

North Devon Conservatives

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Date: 16 February 2009

THE WORRYING COLLAPSE IN ADULT LEARNING

PHILIP MILTON, the Conservative Prospective MP for North Devon commented today on the release of new official figures which show that the number of people studying on an adult education course has fallen by a quarter in the last four years.

Since 2003/04, 1.3 million Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded places in adult education courses have disappeared and the decline has been felt equally across the whole of the country. In the South West there has been a reduction of 150,500 places.

Despite our Colleges' excellent achievements locally, the Government has deliberately cut funding for adult education courses that don't produce paper qualifications and as a result hundreds of thousands of adults are unable to re-skill and up-skill.

Philip said:

"This is a very worrying trend and one which the Government must take full responsibility. With the current economic climate all adults must be given the opportunity of re-skilling and up-skilling in order to be in a position to apply for any vacant position. A better-skilled workforce is absolutely fundamental if we are to emerge from the recession in a competitive state."

The Conservatives are committed to refocusing £100 million from the Train to Gain budget on Adult and Community Learning and a further £100 million on young people not in employment, education or training. That will benefit people in every corner of the country and make amends for Labour's cuts, which have hit those most in need the hardest.

Philip added:

"Here in North Devon we have excellent training facilities for both younger students and adult education. In order to "Keep Britain Working" we must ensure that these essential skills are passed on and taken into the workforce and that the training positions are not lost forever."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR PHOTOCALL PLEASE CONTACT:

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Notes to Editors

Table 1: Number of Learners funded by the Learning and Skills Council by region and funding stream, 2003/04 to 2006/07

Region	Adult and Community Learning		Further Education Colleges		University for Industry		Work Based Learning		Train to Gain		Grand Total	
	2003/04	2006/07	2003/04	2006/07	2003/04	2006/07	2003/04	2006/07	2003/04	2006/07	2003/04	2006/07
East of England	91,600	80,200	341,100	226,100	18,800	18,800	24,700	21,200	--	20,700	476,200	367,100
East Midlands	74,100	48,600	367,700	224,100	3,000	15,000	26,100	21,800	--	17,800	471,000	327,300
Greater London	139,100	132,300	501,700	407,700	71,800	32,800	19,900	16,800	--	21,700	732,500	611,300
North East	37,800	39,900	248,800	158,100	14,900	9,300	20,100	16,800	--	17,700	321,600	241,700
North West	116,600	105,900	531,300	354,800	72,000	22,900	48,400	41,700	--	35,400	768,300	560,800
South East	176,500	127,100	516,800	331,900	29,800	25,800	36,100	30,800	--	20,300	759,100	536,000
South West	85,500	63,900	417,100	265,500	5,800	16,300	28,600	24,300	--	16,400	536,900	386,400
West Midlands	65,800	57,600	467,900	325,900	23,000	20,800	34,600	26,500	--	29,700	591,200	460,600
Yorkshire and The Humber	66,700	52,100	420,500	287,200	26,700	16,300	35,900	30,800	--	22,900	549,800	409,200
Other	33,400	34,500	86,800	51,600	3,800	2,500	7,100	5,100	--	36,100	131,000	129,800
TOTALS	887,000	742,100	3,899,700	2,633,000	269,400	180,500	281,500	235,800	--	238,700	5,337,500	4,030,000

Published and promoted by Sir Richard Peek on behalf of the NDCA, The Strand, Barnstaple, N. Devon EX31 1EU. Tel 01271 343101

Notes:

1. Figures are taken from the Individualised Learner Record final F05 data freezes. An earlier freeze of University for Industry data has been used due to data issues with the final freeze.
2. Region is based on home postcode of the learner.
3. The 'other' category includes incomplete records and learners not resident in England, but who are learning in England (for example, learners resident in Scotland or Wales).
4. For Train to Gain and Work Based Learning, participation is counted as the number of starters.
5. There will be an element of double counting in the figures as some learners will participate in more than one funding area.
6. Totals may not equal the sum of their components due to rounding.
7. Train to Gain was created in April 2006. Standard reporting practice is to include the months of April to July 2006 in the 2006/07 academic year.

Source:

Individualised Learner records

Hansard, 19th November 2008

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