

Derby College

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25% of cleaning company employees “brushing up” on their skills thanks to funding initiative.

Background

Derby based company Ideal Specialised Industrial Services (ISIS) employees are brushing up on their literacy skills and are becoming whizzes with a mouse as they go. This is all down to a partnership approach between the employer, trade union and provider, Derby College, running on-site learning funded by the Employer Training Pilot (ETP).

Specific Training Requirements

ISIS are based on Acordis site at Spondon (near Derby) and its workforce work alongside the Acordis employees on various operations as well as covering the sites cleaning.

The company employs 100 on-site and currently 24 of the workforce are attending the weekly computer based literacy courses funded by the Derbyshire ETP called “Valuable Skills”.

The courses were arranged in partnership with ISIS, The Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), TUC Learning Services and Derby College.

The ETP offers wage compensation for employers who release their employees for a few hours a week to brush up on their essential skills such as English, Maths and more increasingly nowadays Computers Skills.

ISIS site manager Ray Purcel who has enrolled and enjoying the course himself had this to say about the experience:

Benefits as an Employer:

“The wage compensation has given us the affordable option of releasing staff in works time” “Learning on-site has really raised our profile with clients, because now we are an employer who invests in our employees and train them up to recognised standards”

Benefits to Employees:

“When you have learners at all academic levels learning together, helping each other and enjoying the experience, it is great!”

Advice to other Companies looking at Learning Opportunities:

“I would highly recommend this to others and take advantage of this great opportunity for funding in partnership” “From the initial meeting with the TUC and TGWU we haven’t looked back, then with Derby College setting up on-site each week, there has always been professional support available from all involved”.

Future Plans:

“The next step is to look at funding available for progression of all employees from Manual Operators to Process Technicians”.

This is what the learners had to say when Alan Cook (Project Worker for TUC Learning Services) dropped in to see them on one of their classes:

Mandy a 41 year old cleaner said “I’d never switched on a computer before and now I’m progressing week by week.” “I am really enjoying the course and I am brushing up on my English: spelling, punctuation, everything!!”

Antoni a 24 year old industrial cleaner said “I’ve learnt a lot more since leaving school working in a small groups with my workmates supporting each other”.

David a 57 year old industrial cleaner said “I’m starting from scratch, technology has advanced so much, it’s a really interesting course and I would’ve missed the opportunity if I hadn’t the chance to attend in works time”.

Graham a 36 year old cleaning supervisor said “I had a basic knowledge of computers, but now I can type a letter, change its layout, its look and check the spelling.

Harry a 59 year old industrial cleaner said “I’d had a very basic knowledge of computers and I really like the relaxed atmosphere in the class” “It’s 44 years since I left school in that time things have changed a lot, I’m now looking forward to achieving some qualifications.

Ian Hawley (TGWU Site Convenor and Union Learning Rep (ULR)) said:

“The TGWU is proud to be involved in this useful and worthwhile educational program, raising its’ profile in regard to the benefits of union membership and the learning agenda”

When asked about how the learning was organised on-site he had this to add:

“I first heard about the ETP from Alan on my ULR course, I got back to him a few weeks later and arranged a meeting with Ray Purcel (Site Manager) and John Pride (Works Director) at Ideal” “Once they were told the details and that there were no strings attached, they could soon see the benefits to them as a company and the employees, now up and running things have gone from strength to strength with everyone benefiting”.

What about the future?

“Now this has been proven at ISIS a contractor on the site I would like to see this partnership approach extended to compliment the current Acordis training program”.

SSL International celebrates success

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A key event on SSL International's training calendar took place on 9th September at the company's premises in Derby. Trainees, colleagues, providers and representatives from Valuable Skills Employer Training Pilot gathered to celebrate success at an award ceremony.

Representatives of the Skills For Life academy at Derby College, Steve Logan (Assistant Principal) and Irene Bailey (Tutor), were delighted to have the opportunity to present certificates to 10 SSL employees who had taken part in a course funded by Valuable Skills.

The employees had attended classes on company premises for 15 weeks from January 7th and had worked to improve their skills in English Language or Literacy. Participants on the course had given an hour of their own time each week and this was matched by an hour's release from duty by their employer.

Collaboration between Derby College and the company to meet Government targets has ensured that the skills of employees have developed. This is beneficial to both the SSL and their employees. Some course participants have expressed their intention to continue to develop their skills in their own time. Success for everyone is a reality at SSL International and both the company and their employees deserve applause.