers who provide high-quality training for their employees to have that training

ISSUE 11 – MAY 2009

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- [Economic Bulletin](#)
- [Labour Market Bulletin](#)
- [NI Skills Monitoring Survey](#)

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- [Training for Success](#)
- [Investors in People](#)
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Management

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accredited nationally.

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Now is the Time – New award category for National Training Awards

In recognition of the current economic climate there has now been a new award category added to this year's [National Training Awards](#). The category will be entitled 'Now is the Time' and will identify and celebrate businesses and voluntary organisations who have invested in training initiatives in direct response to the challenges of the recession. Applications are still being accepted for this category and the closing date is 26 June 2009. Further information can be obtained by contacting Catherine Millar on 028 9025 7474 or by emailing catherine.millar@delni.gov.uk.

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Brian Ambrose, Chairman of the CBI Northern Ireland is pictured above with Sir Reg Empey.

Skills forecasting report published

The Department for Employment and Learning has published a report examining the skills our future workforce might require. The report, entitled, 'Forecasting Future Skill Needs in Northern Ireland' which was undertaken by Oxford Economics, in conjunction with FGS Consulting, outlines the skills that our workforce will need under a range of economic scenarios, up until 2020. Any comments on this report should be emailed to successthroughskills@delni.gov.uk

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Hospitality and Tourism Future Skills Action Group

A Future Skills Action Group for the Hospitality and Tourism sector has been set up and will build on existing work by People 1st (the Sector Skills Council). It consists of a number of employers from the sector along with representatives from the Higher Education and Further Education sectors, the Department for Enterprise Trade and Investment, People 1st and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Further information can be obtained by contacting Sian McCleave on 028 9044 1778 or by emailing sian.mccleave@delni.gov.uk

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ICT snapshot

The first of a series of ICT industry skills snapshots for Northern Ireland has recently been published by e-skills UK, (the Sector Skills Council for Business and Information Technology). These snapshots have been commissioned by the Department through the work of the ICT Future Skills

Action Group. Their aim is to provide a regular temperature test of the skills issues facing the industry and inform policies and programmes to address these issues. The first snapshot contains some interesting findings. For further information contact Mark Feeny on tel 07940 736552 or email mark.feeny@e-skills.com
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Essential Skills Awards 2009

The Department's Essential Skills Awards took place in Hillsborough Castle on 22 April. This is the second year of the Awards which are designed to recognise and celebrate outstanding achievements in literacy, numeracy and ICT learning. Twenty seven learners received awards in recognition of their outstanding achievement across a range of categories. Three new award categories have been added including ICT Learner of the Year, Trade Union Learner of the Year and an Outstanding Contribution to Learning award. For further information on [Essential Skills](#) courses then please contact the free phone number 0800 660 800 or if you are an employer contact 0800 731 2426.

[Find out more >>](#)



William Stewart (centre), Essential Skills Learner of the Year 2009 pictured with Sarah Travers (BBC) and Bill McGinnis, Northern Ireland Adviser on Employment and Skills.

Apprentice of the Year Awards 2009

Rafal Cherezniak has been announced as the 2009 Apprentice of the Year at an event held in the Hilton Hotel on 19 May. Rafal is 24 years old and comes from Poland. He came to Belfast in October 2006 and started working in the hospitality sector as a kitchen porter with Castle Catering. He then joined the Apprenticeship programme with Belfast Metropolitan College in January 2008 and by September had progressed to a level 3 in Hospitality Supervision. He has since been appointed as one of the



Rafal with the Minister and Stephen Nolan, BBC.

catering managers at Malone House, Belfast, with responsibility for the daily running of the establishment and has up to 20 staff under his direction. There are now over 10,000 apprentices currently training in Northern Ireland and all are following a training framework developed with the relevant industry sector, which includes attainment of a National Vocational Qualification, a technical certificate and specified essential skills. For further information ! about ApprenticeshipsNI contact the Freephone number on 0800 0854 573 or email apprenticeshipsni@delni.gov.uk

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Planning for the future with apprenticeships

Aideen McGinley, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Employment and Learning launched the new employer-led Water Apprenticeship in March.

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Learning and Skills Development Agency NI (LSDA NI) Conference

Over 300 delegates attended the annual LSDA NI conference on 29 April. The Minister delivered an official welcome and highlighted the need for us to 'weather the storm' as well as continuing to invest in our workforce through upskilling and reskilling. Significant investment in skills training is required if we are to compete on a global basis and develop jobs which are high value, highly paid and secure. Further information can be obtained by emailing scrawford@lsda.org.uk

Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme

The Department has responsibility for the Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme (VQRP) in Northern Ireland. A VQRP conference is to take place on 3 June in the Stormont Hotel, Belfast. This high-profile event will give key stakeholders from sector skills councils, awarding bodies, learning providers, employers' bodies, government and others an opportunity to hear about and discuss developments in the reform programme in Northern Ireland. Further details about this event can be obtained by contacting Linda Berg on 028 9025 7506 or email linda.berg@delni.gov.uk

Celebrating Vocational Qualifications

Millions of people will gain a vocational qualification this year, which will for many, be their stepping stone to a brighter future. Celebrations of these achievements will take place throughout the UK, including Northern Ireland on 24 June.

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Minister supports Vocational Qualifications

In the current economic climate, the importance of providing the workforce with skills that employers want cannot be overstated. Vocational qualifications are an excellent preparation for the world of work. VQ Day is a UK-wide celebration of the achievement of the millions of people who gain a vocational qualification every year and highlights the many paths to success taken by learners of all ages.

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Department supporting Engineering

The Engineering and Technology Board (ETB) '*Engineers Make It Happen*' programme, co-funded by the Department for Employment and Learning is working with further and higher education institutions and employers and skills organisations to increase understanding of engineering careers at all skill levels and to improve supply of technician and graduate level engineers. '*Engineers Make It Happen*' provides carefully chosen and trained visiting lecturers from the engineering industry and research

organisations to visit colleges or universities to talk about their career in engineering or technology. For further information about '*Engineers Make It Happen*' visit www.engineersmakeithappen.co.uk! or contact the Northern Ireland manager, Victor Jordan at vjordan@etechb.co.uk

Investing in People essential for the economy

The Minister has called on local businesses to continue investing in the skills of their employees. At a recent event celebrating the achievements of 36 businesses and organisations who were awarded Investor in People (IiP) accreditation he spoke about the current economic downturn and highlighted the need for us to invest in training so that we can gain a competitive advantage in the economic recovery. IiP has long been acknowledged as an important international marque of good business practice. Despite the current economic climate, the uptake of IiP in Northern Ireland is encouraging.

Sir Reg also assured businesses that as the business environment changes the delivery of IiP will also change. For further information about the Investor in People standard contact Jillian Gilmore jillian.gilmore@delni.gov.uk or telephone 028 9044 1794.

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Pictured with the Minister are Oonagh Devine and Claire McQuillan, Ballymena Sportsbowl. The Sportsbowl were one of 36 recipients of the IiP award at a recent celebration event.



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