National Skills Academy network expands with launch of new construction training academy site

London, 13 March 2007: The National Skills Academy network is expanding with the opening of a new National Skills Academy for Construction site at Newall Green High School in Wythenshawe, Manchester. In response to the high demand for skills in the UK construction industry and a predicted construction output growth of 11 percent by 2011, this new Skills Academy is the start of a fleet of mobile training centres to be established on-site at major construction projects throughout the UK.

This launch expands the network in the North West, which already has skills academies in the food and drink manufacturing, manufacturing and financial services sectors.

The National Skills Academy network is an employer-led network of skills academies funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) with its partners, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) and Department for Trade and Industry (DTI), and aims to drive up skills levels and productivity in England by delivering the skills required by each major sector of the economy.

The National Skills Academy network launched in October 2006 and skills academies are currently approved for the construction, manufacturing, financial services and food and drink manufacturing sectors. By 2008 the Government aims to have 12 national skills academies up and running. In addition to the nine sectors with skills academies approved
or in the planning stages, the latest round of applications has just been received. Following a consultation and interview process, the successful applicants will be announced later this year.

Skills Minister Phil Hope said: "Raising skills is essential for our country. That is why we are putting employers at the heart of the National Skills Academy programme - working in partnership we will have a more highly trained and highly motivated work force for the future. I am delighted that the new National Skills Academy for Construction will be leading the way in the North West."

David Way, National Director of Skills for the Learning and Skills Council, said: "National Skills Academies are a direct response to employers and their needs. They have put employers in the driving seat in developing high-quality and relevant training programmes for their own sector and the commitment of so many top employers has been impressive. The network will help transform the further education sector so that it meets the needs of business more effectively."

Businesses are already seeing the benefits of this unique employer-led approach to training provision. Commenting on the creation of a Skills Academy for the construction sector, Val Lowman, UK Community Development Manager of Bovis Lend Lease, said: "By its very nature construction tends to be a hugely fragmented industry. The only place that everyone comes together is on a live construction site, so the fact that training will be focused on-site is very significant. Employer-led training is the only way to get it right and I believe that the National Skills Academy network truly recognises this."

ENDS

Notes for editors

This press notice relates to England. The National Skills Academy network will be the new gold standard for industry training, aiming to improve productivity and tackle skills shortages across England.
Each National Skills Academy puts employers at the heart of skills training for their sector: they influence the curriculum to ensure it reflects employers’ needs; get involved in the Academy’s management; set standards and influence strategic direction.

National Skills Academies aim to:

- deliver high quality training for a specific sector
- provide first-class teaching in a modern learning environment
- be centres of innovation and creativity in skills development for their sector
- be flexible, sustaining the closest possible relationships with employers of all sizes
- build specialist networks with a range of other learning providers, so that new thinking, new methods and higher standards are shared. to the benefit of learners and employers.

The National Skills Academy network was initiated by the Government to address the need for a world class workforce with better skills than ever before. It is managed by the Learning and Skills Council working in partnership with the Department for Education and Skills, the Sector Skills Development Agency and the Department for Trade and Industry.

For more information see: [www.nationalskillsacademy.co.uk](http://www.nationalskillsacademy.co.uk)

**LSC**

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.