

# The Euro Effect

The East Midlands Further Education Sector  
Showcases European Funded Projects





## Introduction

The region's Further Education sector has accessed a wide range of European funding to support projects which have achieved tangible economic and social benefits for the East Midlands.

The aim of this publication is to celebrate project achievements and to share the best practice they demonstrate. Many are also excellent examples of partnership working, as public, private and voluntary and community sectors work in collaboration to deliver common goals.

Activity is varied from the building of a rural learning centre, to raising the skills levels of the most disadvantaged in the region and the creation of an e-business champions

web community. Highlighted also is the rich learning experience resulting from student and staff mobility to and from other EU member states. Comments from the participants have been sought, giving a real indication of the impact on the lives of the individuals who have benefited from involvement.

We hope that you find projects described in the following pages interesting.

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## About EMFEC...

EMFEC is a registered company, limited by guarantee with charitable status. Established in 1992, following incorporation of colleges of Further Education, EMFEC is an independent and neutral organisation whose existence is underpinned by the objective to help its customers, members and stakeholders to achieve excellence.

The company's mission is to promote and support excellence in the post-14 learning and skills sector and firmly believes that the best and highest quality provision for learners can be more effectively achieved through partnership and the sharing of professional knowledge, intelligence, experience and expertise.

EMFEC's **Pro-fund service** was established to help colleges access external and discretionary funding, providing assistance to members as they research, access and deliver projects. Elements of the service dedicated to supporting the effective delivery of European Social Fund within the region are part financed by ESF Technical Assistance funding.

In April 2009, EMFEC became a member of the **East Midlands European Office** (EMEO). Managed by the East Midlands Development Agency and operating from within the heart of Brussels, the Office seeks to maximise the benefits of the European Union for the region.

Membership of the Office brings exciting advantages to the region's colleges, just some of which include regular intelligence on EU policy, news and funding calls, partner search facility and support with the applications process.

**This publication has been produced by EMFEC on behalf of Further Education colleges in the East Midlands.**

For further information, contact:  
Pauline Guild  
EMFEC, Robins Wood House  
Robins Wood Road, Aspley  
Nottingham, NG8 3NH  
Telephone: 0115 854 1627  
E-mail: paulineg@emfec.co.uk  
Or access EMFEC's website at:  
www.emfec.co.uk

## Funding Facts

### European Social Fund in the East Midlands

The ESF Programme will invest approximately £164 million in employment and skills priorities in the East Midlands over the programme period 2007-2013. Activity falls under two priority areas:

- Priority 1 - extending employment opportunities;
- Priority 2 - developing a skilled and adaptable workforce.

The funds are co-financed in the East Midlands by Co-financing Organisations (including the Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus and the Local Authority Consortium), meaning that delivery organisations do not have to supply match funding.

Innovation, Transnationality and Mainstreaming funding sits outside co-financing arrangements. This supports a small range of strategic, regional projects to develop new ways of extending employment opportunities and raising workforce skills by working with EU partner(s).

### European Regional Development Fund

The current ERDF Programme is managed in the East Midlands by the East Midlands Development Agency and has the objective of strengthening economic and social cohesion in the European Union by supporting regional economic development. The Fund is worth approximately £246 million to the region during 2007-2013, to which is added public match funding signifying approximately £492 million overall.

### Lifelong Learning Programme

The Lifelong Learning Programme is an umbrella programme for the various education and training initiatives of the European Commission's Education and Culture Directorate-General. Through transnational working, the EU Lifelong Learning Programme aims to support vocational education and training across Europe throughout all its phases - at school, college, university, in the workplace and in the community.

The two following sub-strands of the Programme feature in this publication:

**Leonardo da Vinci** focuses on the teaching and learning needs of those in vocational education and training (VET). It aims to improve the competitiveness of the EU labour market by helping citizens to acquire new skills, knowledge and qualifications. It also supports innovations in VET systems. It supports EU mobility and innovation transfer. The Programme is managed in the UK by ECOTEC.

**Comenius** provides opportunities for schools and colleges to strengthen the European dimension within their curriculum. This is achieved through partnerships and networks, in-service training, the funding of assistants, preparatory visits and seminars. In the UK, the Comenius Programme is administered by the British Council.



### Glossary of Acronyms

BREEAM	BRE Environmental Assessment Method
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FLT	Foundation Learning Tier
IAG	Information, Advice & Guidance
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
ILM	Institute of Leadership & Management
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OCR	Oxford Cambridge & RSA Examinations
SME	Small & Medium-sized Enterprise
TtG	Train to Gain
VET	Vocational Education & Training

## Boston College's Working Communities Project

Boston College's Working Communities Project provides local access to free pre-employment training, practical job search skills and IAG to all adults in Lincolnshire's most disadvantaged areas. It combines the College's experience in managing ESF monies with the expertise of local neighbourhood centres in reaching those hardest to help and supporting them into employment. It is targeted to reach 666 participants, helping 173 into work and helping 147 maintain that employment for at least 13 weeks.

“Working with Boston College on this project has been excellent for the organisation, developing our capacity to manage more complex funding streams”.

Mick Taylor of TaylorITEX

The project offers highly personalised assistance to those who have been unemployed for some time and live in disadvantaged areas of Lincolnshire. Learners all follow a similar journey of IAG, job search learning, work or voluntary sector placements with frequent progress reviews, and holistic support for personal or family issues but due to the local delivery the project is able to tailor this to the individual in their community context. Funding is available for travel, childcare, food parcels, interview clothing and essential equipment.

In recognition of barriers to employment the project has developed a fund to support the transition from benefits to salary and there is a bonus for crossing the 13 week employment threshold encouraging people to stay in work. Another innovative feature of the project is that a payment is also available for employers to compensate them for extra training involved in recruiting someone who has been long-term out of work.

Boston College has maintained a number of satellite centres in its catchment area despite falling funding rates for adult learners enabling them to work closely with local

communities ensuring that they keep in touch with their needs. They have worked in partnership with other colleges and voluntary sector organisations continuously to ensure that they can provide learning where it is most needed. As you would expect, learning materials and tuition are customised and based on local skills deficits and learners' individual skills gaps. The College therefore can ensure that the provision is relevant to local needs and that learners maximise their chances of being successful in finding work in their local communities as the centres work to source jobs in the local community. This means that the project is directly relevant to the local jobs market and its effectiveness is shown by the project's success in finding and keeping people in work.

The ESF funding allows the College to help and support people who often feel that they have little to offer and that their skills are too minimal or out of date to be attractive to employers. The contract allows this service to be offered uniquely in local communities to make access as easy and affordable as possible. For example, most learners walk to their learning centre for support and





For further information, contact:  
Dr Josie Pedersen  
Telephone: 07717 501149  
E-mail: [pedersen@boston.ac.uk](mailto:pedersen@boston.ac.uk)

training. Josie Pedersen, Project Manager, said that *“without ESF funding it just would not be possible to deliver such a focused, locally delivered project in the heart of communities for this hard to reach client group. Their additional and complex needs mean that mainstream provision often isn’t suitable or supportive enough to ensure that they are able to succeed.*

*This project has shown that with appropriate intensive and individualised support people are able to make the transition from benefits to sustained employment.”*

The College’s partners are essential to achieving success and are based across Lincolnshire. Their commitment and

support is outstanding: CG Partnership in Gainsborough, Market Rasen and Mablethorpe; in Lincoln: Moorland Community Centre, Birchwood Community Centre, Abbey Access Centre and The Priory Centre; Wolds Learning Network in Horncastle; TaylorITEX in Boston Fenside and Sutterton; and specialist partner Mencap operating across Lincolnshire.

Mick Taylor of TaylorITEX said: *“working with Boston College on this project has been excellent for the organisation, developing our capacity to manage more complex funding streams. It is good to have been recognised as a key part of the local community and to have our focused and proactive work valued in this*

*way. The progress that has been made by our learners is astonishing and we are very proud of what they have been able to achieve. The ESF funding has enabled us to offer long term support to these beneficiaries transforming their lives.”*

Performance on the project has been very good and the demand is outstripping the funding the College has with the result that they are likely to achieve its targets early. Following these outstanding results, Boston College has been successful in securing an additional £1.1 million which will support even more people who need intensive help in finding work.



For further information, contact:  
Shaf Hussain - Director of International  
and External Funding  
Telephone: 0115 8842375  
E-mail: shaf.hussain@castlecollege.ac.uk



The aim of the project is to help small businesses with effective use of Information Communication Technology, which will increase opportunities for growth and competitiveness of SMEs, opening up new markets through the use of ecommerce.

## College Wins Euro Bid to Help Small Businesses

During the current economic climate, small businesses will be looking for alternative and innovative means of maximising their potential. Businesses will be looking to engage with new means of technology to increase competition, including increasingly popular social networking sites such as Facebook.

Castle College Nottingham's Axis Centre has won approval for a prestigious European Social Fund Innovation, Transnationality and Mainstreaming contract to research and build an on-line business community in the East Midlands, which will help SMEs exploit such social media sites. The Centre, established in 1996, has already pioneered a number of highly successful web projects to help businesses and small enterprises innovate and grow.

The winning bid, led by Castle College and delivered in partnership with New College Nottingham, South Leicestershire College, Loughborough College and EMFEC, will see the Axis Centre team up with De Montfort University and transnational partners Hibernia College in Ireland. The bid, one of only two successful college consortia bids in the UK, will explore the business application of on-line communities, building on the huge growth and interest in social media sites including Facebook.

The Axis eBusiness Strategist, Jonny Green, commenting on this exciting opportunity for the region said: *"It could not have been better timed. It is the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the web and will provide a vital stimulus for hundred of businesses in the East Midlands and beyond during the recession."*

Small firms with fewer than 249 employees are eligible.

The aim of the project is to help small businesses with effective use of Information Communication Technology, which will increase opportunities for growth and competitiveness of SMEs, opening up new markets through the use of ecommerce. As well as this, the skill needs of SMEs will be taken into account to ensure their engagement and that they benefit from rapidly changing ICT.

Mr Green said:

*"The two year project will see a large expansion of the successful concept, pioneered by the Axis Centre, of creating a web-based business community for SMEs with a special focus on learning and social contact."*

*The Axis Centre's business community members have been meeting on-line for the last 18 months with regular monthly social meetings at the Playhouse.*

*The web will leave very few industries unaffected in the next few years. We are looking to engage up to 500 businesses from diverse industries in the East Midlands, who are genuinely interested in collectively collaborating, sharing, learning and working together to capitalise on the massive commercial potential of the web."*

# Making the Connection with Chesterfield College

A new European Social Fund initiative to help unemployed people to find employment is being supported by Chesterfield College in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and Making the Connection, the Nottinghamshire and North East Derbyshire scheme that provides recruitment and skills solution services that work with employers and communities across the region.

The initiative aims to give people who are out of work the opportunity to undertake training courses that are tailored to their specific needs. On successful completion of the course, the participants are guaranteed an interview with an employer. The training is carried out by Chesterfield College at either its Infirmary Road/Tapton Campuses or, if appropriate, on employers' premises.

Appropriate jobseekers are referred to the Making the Connection programme by Jobcentre Plus. Following this referral, the programme then aims to engage with local employers to identify suitable employment

opportunities, and develop a tailor-made training course that will benefit both the individual and the employer.

The initiative has already proven its worth with notable successes achieved with local employer, Gunstone Bakery, offering jobs to 11 people who completed a course through the partnership. In addition, six people who studied on the Gateway to Health and Social Care Course, have already been employed in care homes.

The students themselves appreciate the efforts that are made for them. One said:

For further information, contact:

Pat McGowan

Telephone: 01246 500637

E-mail: McGowanP@chesterfield.ac.uk



*"Many thanks for all your hard work and never ending supply of optimistic thinking and enthusiasm. The tutors picked me up off the floor when I needed it the most!"*

Pat McGowan, Chesterfield College's Partnership and Standards Manager commented, *"This partnership has been really successful in finding people work, which is no mean feat during a recession! It is proof that our partnerships and our training can open doors to a new career, even in difficult times."*



The initiative aims to give people who are out of work the opportunity to undertake training courses that are tailored to their specific needs.

Above: Care sector routeway participants

Below: Food Production sector routeway participants

For more information, contact:  
Pauline Guild: Pro-fund Manager  
and International Services  
Telephone: 0115 8541627  
E-mail: paulineg@emfec.co.uk



This was the sixth group to make a similar visit to the East Midlands with Comenius funding since 2005.

## EMFEC - East Midlands/Alsace Partnership

A party of four teachers from the Alsace region of France visited the East Midlands in March 2009 to participate in a study visit, jointly organised by West Nottinghamshire College and EMFEC. The stay was funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, the Comenius strand, and was a further action under the partnership agreement between EMFEC and the Académie de Strasbourg which runs until 2011.

Three of the party were catering tutors and keen to observe how this curriculum area was taught in the UK and to learn specialist vocabulary so that they could return to France and teach their discipline in English. From the Lycée Bugatti, the fourth specialised in car mechanics and particularly benefited from time spent at The Engine, West Nottinghamshire College's Centre of Vocational Excellence in Engineering.

Following a varied ten-day programme, the group also learnt in general terms about the VET system in England, took part in a seminar on apprenticeships and work-based learning and visited bksb, the College's specialist centre in basic, key and functional skills assessments and learning resources for English, mathematics and ICT.

Highlights of the cultural programme included an evening historical tour of Nottingham and a day out in Lincoln where, on a beautifully sunny and clear day, they were lucky enough to go on a roof tour of the Cathedral and enjoy the magnificent views. This was the sixth group to make a similar visit to the East Midlands with Comenius funding since 2005. It is anticipated that a larger group of approximately 10 tutors will continue the activity during March 2010.

Meanwhile, by way of reciprocal action, EMFEC was awarded Leonardo Mobility funding, for twenty lecturers from EMFEC member colleges to spend one week at the Académie de Strasbourg lycées professionnels (equivalent to our colleges) to work shadow their counterparts, compare curriculum content and learn best practice from the French VET system.

The first visit will concentrate on Hospitality and Catering with a large element of the programme spent at the Ecole Hôtelière Alexandre Dumas, a specialist hospitality and catering college based in Strasbourg, the reputation for excellence of which goes beyond its country's borders.



*The Alsace teachers experience the sights of Lincoln*

# Autumn in Eastern Europe Leonardo da Vinci Mobility

Hospitality & Catering, Sports, and Travel & Tourism students from Grantham College have participated in a Leonardo project which saw them undertaking work placements in Eastern Europe.

Taking place in September 2008, this latest Mobility project saw six Travel & Tourism and ten Sports students travel to Hungary, and six Hospitality & Catering make the journey to Poland.

During their time in Eastern Europe, the students were required to take part in a variety of work placements at locations including a football club, hotels and a travel agency. External Funding Manager, Sarah Dakin, relays the students' experiences –

This is the third time that Grantham College has taken part in the Leonardo project – and the project keeps growing. 22 young people took part last autumn and this was the first time that we had included any from the Sports curriculum in the programme, expanding on the success of the Hospitality & Catering and Travel & Tourism students' visits.

The weather was better too this time – when the students touched down after their flights from Stansted they were enjoying the sunshine and high temperatures! As in previous years, the Hospitality & Catering group were to be based in Bielsko-Biala, at the foot of the Beskidy Mountains – their placement was at The Villa Barbara, a hotel and spa. During their stay they would learn about the workings of this 40 bedroom hotel and gain some professional work experience.

Also gaining some invaluable work experience were the Travel & Tourism and Sports students, who were breaking new ground by taking part in the first Grantham College/Leonardo project in Hungary. They were based in Gyor, 76 miles west of Budapest, in the north west of the country. The town's proximity to the border meant that the group flew into Bratislava, Slovakia, which allowed them to experience both countries' scenery. The College was fortunate enough to secure exciting and interesting placements for both areas, including a placement at the local football club for some of the Sports students!

Playing host to some of the Travel & Tourism students was the Four Star Business and Conference Centre, Hotel Famulus, situated within easy walking distance of Gyor's famous baroque centre. Whilst working at the hotel students would learn about the hotel's facilities, including hosting business conferences. Other Travel students were fortunate enough to gain work experience in a local travel agency which provided them with a flavour of the industry.

Everyone that took part agreed that it was a great chance to improve their communication skills and confidence, along with boosting their language skills. One student, Troy Eldred, who completed his work placement at Gyor football club, commented,

For more information, contact:  
Sarah Dakin: External Funding Manager  
Telephone: 01476 404305  
E-mail: sdakin@grantham.ac.uk



*"I really enjoyed learning about a different culture and style of play. I would recommend the project to other students and would really like to do it again myself!"*

The work experience was also tied into the Hospitality & Catering students individual NVQ programmes which allowed them to gain credits towards their qualifications. The Sports and Travel & Tourism students placed in Hungary also had the opportunity to complete an OCR Preparation for Employment module, which was recorded as an achievement on their records.

*Two of the Sports students who participated in the Leonardo project*





## Leicester College European Social Fund Train to Gain Project

The focus of the European Social Fund Train to Gain contract is to develop a skilled workforce in Leicestershire. The contract supports employed groups that would not traditionally take part in training such as the over 50s, employees with disabilities or learning needs and ethnic minorities. This diversifies the skills base of the Leicestershire workforce and facilitates business development and effectiveness.

"I now think more critically about the way I lead, what the company's vision is and how I take people forward to support it, as well as how I support staff."

Alison Jolley,  
County Director,  
Leicestershire Clubs

The contract has increased the number of employees with a level 2 qualification related to their current industry sector and developed managers and workers in small enterprises. It has also increased the uptake of training in small enterprises within Leicestershire. Across the county there is now improved leadership and management in the workplace thanks to Train to Gain.

### Small businesses lead the way

Employees from small businesses are well on their way to gaining a nationally recognised course in team leading funded by ESF through the Key Worker Programme.

Six first-line managers from companies across the Leicestershire region attended the course at Leicester College which ran for three weeks in May to achieve a level 3 certificate in Leadership.

Leicester College secured the funding from ESF to support the training enabling first-line managers to sharpen their skills and deliver bottom-line benefits to their business. Attendees went through a needs analysis for their organisation and developed an individual learning plan that could be implemented back in their organisations.

Alison Jolley, County Director, Leicestershire Clubs for Young People said, *"I was looking for a management course, but couldn't find one that sat with what I wanted to achieve in the organisation I work for."*

*The ILM course at Leicester College ran over three weeks, so it was achievable to take the time out. I learnt about leadership styles, theories and how to manage change. I was pushed to think about where I sit in the organisation.*

*I now think more critically about the way I lead, what the company's vision is and how I take people forward to support it, as well as how I support staff.*

*On a personal level, I enhanced my leadership skills and how my personality impacts the way I lead.*

*There was a good mixture in the group with people from a care home, and pub for instance, who all brought something useful to the discussions.*

*The course made me think and reflect and gave me inspiration for going forward."*



# Leicester College

## Skills for Jobs

The ESF Skills for Jobs contract addresses regional differences in levels of worklessness by joining up services for participants. Individuals are provided with tailored pre-employment coaching, up-skilling and in work support. This high level of customised personal support enables individuals to be job-ready, with the requisite skills and support continuing beyond employment where necessary.

Simultaneously, regional skills needs are addressed by linking job-ready individuals to potential vacancies. Skills areas in demand are focused on so that the region can build a broader skills base. The target group who participate in this programme are the unemployed who want to work. Groups facing barriers to employment and experiencing significant disadvantages are prioritised, enabling more individuals to be assisted into sustainable employment.

### Terry Amos BPEC Gas Foundation Course

Leicester College is helping many in the region seeking employment through funded places on its Routeway Training Programmes.

One person that has already benefited from the Routeway programme is 41 year old Terry Amos from Rushey Mead. After various roles in sales, factories and labouring, as well as a spell of unemployment, Terry Amos didn't know where to go next. He was pointed in the direction of a Construction taster training programme at Layton Training Centre and after a visit to Nextstep and the Leicester Adult Education Centre was referred on the Routeway to Construction programme at Leicester College.

By trying his hand at plastering, plumbing, painting, carpentry and electrics, Terry was able to try out different trades and find out where his interests lie. He gained a City and Guilds level 2 qualification in plumbing, which has led to freelance work fixing radiators as well as other odd-jobs. This has also resulted in Terry enrolling onto a BPEC Gas foundation course with Leicester College.

Terry says, *"I always got by, but with the current work market as it is I realised I needed to find a trade I could work in for job security."*

*"If you have a qualification, you have something to show you can learn and take in information. I've now found a trade I can do and find work in and my confidence has grown as a result."*

### Swity Rathod Selling Assistant, Cosmetics – John Lewis

Swity left college in 2008, but after working in a beauty salon for a couple of months was unfortunately made redundant in January 2009. Swity then registered an interest to work in the retail industry and was contacted by an adviser at Job Service Partnership to arrange an appointment to discuss ways of supporting her journey back into work.

Swity's advisor referred her to the Retail Works pre-employment training course, delivered by the Retail Skills Centre Leicester at Leicester College, utilising ESF Skills for Jobs funding. The course allows attendees to learn or update their knowledge of the retail sector, whilst preparing them for the labour market. A range of topics are covered on the course which enable confidence building and interpersonal skills to be enhanced.

Swity successfully completed the course with her tutor identifying that she had gained in confidence and would have a good 'brand fit' with a number of retail establishments including John Lewis.

With continual support from her advisor, Swity amended and updated her CV and covering letter, and received further advice on interview techniques. She attended a couple of guaranteed interviews arranged by the City Strategy Employer Brokerage Team but was unfortunately unsuccessful. However, Swity remained positive; her confidence growing with each opportunity by absorbing the feedback provided.

The City Strategy Employer Brokerage Team then secured Swity a place on a John Lewis assessment centre. The team prepared Swity with a mock assessment and she was able to draw on the skills and knowledge that she had learnt on the Retail Works course such as team working, integrity and respect for others, which replicate the John Lewis ethos.

She attended the John Lewis assessment centre and really enjoyed the experience. After a nervous wait she was thrilled to be offered a part time role as a Selling Assistant in the cosmetics section.

Swity says, *"I am over the moon now I have been offered a job at John Lewis. I would definitely recommend this service for anyone needing help in finding the job they want."*



Leicester College's Abbey Park Campus



Leicester College  
learning for success

← Leicester College  
(Abbey Park Campus)

Leicester College  
Abbey Park Campus  
Welcome

# Leicester College Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) Project

FLT provides a programme of study for employed people who are aged 19 or over working in low skilled and low paid jobs, and who are not supported by their employers with training and development who are living or working in Leicester city. The courses are provided free of charge and help participants progress from entry level to level 2.

The project is funded by the European Social Fund and is delivered on behalf of the Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership (LLCLP), with the following partners: Leicester College, South Leicestershire College and the Leicester Adult Skills and Learning Service.

The courses are available in venues across the City and are delivered at a pace to suit individuals. They are designed to develop employability by improving communication, literacy and numeracy skills. The confidence of participants is built over the course and made official with a nationally recognised qualification.

The project also offers initial advice and guidance sessions with continued mentoring support. Participants studying are assisted with childcare and travelling expenses where necessary. Careers advice and guidance is also available to participants who want to progress further.

Since the project started in October 2008, 84 people have had an initial advice and guidance session and 61 of these have started the programme. Of these, 24 achieved at least one nationally recognised qualification, 7 are awaiting results and 30 are continuing on the programme.

## Terri-Anne Freakley

Terri-Anne joined the programme to improve her literacy and numeracy skills, she also managed to successfully complete the 'Interview and Presentation Skills' and 'Career Portfolio Building' progression pathway awards. At the point that Terri-Anne joined the course she worked as a beauty consultant and has had training in this area but no formal qualifications.

Initially she wanted to work towards a management qualification but through

mentoring and guidance, and the qualifications she has gained on the course, she has decided to become a fully qualified Beauty Therapist. Terri-Anne has two young children and the project was able to support her with childcare costs so that she could attend and achieve her Literacy Level 1 National Test and complete her Career Portfolio Building and Interview and Presentation Skills units, which Terri-Anne is currently awaiting the results for.

Terri-Anne is dyslexic and by attending this programme she has not only achieved a basic skills qualification but has also gained confidence to take on further full time education. Since leaving the Foundation Learning Tier programme Terri Anne has enrolled onto a Level 2 Beauty Therapy course at Leicester College. In the future she would like to run her own business.

## Usha Gajjar

Usha had been working for 35 years in shoe manufacturing but was unfortunately made redundant and lost all confidence and had low self esteem.

To try to get back into work Usha became a volunteer and joined the Foundation Learning Tier programme at Leicester College to gain some qualifications. Usha achieved Literacy Level 2 and Numeracy Level 1 National Test qualifications, and started to gain her confidence back through careers guidance and tutor support. Usha also attended 'Career Portfolio Building' and 'Interview and Presentation Skills' progression pathway awards as part of the project, and has since been able to apply for jobs and has been invited for interviews.

For further information contact:

Dawn Harris

Tendering and Awards Manager

Tel: 0116 2242127

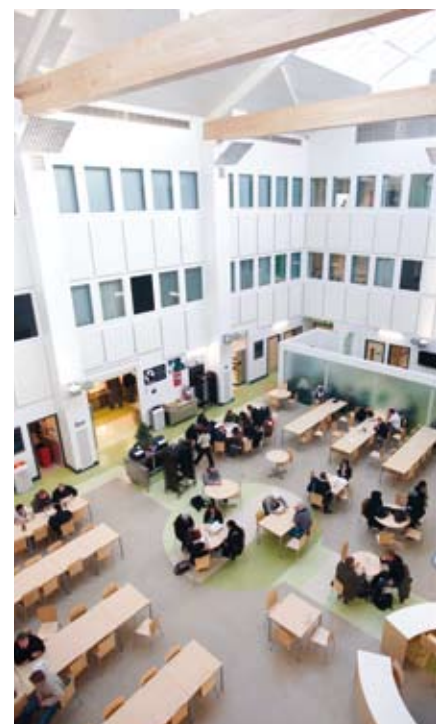
E-mail: drharris@leicestercollege.ac.uk

However after discussing her options with the Advice and Guidance tutor Usha chose to continue studying as she says she *"never had a chance to get proper qualifications early in life, and it is not too late to get them now."*

Usha decided to enrol onto a short Level 1 childcare course to give her an insight into the childcare sector and really enjoyed this.

Since completion of this Usha has secured a work placement in a local school and has enrolled onto a Level 3 Childcare course.

Leicester College's Abbey Park Campus





## Overseas opportunities for students through Leonardo and Training Bridge

Lincoln College has a long-standing history of securing money from both Leonardo Mobility funding (Lifelong Learning Programme) and Training Bridge, allowing a number of students the opportunity to travel overseas while continuing their studies. All of the chosen partners have much in common with Lincoln College.

Success for the project was almost immediate with a pilot programme run in nearby Newark-on-Trent, where the College has a campus.

All are well respected for their excellence in vocational training, with MCAST (Malta College of Arts and Technology) offering many qualifications that correspond to those at Lincoln. Richard von Wiesacker College in Germany and Alfa College in Holland are both situated in the centre of largely agricultural regions, so understand some of the challenges facing us in Lincoln.

The Training Bridge project is a bilateral exchange programme designed to promote British-German co-operation in the field of work-based training. Over the last academic year, seven German apprentices in the fields of motor vehicle engineering, hair, carpentry and electrical engineering flew to Lincoln for a three week placement in October 2008. Here, they were placed with prestigious local companies including Twells of Billinghamay, Micrometric and Talking Heads.

The reciprocal visit took place in February 2009 when four Lincoln College students were found placements through the Kreishandverkerschaft (Guild of Crafts) in Coesfeld in north-west Germany. Here they followed the same pattern of attendance as they do at home: four days at work and one day at College. They were also visited by Lincoln College staff, just as they would at home and supported by telephone and online communication.

Running alongside Training Bridge, and now approaching its tenth year, the Lincoln College Leonardo exchange offers opportunities in Malta, Holland and Germany for students studying Childcare, Health and Social Care and Sport. The project aims to offer exchange opportunities to those in 'Initial Vocational Training', with 24 students going abroad in 2008/09. Placements include nurseries, care homes, voluntary organisations, hospitals and health and fitness centres.

The last visit to Malta's MCAST (Malta College of Arts and Technology) happened in November 2008. Laura Byford, a tutor in Sport reports, *"Looking around the MCAST site and meeting the staff was fantastic. The work placement for the sports students was at a really big 24 hour gym, which was a great experience for them. The Maltese people were very friendly and everyone made us feel very welcome during our stay, the climate is good and there are lots of historic sites to visit."*

Working in an overseas company and working alongside international peers adds a valuable point of distinction to the CVs of the student when they return home. The learning experience for the students also includes the experience of living away from home: which for many is their first experience of life away from family. One student said *"The whole experience was FANTASTIC!! I feel a lot more independent having lived on my own for 3 weeks."*

Another added, *"It doesn't matter if there is a language barrier; I have the confidence and communication skills to overcome this."*

It is hoped that the programme will expand to include the French city of Strasbourg in 2010/11.

Both projects are co-ordinated by Ann Stanley, Director of School: Care and Salon Services who highlights that it is not only the students who benefit, *"The exchange students need to be accompanied from a pastoral support perspective, but the members of staff who are involved are also gaining valuable CPD experience. The insight that they get into training in another country is used when they return to their permanent post. As a College we are always mindful of the role our students will play in developing the UK as a global economy and this kind of experience is invaluable."*

Cathedral external: Staff from Lincoln College and the German Kreishandverkerschaft



Talking heads – German hairdressing exchange students at the Talking Heads salon



## Riding the recession wave

Lincoln College has a long-standing history of securing money from both Leonardo Mobility funding (Lifelong Learning Programme) and Training Bridge, allowing a number of students the opportunity to travel overseas while continuing their studies. All of the chosen partners have much in common with Lincoln College.

Lincoln College has been successful in securing funding under European Social Fund Priority 2: Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce. The project assists 560 individuals who are under threat of redundancy, newly redundant, who have been redundant for less than 6 months or those who are unemployed who could be made ready to re-enter the workforce. The project commenced in April 2009 and is forecast to run until December 2010.

The aim is to provide short bite-sized training packages to help people remain in work, or to gain work almost immediately. Where there are known skills gaps for employers and unfilled job vacancies the College are providing vocational training to equip individuals with the qualifications and skills which employers cite as necessary for their industry.

Success for the project was almost immediate with a pilot programme run in nearby Newark-on-Trent, where the College has a campus. As the largest employment sector in the region, Care and Public Services was chosen for this initial course. Working in collaboration with Making the Connection, the project specifically addressed job vacancies at five Newark-based care homes.

One local resident is a success story. Having worked in care homes before moving into retail, Karen Baines wanted to get back into care work, but found that her time away from the sector made it a struggle to get her foot back in the door.

*"Jobcentre Plus talked to me about my options; finding out what I was interested in and where I wanted to be. That was when they mentioned the Care Training course. The course has been so helpful. Having the employers involved in the training has been really useful as they are who we would like to work for! It's also great*

*to know we are being supported to help find work and train further even after we've finished the course. Without this course, my chances of getting back into care work would be so much lower. It's really opened my eyes. In the future I hope to study more courses that will help me with a career in care. Although I was nervous about coming back to college, I really enjoyed the different ways they taught us."*

The success of the pilot programme is now being rolled out across other sectors and over a wider geographical region: encompassing much of Lincolnshire. Programmes will be offered in the selected sectors of administration, retail and customer service, construction, warehousing and distribution, hospitality, security and health & social care.

Alongside sector-specific sessions, the course delivers a flexible rolling programme of guidance, training and support to enable individuals to re-enter the workforce. Students learn employability and work-focused skills such as Communication Skills, CV Writing, Interview Skills, Job Search, Basic Skills, First Aid and Health & Safety. The partnership with the local Jobcentre Plus has the added benefit of working with employers who will guarantee interviews to those who complete the training.

Opportunities for work experience are also offered to put individuals in the best possible position to find employment on completion. Finally, students are assessed and given the opportunity to enhance their English and Maths skills.

Support doesn't stop once employment has been found. Once individuals are successfully employed, the College continues to work with employers to provide further on the job training such as an NVQ.

Director of Employer Engagement at Lincoln College, Rachel May said, "This is a very difficult time for businesses, and we are pleased to be able to offer this support for companies in our area.

*Current figures show that redundancies in Lincolnshire have been lower than in the rest of the country, and we'd like to make sure it stays that way by working with companies to reskill their staff in order to diversify into new markets. If jobs are lost, however, this programme means we are best placed to ensure that each individual's time away from work is as brief as possible, and that they return to work refreshed and with an enhanced skills set."*

*Karen Baines receiving her award from Ann Stanley, Director of School: Care and Salon Services.*





# How to have your cake and eat it

Lincoln College was successful in securing funding under ESF Objective 3 Priority 1 "Extending Employment Opportunities", co-financed by the Learning and Skills Council. The selected project, which started in September 08 and runs for 2 years, is delivered in partnership with St Christopher's School and aimed at students with learning difficulties.

Lincoln College has had a relationship with St Christopher's, a special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, for over ten years. The current intake of 42 students each experience a 12 week programme of study in either cookery or construction skills.

In Introduction to Cookery, each student takes home a dish they have prepared themselves. They also learn how their newly acquired skills link to the catering industry. Their tutor tempts their palates by linking each lesson to a current topic. For example, to celebrate Chinese New Year the students learned about Chinese food and how to prepare it, and also about Chinese culture and horoscopes and how to use chopsticks.

Pancake Day was another resounding success with pupils learning the link between Shrove Tuesday and Lent, as well as having fun tossing their pancakes and preparing a number of fillings.

For Mothers Day, students made and wrapped individual sweets to present as gifts and also created a bouquet of fresh flowers. These skills can be readily transferred to industry, for example by creating posies for restaurant tables and creating hand-made sweets for farmers markets and gift shops.

The sense of achievement and pride displayed when they presented their wares is inspirational. The students display good team-work and are sympathetically supported. The pupils are lucky to work with industry-standard equipment, such as talking scales and hydraulic worktops, giving them a real insight into the catering industry. In fact, Rachel Elsom and Adam Wood, two current Year 11 pupils on the course, are already ahead of the game and will move onto a catering course in September. The sweet taste of success, indeed!

Living in the historical city of Lincoln, the students on Introduction to Construction are able to experience first-hand the heritage and wonders of construction, from the Cathedral and Castle to the Roman pillars under the Bailgate.

This link to history has been exploited to its full with the students building an English bond wall, Queen closures and constructing a castle with soldiers (in construction terms, soldiers are bricks laid on their end!).

There has also been fantastic success here, with students moving onto the foundation construction course; Level 1 Joinery; NPTC entry level 3 qualification in brickwork - all starting in September.

The dedication of one student, Terence Ayre, paid off when he won a special award, presented to him by senior staff at a recent College Awards Celebration.

So, mixing cakes or mixing cement, these students can all now enjoy the fruits of their labour!

For further information, contact:  
Beth Curtis  
External Communications Manager  
Telephone: 01522 876272  
E-mail: [BCurtis@lincolncollege.ac.uk](mailto:BCurtis@lincolncollege.ac.uk)

*A student on the construction programme*



## Idle Valley Rural Learning Centre

North Nottinghamshire College's new Idle Valley Rural Learning Centre is the first phase of a 'masterplan' to develop a 316 hectare Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within an 800 hectare expanse of gravel pits and floodplains to the River Idle to the north of Retford, Nottinghamshire. Masterplan objectives included the creation of a Rural Learning Centre catering for both formal and informal learning, and the long-term conservation and the management of the SSSI.

To date, two new courses at NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Environmental Conservation have been specifically developed for delivery in the new facility.

The Centre was created with assistance from:

- the 2000-2006 Objective 2 European Regional Development Programme;
- Single Programme Fund via the Alliance Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership;
- North Nottinghamshire College;
- the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, and
- the Low Carbon Buildings Programme (run by the former Department of Trade and Industry).

The single-storey, 800 sqm fully ICT-enabled facility includes a range of classrooms/workshops and learning/resource rooms, outdoor 'green classroom' area, information and advice area, meeting and staff rooms, refectory, and car parking facilities. The Centre has the capacity for up to 100 full-time equivalent learning places.

The project has a dual focus – firstly, to help diversify and improve the competitiveness of the rural economy by working with local businesses, particularly SMEs, and, secondly, to inspire people from the rural areas to participate in lifelong learning. As well as striving to become a centre for excellence in conservation and countryside education, the Centre is providing training and facilities to

support SME and social enterprise business development; a new business-to-business networking forum; advice, guidance and training for individuals living and working in the local area; on-site work placements with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust; first hand experience of food preparation for catering students serving other Centre students, visitors to meetings and events delegates.

To date, two new courses at NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Environmental Conservation have been specifically developed for delivery in the new facility. Other training courses delivered by North Nottinghamshire College and its partners have ranged from an Adult Learners' Week Basket Weaving Taster to certificated Health and Safety Courses for SMEs; and from Positive Pathways Pre-Foundation training to a training programme for people preparing to teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector.

The Centre has also recently collaborated with the Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus 'Sector Routeway Programme' to provide advice, pre-employment training and recruitment support to candidates of the UK's largest construction company. The company's multi-million pound inward investment into a site on the North Nottinghamshire/North Derbyshire border will create new state-of-the-art pre-cast concrete manufacturing plant to serve its projects throughout the UK. The new plant will create up to 270 long-term manufacturing jobs including skilled and semi-skilled operatives, technical and design staff and managers.

The Idle Valley Rural Learning Centre is one of the most environmentally sustainable in the UK with wide-ranging technology from solar panels to rain water harvesting – significantly reducing carbon emissions. Features within the design include enhanced insulation to minimise heat loss; increasing



For further information, contact:  
Ann Vallance  
Employment and Community Manager  
Telephone Idle Valley: 01777 712002  
E-mail: [avallance@nnc.ac.uk](mailto:avallance@nnc.ac.uk)

natural daylight through large areas of wall and ceiling glazing and sun pipes; and maximizing natural ventilation throughout. Space heating is provided by a geothermal heat pump system, which utilizes the adjacent lake water to provide a highly efficient under-floor heating system. Hot water is predominantly generated by roof mounted solar thermal panels. Rainwater falling on the roof is collected, filtered, and used to flush the toilets and percussion taps mean water is not left running unnecessarily.

Lighting throughout is controlled by movement and light sensors to minimize energy consumption. Materials used were

also carefully selected for their sustainable properties, pedigree and capability of being recycled at the end of the building's life. The above technologies combined mean that the building omits at least 65% less carbon, in comparison to a building designed to the 2002 standards, and achieved a BREEAM rating of "Excellent" at the design pre-assessment stage.

The Idle Valley Rural Learning Centre has already won an environmental award by the UK Sustainable Development Association in recognition of its 'green' credentials. In addition, it was a finalist in three categories

of the 2009 Local Authority Building Control East Midlands Region Excellence Awards:

- Best Sustainable Building
- Best Educational Building
- Best Technical Design & Construction.

Despite the very high standard of entries, the project finished within the top five in each category.

The Centre is now developing a new Foundation Degree in Environmental Conservation that should see the Centre go from strength to strength.





## ESF and Train to Gain at South Nottingham College

South Nottingham College received substantial ESF funding to support its Train to Gain (TtG) offer. For those unfamiliar with Train to Gain, it is the national government's flagship for funding work based learning here in the UK. The funding responds to employer led demand with training providers in effect providing what the employer wants them to provide.

The College has seen huge growth in its contract profile for TtG and continues to generate further demand for vocational education and training.

Businesses clearly want vocational education and training; in addition they want it in the workplace, at unsocial hours with innovative teaching and learning practice delivered in a professional way.

The College had become one of the leading deliverers of this provision within the East Midlands, a partnership of private workplace providers and College operational staff was delivering training to a high standard. Employers were seeing very high success rates (with vocational training at 86% and Skills for Life at 88%) for their employees and the decision was made to apply for further funding. ESF had the advantage of giving the delivery consortium even more flexibility to meet learner need; those employees who did not fit the eligibility criteria were now able to access the training.

For example Vikram who already had a Level 2 qualification but gained 7 years previously and in a totally different occupational field could not access training previously. Because of ESF funding and a relaxation of the eligibility rules he was now able to take advantage of TtG, consequently his prospects have been considerably improved. He says *"I felt I was getting left behind, colleagues with no qualifications were being trained and to me it felt they now had a better chance of promotion. When it came around that I could be funded, I jumped at the chance."*

The College was able to help learners who wanted to take Level 3 and 4 qualifications as well as support those in need of vocationally based basic skill provision. In time the LSC would relax eligibility conditions on who could access TtG provision and the early results of these projects were instrumental in helping persuade key decision makers this was the right way to go.

Neil Fowkes, Head of Business Development at the College was interested in the funding for very different reasons, *"It helped us help even more learners. The whole point about education and training is that people benefit from it. Employers appreciated we could offer a greater variety of service to a much greater number of their workforce."* He also pointed out that by aligning ESF funding to this pot the government did themselves a favour with employers who recognised that they were providing a real service of genuine benefit. *"By extending funding available the government benefitted from raising the profile of TtG,"* he stated.

The College has seen huge growth in its contract profile for TtG and continues to generate further demand for vocational education and training. A management spokesperson at Noble Foods Ltd at the Blidworth site, North Nottinghamshire said *"We're on to our third cohort of learners, the training is well organised, structured, timely and our employers like it."*

*"Our operation has benefitted greatly from the relationship with South Nottingham College; the programme is fitted around the needs of the business and its most important asset the staff."*

Indeed so successful is the operation that retention still runs at 100% and those employees who were initially skeptical and suspicious have now joined the training.

Typical of this is a lady employee who asked not to be named; *"I've always struggled with my reading and writing, because we deal with egg production and I've worked here a long time I got good at reckoning things with my eye. I didn't want anyone to know that I found it hard to read and write, but saw others benefit from the training on language and maths."*

For further information, contact:  
Graham Wood  
External Funding Manager  
Telephone: 0115 9457261  
E-mail: [graham.wood@snc.ac.uk](mailto:graham.wood@snc.ac.uk)

*It was a long time ago when I was at school and not a happy one I may add, but the trainers here are so nice, I started learning so quick. It now appears I've got dyslexia so they helped me with that. I'm going to become a Grandma soon and I want to read to my grandchildren. I'm better at my job and have a better life too."*

David Drury, Director of Market Development says "This story illustrates that while the funding was intended to be employer responsive it has helped people with their everyday lives. I'm delighted that we've already successfully delivered 55% of the project and on profile to complete by December 2009, exceeding a targeted 80% Success Rate, all this

*a full year before the contract is supposed to be completed. This is a service needed by the employers and employees of the region."*

*Working extensively with employers - South Nottingham College's East Midlands Centre for Automotive Training and Business Development site at Ruddington, Nottingham*



## Stephenson College Success with Leonardo da Vinci Bids

In 2008 the College, for the first time, submitted bids for Leonardo da Vinci funding to enable exchange visits for students and trainers.

The College submitted four bids which were all successful and are now underway. The projects have enabled both the Construction and Motor Vehicle curriculum areas to take part in international exchanges.

The projects are designed to give overseas experience to students and staff and offer an opportunity for them to work in a different culture and environment.

Each curriculum area has two projects, one for two week student exchanges and the other for one week trainer exchanges. Our Construction section is working with hosts in Germany and Motor Vehicle with hosts in Sweden.



*Top Right: Volvo Dealership in Sweden (work experience).*

*Right: Digger driving experience in Sweden.*

*Below: Paint Balling in Sweden.*



The projects are designed to give overseas experience to students and staff and offer an opportunity for them to work in a different culture and environment. Taking part in these events also counts towards a Europass certificate used to record skills, prove competency and can be used to gain employment across Europe.

To date four student exchange visits have taken place, two to Germany and two to Sweden, with our trainer exchanges planned for October 2009 and February 2010.

The student exchange visits include a week at the host college, in either Germany or Sweden, where students take part in a range of activities followed by a week's work experience at a suitable location.

During their stay students have already visited industrial, cultural and social locations including:

- a Guided tour of Hamburg;
- a visit to a private build site (Hamburg) observing different methods of joinery and insulation techniques;
- St Michaels Church, Hamburg to view renovation project;
- visit to historic coastal resort of Lubeck
- A day experiencing driving heavy plant machinery;
- a visit to the Volvo assembly plant in Gothenburg;
- a visit to a transmission assembly plant in Stockholm;
- visits to local Volvo dealerships where they were able to compare working practices and techniques;
- social activities including Ice Hockey, Paint Balling and Bowling.

Staff and students who have already taken part in these exchanges have been very positive in their feedback and have been enthusiastic in promoting the projects to their colleagues and fellow students.

For further information, contact:  
Leigh Bailey  
Information Systems Quality Auditor  
Telephone: 01530 836136 Ext 246  
E-mail: [LBailey@stephensoncoll.ac.uk](mailto:LBailey@stephensoncoll.ac.uk)

Stephenson College has also played host to visitors from both Germany and Sweden. The visitors from Germany were staff from a college who hope to be successful with a Leonardo da Vinci bid of their own in the near future and are interested in Stephenson College acting as host for their students.

The visitors from Sweden were staff and students on reciprocal visits from the college in Stockholm that plays host to our staff and students.



*Work experience in Germany.*



*College lessons in Germany.*



*Sightseeing in Germany*



## European Social Fund Partnership ensures promotion for woman after 26 years!

The ESF Train to Gain project, run by Tresham's Business Solutions team and Options 2 Workplace Learning and co-financed by the Learning and Skills Council, has helped Goretti Mannion, 57, from Northampton get promotion to become a trainer after 26 years as a factory operator, packaging sandwiches for Marks and Spencer and British Airways.

The Train to Gain project provides free and subsidised training to employers and volunteers working in Northamptonshire.

She always felt embarrassed by her lack of skills and ability, particularly her dyslexia. Her son Matthew, who is at university, is also dyslexic, so it is twice the battle for Goretti and her family.

Goretti had always felt that one day she would have to address this, but was nervous about committing herself to a course. By putting it off for so long she had developed insecurities and low self esteem. However, one day she noticed an advert for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) training at her company.

Goretti explains: *"When I saw the advert for the training, I thought this could be what I need to help my confidence and give me the skills that feel I am missing."*

Goretti signed up for the course and received special one-to-one tuition to help boost her confidence.

She said: *"The lessons were fantastic. We covered a range of skills from writing short stories to learning how to fill bank cheques. The tutor was very supportive and sympathetic to my situation, which made me feel more positive about the course."*

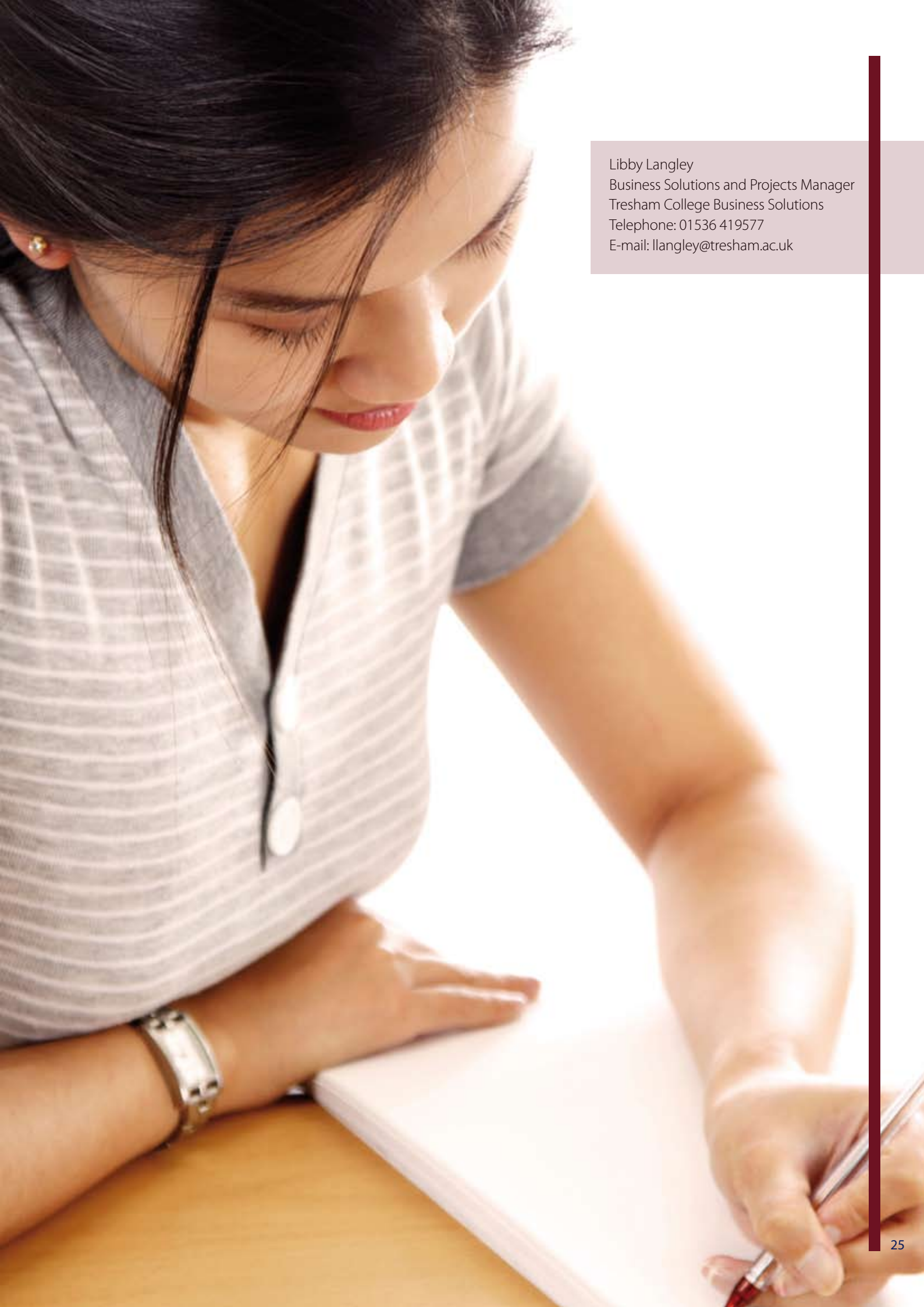
Carina Woods, her line manager at Uniq, noticed the change in Goretti. She saw the improvement and positive change in her confidence, so much so that she promoted Goretti to a trainer.

Goretti continued her training and after completing Entry 2 ESOL she went on to study the Entry 3 ESOL. Her family has expressed how proud they are of their mother.

Goretti adds: *"I now write to my son Matthew who is studying at university and he comments on how my writing has improved."*

The Train to Gain project provides free and subsidised training to employers and volunteers working in Northamptonshire. The aim is to improve competitiveness, efficiency and employability of the workforce through improving skills.





Libby Langley  
Business Solutions and Projects Manager  
Tresham College Business Solutions  
Telephone: 01536 419577  
E-mail: [llangley@tresham.ac.uk](mailto:llangley@tresham.ac.uk)

## The County NEET Partnership Project (Nottinghamshire)

The County NEET Partnership is a £1.1m ESF project led by West Nottinghamshire College with 7 delivery partners: Castle College, the Connexions Service, Enable, Groundwork Trust, Lincoln College, NCC Youth Support Services and North Nottinghamshire College. The project's primary objective is to engage young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

Ashfield College is a West Nottinghamshire College site which has been developed specifically to support vulnerable and 'at risk' young people.

The overarching ethos is the holistic development of the young person, achieved through fostering work-related and vocational skills while building confidence, communication skills and a passion for learning. The project aims to empower young people to make positive choices and a positive contribution to the community.

Project partners have their own approach to delivery within this framework, with the Connexions Service providing a common thread of individual support and focused activities.

Three of these approaches are highlighted below:

**Ashfield College** is a West Nottinghamshire College site which has been developed specifically to support vulnerable and 'at risk' young people. The curriculum includes a variety of vocational programmes, underpinned by a strong philosophy of practical learning combined with citizenship, celebration of success and

a culture of mutual respect. The County NEET Project has enabled the centre to recruit additional support workers and to provide a more flexible offer. This includes a 10-week Summer School with a range of fun, vocationally-relevant experiences alongside development and career-planning activities with the Connexions Service. The enthusiasm of the learners is testament to the success of the centre and the level of support received. In the words of one:

*"I went to Ashfield because other options were not available to me. Whilst there I got a lot of very good support that boosted my confidence. I was made to feel like an adult."*

Jon – Ashfield Learner  
- now on Music Level 3 programme

There are many experiences that can leave a young person feeling unable to make a decision about the future. Most of those referred to the County NEET Project come with a complex range of issues to which there is no quick fix solution. However, experience shows that sometimes a short, focused intervention can produce excellent results. Such is the case with one of the participants at **Lincoln College**. Peter Usher joined the project at the end of May, not knowing how to make the 'next step'. He wanted an apprenticeship and had good literacy and numeracy skills.

However, his general employability skills were letting him down. The one-to-one support he received through the project enabled him to focus on his goals and gave him practical job search and presentation skills. As a result, Peter secured an interview at Siemens Lincoln and was offered an apprenticeship in turbo machinery, which he happily accepted.

*Pictured below are students from the West Nottinghamshire Colleges' NEET Project: Tom (left) and Jon (right).*



For further information, contact:  
Mark Widdowson  
External Funding Contracts Manager  
Telephone: 01623 627191 Ext 8593

Re-engaging young people who have had difficulties during their time at school is one of the main challenges faced by the project. The reluctance to re-enter formal education can be difficult to overcome. With this in mind, **Groundwork Cresswell**, Mansfield and Ashfield has recently extended its provision to a group of young people in Kirkby-in-Ashfield through the development of a construction training programme, supported by the project.

In their words *"the plan was ambitious"*. The site was far from ready and the lead-in time

to identify and interview the participants was minimal. Nevertheless, with dedication and determination, the training team and several of their groups prepared the site on a very tight budget.

As a result, 10 young people joined the programme at the end of May. Within a few weeks, they were producing some complex brickwork test pieces, relishing the opportunity to learn practical skills. Attendance levels remain commendably high.

Tom (pictured opposite) is one of those making excellent progress. As he says, *"It's phat. I'd not done any bricklaying before and I've learned loads."*

The County NEET Project is now entering its second year of operation. Running until December 2010, it expects to support over 200 young people in the coming months.





## List of Pro-fund Members

- Boston College
- Castle College Nottingham
- Chesterfield College
- Derby College
- Grantham College
- Leicester College
- Lincoln College
- Loughborough College
- New College Nottingham
- Northampton College
- North Nottinghamshire College
- South Leicestershire College
- South Nottingham College
- Stephenson College
- Tresham College
- West Nottinghamshire College

