

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Workplace Learning Advocates celebrate award for a pioneering approach to learning at work**

Lincolnshire and Rutland Workplace Learning Advocates (WLA) network has won the prestigious NIACE Midlands Region workplace project award for its innovative approach to peer learning support. The Adult Learners' Week Awards celebrate the achievements of outstanding adults that have transformed their lives and benefitted their workplaces through learning. Lincolnshire and Rutland Workplace Learning Advocates (WLA) is a network of colleagues who champion learning opportunities in non-unionised workplaces. They are supported by the national WLA initiative which is managed by Workbase Training and The Johnston Partnership.

Members of the Lincolnshire & Rutland Employment and Skills Board began the scheme in 2011 to improve the skills base of the local workforce. Since then, over 40 WLAs from workplaces across Lincolnshire and Rutland have trained to offer peer-learning support with some completing an NVQ qualification in Information and Advice.

Over 600 employees across the region have engaged in learning in their workplace as a result of the approach. Skills developed range from beekeeping to maths, from first aid to vocational qualifications. Local employers who have a trained Workplace Learning Advocate in their workplace are delighted with the results finding that it's a cost effective way of enhancing employee motivation and engagement.

"In a sparsely-populated rural area with many smaller businesses the Lincolnshire and Rutland Workplace Learning Advocates (WLA) network has proved invaluable in bringing local employers and employees together to share knowledge and resources. As a business we've found that our people are much more engaged and willing to try new things as a result of the Workplace Learning Advocates initiative. It has benefitted our company" said a local employer

Clare Hughes from the Lincolnshire & Rutland Employment and Skills Board said "The great thing about the Workplace Learning Advocate scheme is that everybody benefits. It is employee led, so it matches what people want and need in terms of learning, it brings benefits to the employer through improved engagement with staff and teams and it provides a mechanism for people across a range of businesses to share learning experiences and initiatives. I am delighted that the scheme has been recognised by NIACE."

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**For further information contact:**

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### **About Workplace Learning Advocates**

<http://www.workplacelearningadvocates.org.uk/>

Workplace Learning Advocates (WLAs) are employees in non-unionised workplaces who are trained to inform, encourage and support others to participate in learning at work. WLAs help people at work to join in with learning and get the most from training and development opportunities available, including English and Maths skills. This is achieved by;

- Offering information and advice to colleagues
- Organising activities designed to encourage people to improve and develop new skills
- Sharing learning activities between small companies
- Developing social or learning clubs in the workplace

Regional networks have been established in the North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, London & the South West and Oxfordshire - working with LEPs, over 200 employers, colleges, CBI, Chambers of Commerce, Local Authorities and partnerships with unionlearn and Trade Unions, Community Learning Champions, Third Sector organisations and government agencies.

Workplace Learning Advocates is managed nationally by Workbase Training and The Johnston Partnership.

### **About Workbase Training**

Workbase Training began in 1980 as a project for tackling under performance and under achievement in the workplace and has grown to become a leading not for profit organisation and winners of a National and a Regional Training Award for pioneering employee development and workplace literacy and numeracy and workplace learning. It specialises in developing communication skills for low skilled and low paid employees to help them get the most from development opportunities. Workbase has created a number of tried and tested models for literacy and numeracy at the workplace which have been used by providers including colleges, trade unions and private training organisations. <http://www.workbase.org.uk/>

### **About The Johnston Partnership**

The Johnston Partnership started to deliver their Learning Advocates Initiative in non-unionised workplaces in 2004 in Cumbria. Liz & Graham Johnston have worked in the field of Information, Advice & Guidance since 1988. The company specialises in training employees and community based volunteers in information and advice skills. They also use a range of support models to encourage non-unionised companies to upskill their workforce. They now deliver the Workplace Learning Advocates initiative throughout the Northern regions. W:

[www.learningadvocates.co.uk](http://www.learningadvocates.co.uk)

