

Cash “Golden Hellos” for Apprentice Employers

Employers learned how they could secure a £2500 “golden hello” for new apprentices at a special event at Great Yarmouth College as part of National Apprenticeships Week.

More than 50 employers were urged to employ trainees to benefit their workforce and future business success and tap into the limited offer to help cover wage costs.

Many employers registered their interest with college staff and took away information about the opportunities for their businesses from the scheme.



Employers who sign up unemployed 16 and 17-year-olds by 31 March could qualify for the one off £2500, aimed at companies which would not have otherwise have afforded to take on an apprentice.

Glen Moore, of the National Apprenticeship Scheme (NAS), told the audience that only 180 of the 500 grants in the eastern region had been taken up so far in the Government drive for one in five young people to enter apprenticeships - currently, it is one in 17.

“Apprenticeships have become a success story over the last few years since in 1997 the Government decided to make a real commitment. In 1997 there were 65,000 apprentices and that has gone up to 225,000 a couple of years ago.”

“In the current economic climate it is difficult for employers, particularly as many employers say that to take on apprentices say they need some money to subsidise it.”

The golden hello – primarily for companies with up to 250 employees– is designed to help with wage bills. Apprentices’ training costs are met by the NAS.

The incentive was “a short-term extra – a one-off until the end of March” and part of a major Government investment in the apprenticeship scheme, Mr Moore said.



Young people must be recruited by their 18th birthday and must be unemployed. The grants will be distributed by Great Yarmouth College, the training provider.

Chairman of Great Yarmouth and Waveney PCT David Edwards, who started his career as an apprentice in the steel industry, spoke passionately about the benefits of apprenticeships.

The PCT and James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are leading the way nationally with its NHS apprenticeship scheme taking on 100 apprentices since its launch last April.

“I believe in apprenticeships. It gave me a lot of opportunities myself and I want to see young people getting similar opportunities.”

Robin Parkinson, Principal of Great Yarmouth College, said it was a “genuine renaissance” for apprenticeships with Government putting “serious money” into the scheme as a career pathway for youngsters.

Young apprentices were at the event held in the college's new £6 million School of Construction and Manufacturing Technologies building.

Daniel Marshall and Joe Lees, both apprentice chefs at Great Yarmouth's Imperial Hotel, prepared and served the food with first year student Shauni Reid, under the guidance of college tutor Simon Tedstone.

Mark Bayley, Head of Centre for Sales and Marketing, said "We had a great turnout for the event with employers across a whole range of sectors, from boatbuilding to catering, hairdressing, engineering and construction.

"Hopefully the grant will provide the incentive for employers who, in the current economic climate, are finding it difficult to take on apprentices. However, this is a time limited offer so I would urge any employers who were not able to attend our event to contact us to see how they might benefit."