

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2009



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VOCATIONAL TRAINING – based at Lovers Loan, Lerwick



It's recruitment time again and we are keen to assist employers looking for new apprentices and trainees.

Against a backdrop of economic downturn, this is a challenging time for most businesses and also difficult for the 300 pupils due to leave school this year!

Our training co-ordinators have been busy visiting schools to meet with pupils to explain our role in co-ordinating recruitment and managing apprenticeships and vocational training.

Shetland's businesses and organisations have a very good track record of providing opportunities for young people and we remain hopeful that many companies, including those who haven't had an apprentice before, will seek out government

funded training for a new recruit. Trial periods are a great way for both the employer and potential trainees to begin vocational training. This is becoming recommended practice as it avoids early drop-outs and the loss of funding which cannot be reallocated.

On a positive note, our new contract for 2009/10 allows us to access government funding for up to 58 new apprentice/trainee places. We've heard from a few companies planning to recruit, and, with 41 employer vacancies so far, 18 places have already been filled. Again this year, most of the employment opportunities are with engineering and construction related trades, but we also support non-traditional apprenticeship frameworks for a variety of occupational sectors (for example, jewellery manufacture and floristry). We can source the right framework for each business and industry sector on request.

We're having an 'Open Evening' on Wednesday 24 June, when staff will be on hand to provide information on what's available this year.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Margaret Simpson

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

WHY DO COMPANIES TAKE ON YOUNG APPRENTICES?

We asked a few questions to find out more:

SCALLOWAY MOTORS *with Alex Sharp*



Proprietor Alex Sharp, with apprentice engineers Neil Preston and Peter Stewart

When did your company take on its first apprentice or skillseeker?

June 2002 and again in August 2006.

What have you found to be the benefits to your business?

Teaching them your own way of working – and not having to correct bad habits. Ultimately, it increases turnover and profitability for this company.

From your experience, what have been the key 'challenges' in training and supporting school leavers in their first four years in the workplace?

Supporting their progress towards maturity – allowing time for their development, both personal, and in terms of the work output and level of complexity.

What are the key qualities you look for when you are selecting a new trainee?

Enthusiasm for the trade, an ability to listen and learn, and honesty are paramount. Also respect for customers' property and workplace tools and equipment. People skills are needed, both with customers and workmates.

For any small business that may be considering taking on an apprentice for the first time, what advice would you pass on?

Give the candidate a trial period (two to three months). Be honest and straightforward with them as to what the job involves.

OCEAN KINETICS

with John Henderson



Manager John Henderson, with apprentices Euan Smith and John Robert Thomson

When did your company take on its first apprentice or skillseeker?

In 1999, and we currently employ five apprentices.

What have you found to be the benefits to your business?

It is important to maintain the skill levels in our workforce. Limited skilled labour in Shetland has made it more important to train. Also, we can train the apprentices specifically to meet our requirements.

From your experience, what have been the key 'challenges' in training and supporting school leavers in their first four years in the workplace?

Freeing up the time to train the apprentices is the main challenge.

What are the key qualities you look for when you are selecting a new trainee?

The ability to listen to our tradesmen. An eagerness to learn, common sense and practical ability. Also, a mature attitude is very desirable.

For any small business that may be considering taking on an apprentice for the first time, what advice would you pass on?

The first phase of the training can be time consuming and expensive. Overall though, the effort and time spent is worth it.

SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN

with Darren Hitchin



Supervisor Darren Hitchin with apprentice Billy McDermot and manager Bob Kelman

When did your company take on its first apprentice or skillseeker?

In 2007, and we currently have two apprentices.

What have you found to be the benefits to your business?

Development of skills. Training the apprentices to eventually replace our current workforce as they head towards retirement. In-house training builds up a workforce that can work to our standards and methods.

From your experience, what have been the key 'challenges' in training and supporting school leavers in their first four years in the workplace?

Our apprentices have been very good and have presented no challenges. This is because our recruitment process is fairly rigorous and our

apprentices are treated well. They are given appropriate in-house training.

What are the key qualities you look for when you are selecting a new trainee?

Good character, conscientious, not 'too' confident and someone with a little hands-on experience. It's also essential that the candidate is enthusiastic about the type of work.

For any small business that may be considering taking on an apprentice for the first time, what advice would you pass on?

Look at the applicant's hobbies, general appearance and attitude at interview. Consider a trial period prior to commitment of either party. Ensure your current workforce is willing and able to instruct in practical skills.

SHETLAND JEWELLERY

with Kenneth Rae



Jewellers in the making Sophie Whitehead and Yvette Leask of Shetland Jewellery



A necklace designed by Sophie Whitehead

When did your company take on its first apprentice or skillseeker?

Our first trainees started in 2002.

How many apprentices/trainees do you currently employ?

Sophie has finished her training now and Yvette has finished Level 2 and is about to progress to Level 3 Modern Apprenticeship. They are trained by our workplace supervisor and also assessed by a lecturer from Orkney College, who visits us every four to five months. She is very experienced and enthusiastic and helps to keep it all going to plan.

What have you found to be the benefits to your business?

There are lots of benefits in seeing people get skills and qualifications. It is satisfying for the employer as well as the individual. It also makes the job more interesting for the employee as they are challenged and have to think of other ways of doing things. This can benefit the company too. For example, when our trainee did research on techniques with enamelling, it became a piece of work for the factory too and led to increased business.

From your experience, what have been the key 'challenges' in training and supporting school leavers in their first four years in the workplace?

You have to keep encouraging employees and give them the help they need. It can be

challenging in getting a balance between workshop deadlines and time-out for study. Study time is very important for trainees and it certainly helps to have a workforce who understands the training programme and is supportive.

What are the key qualities you look for when you are selecting a new trainee?

We take on people for a trial period of one year before agreeing to sign up for apprenticeship training. This ensures suitability and commitment, through checking their work rate and time-keeping etc. All our trainees have been good and we are happy with their progress in the workplace. Artistic ability at school is not essential as design work is done separately but they do need to have good skills with tools for jewellery production techniques.

For any small business that may be considering taking on an apprentice for the first time, what advice would you pass on?

You have to be prepared to give them the time to study as well as work to deadlines. They can't be working five days per week continuously without getting the time to do their formal study and go on courses to improve their knowledge and skills. A trial period is very worthwhile and if you do get the right person, it can be a huge benefit to your business in later years.

CURRENT VACANCIES:

MODERN APPRENTICESHIP (SVQ Level 3/four year training plan)

ENGINEERING MAINTENANCE

Malakoff
HNP
SIC - Ports & Harbour Operations

WELDING & FABRICATION

Ocean Kinetics
Malakoff
Lerwick Engineering & Fabrication

ELECTRICIAN

SIC - Roads Section

HEAVY VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

Northwards Ltd
SIC - Garage

PLUMBING

No 1 Building Firm
SIC - Building Services

JOINERY

SIC - Housing Section
SIC - Building Services

CIVIL ENGINEERING HNC

SIC - Roads Section

LIGHT VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

Scalloway Motors

SKILLSEEKER OR EMPLOYED TRAINEE

(SVQ Level 2/up to two year training plan)

HAIRDRESSING

Jon Stone Hair
Studio 4
Sharp Image
Hair Affaire

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SIC - Housing Section
NB Communication Ltd

VARIOUS

Social Care
- SIC Wastview Care Centre

Science Laboratory Technician
- Anderson High School

Children's Learning and Development
- SIC Scalloway School

OPEN EVENING

DATE: Wednesday 24 June 2009

VENUE: Lovers Loan, Lerwick

TIME: 6.00pm to 8.00pm

It can be difficult to find the time to visit our offices in working hours, so we've set on a date for an open evening. It will be a drop-in session for anyone who wants to find out more about vocational training.



SHELL STEP Project List 2009

Shell STEP is an eight week, project-based placement with a local company.

This year's programme runs from **Monday 22 June to Friday 21 August**. Students are paid an allowance of £210 each week (no tax or NI is deducted) by Train Shetland. Employers pay 50 per cent of the cost. Current projects with local employers include:

Energy Saving programme with Unst Partnership

Marketing project with Shetland Windpower Ltd

Environmental audit and policy with Shetland Recreational Trust

Fuel Poverty Campaign work with Shetland Citizens Advice Bureau

Feasibility study with Family Mediation Shetland

Website design with Shetland Halls Association

Marketing project with AB Associates Ltd

Website design work with Shetland Youth Information Service

We currently have 14 student applications, so if there are any companies/employers who may have a suitable project/placement please get in touch. It does not have to be a complex or demanding project... but something that is achievable in eight weeks and will help with your business workload!

NATIONAL AWARDS

In November 2008 Michael Balmain was awarded Shetland Modern Apprentice of the Year at the Shetland Training Awards.

Earlier this year he also received the Award for Endeavour from LANTRA; the Sector Skills Council for environmental and land-based industries. This was 'In recognition of Outstanding Commitment to Training and Development'.

Michael started work at Shetland Amenity Trust in September 2004 as a modern apprentice in amenity horticulture. He works with the woodlands team where his duties include the planting and maintenance of wooded areas, seed collection, work with mature trees, pruning and felling. As part of his apprenticeship, Michael attended Elmwood College in Cupar on block release to complete his Level 3 and Modern Apprenticeship. Michael is now one of the few employees qualified to climb trees and work with chain saws.

Michael comments: *"I thoroughly recommend apprenticeships - it's getting paid to learn. I love my job and I have a first hand role in helping the environment. It is excellent. It has been a fantastic four years, an ideal opportunity to learn a trade and get qualifications at the same time."*



From left:
Michael Balmain, Modern Apprentice of the Year;
Nicola Duthie, Skillseeker of the Year;
Brydon Pearson, Outstanding Effort Award;
Andrew Hunter, Modern Apprentice Outstanding Effort Trophy.

Michael Balmain receiving his award from Peter Alexander, Chair of LANTRA awards group.

Michael and Andrew are Train Shetland trainees, Brydon trained with Shetland Recreational Trust and Nicola trained with Support Training Ltd.

SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL - CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICES



Construction apprentices

Back row:
Ieuan Reynolds, Mathew Smith, John Leask,
Matthew Medley, Lewis Kay, Ryan Laurenson,
Amy Garrick

Front row:
Lauren Devonald, Jordon Wiseman,
Magni Einarsson, Stuart Milne

A training scheme was introduced in 2005 by the Chief Executive in response to requests from local industry.

The apprentices are employed on temporary contracts for four years to gain qualifications in various construction related trades, namely joinery, painting and decorating, plumbing, bricklaying and technician level training in architecture, civil engineering, electrical and also heavy vehicle maintenance.

Participating departments include Housing, Roads, Capital Projects, Building Services and Transport. There are no guarantees of employment at the end of the apprenticeship programme as the aim of the scheme is to provide the skills training for Shetland as a whole, not just the local authority.