10 January 2008: John Denham MP, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills today announced that eight major employers have made a commitment to training by making the Skills Pledge.

In making the Skills Pledge, the following companies have committed to supporting all their employees to work towards a relevant, valuable qualification to at least Level 2 (the equivalent of five GCSEs at A - C grade), including basic skills such as numeracy and literacy:

Remploy Ltd; Delphi Diesel Systems Ltd & Delphi Lockheed Automotive Ltd; Kwik-Fit (GB) Ltd; TUI Travel Plc; Fujitsu Services; Shell International Ltd; BP; Scottish & Southern Energy.

According to new research from the Learning and Skills Council’s National Employer Service almost 90 per cent of the 201 companies polled said that training had already resulted in demonstrable benefits ranging from increased productivity to better employee commitment and involvement in the organisation and improved employee morale. To date, 852 organisations have made the Skills Pledge, demonstrating a public commitment to their employees.

During a keynote speech today at a National Employer Service Skills event at the QEII Centre, John Denham urged more companies to reap the benefits of training and to show this commitment by making the Skills Pledge:

Mr Denham said:

“I’m extremely pleased to be able to announce that these industry leaders have made the Skills Pledge today, and I urge all other employers to follow suit. By substantially increasing investment in services such as Train to Gain, the Government has ensured that every company can now benefit from individually tailored skills assessment and training, delivered when and where they
need it. We have also cut bureaucracy to make sure that colleges and training organisations can best meet employers' needs, and I am committed to extending formal accreditation to employers' in-house training programmes."

"Having visited companies across the country, I know that high-quality training makes a real difference - to the commitment and creativity of staff, to increased productivity and ultimately to the bottom line."

Adrian Ringrose, Chief Executive, Interserve Plc, who also spoke at the event, said:

“We view making the Skills Pledge as an integral part of showing our employees that we’re committed to their development. We know that our business success is dependent on having well trained and skilled people handling the work. Training is important and its impact is widespread - it improves the ability, confidence and retention of our staff and ultimately brings about long-term business benefits, including increased productivity."

Chris Banks, Chair, LSC / Hilary Chadwick, Director, National Employer Service, LSC, said:

“I want to congratulate the employers that are making the Skills Pledge today for their commitment to the future of their staff and their business. It is critical that employers are leading the way in helping effect a change in culture and attitude to training and skills in the workplace. It's great to see that the employers who have made the Skills Pledge today recognise the value of training their staff to their business, to the individuals involved and to the overall competitiveness of the UK."

Part of the Learning and Skills Council, the National Employer Service supports large, multi-site employers to deliver a range of work-based learning programmes in-house, including Apprenticeships, NVQs and basic skills training. Employers that make a commitment to the Skills Pledge have support from Skills Brokers, as part of the Learning and Skills Council’s Train to Gain service, to help them draw up their plans, and if appropriate to find good training providers and access free literacy and numeracy and first full Level 2 qualification courses.

The Leitch Review of Skills, published in December 2006, warned that the UK must ‘raise its game’ on skills at all levels if it is to sustain and improve its position in the global economy. The Skills Pledge fulfils a key recommendation made in the review, at the heart of a new ‘deal’ where employers will be able to shape the skills system to meet their needs, in return for prioritising skills training at all levels.

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For more information on the Skills Pledge, please visit traintogain.gov.uk/skillspledge or call 0800 015 55 45

- ENDS –

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

Notes to editors:
Interviews and imagery are available on request.

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