

Minister backs whole organisation approach to Workplace *Skills for Life*

The Network

for workplace language, literacy and numeracy



Delegates from Merseytravel show off the conference materials.

Minister for Skills, Phil Hope, gave his backing to the whole organisation approach to *Skills for Life* when he spoke at the National Conference of The Network in Liverpool recently.

Fully endorsing the theme of the 8th National Conference of The Network – part of Lancaster University dedicated to improving workplace language, literacy and numeracy – he said: “The whole organisation approach is the key to the successful delivery of *Skills for Life*. Employers must be at the heart of this initiative, which is to create new markets and make workers as flexible as possible. The skills of our people are our fundamental asset and every

person should be able to achieve their potential.”

Making a presentation via DVD, he said as much as £10bn was lost each year in Britain as a result of poor skills, but five years of Government funding was now having a positive effect on people’s lives. He thanked The Network for the “valuable support it has given my Department in delivering *Skills for Life*.”

A range of high-profile experts in workplace language, literacy and numeracy issues spoke at the conference, which was held on 8 and 9 February. Among the keynote speakers were Fran Hulbert, Director of Skills Policy, Northwest Regional Development Agency; Monica Turner, from the Centre for British Teachers; Neil Scales, Chief Executive of Merseytravel; Tracey Theo from Business in the Community; Peter Keith from Walkers Snack Foods and Christine Troughton from the LSC North West.

More than 200 delegates comprising providers, practitioners, advisers, employers and union learning reps attended 14 workshops

that focused on specific aspects of *Skills for Life* delivery.

An important part of the conference were presentations by employers who have engaged with *Skills for Life* and discovered benefits for both the company and staff.

“It is absolutely essential for UK plc that companies fully embrace Skills for Life,” said Neil Scales.

“Both their own and their country’s future prosperity depends on it.”

The event also saw the launch of ‘Natural Allies’, a DVD/CD-Rom that shows how Investors in People can support workforce skills development. Filmed in Merseyside and produced by The Network on behalf of LSC Greater Merseyside, it profiles employers, employees and their positive experiences with *Skills for Life*. The aim is to make it available for awareness-raising sessions with employers, as a resource for practitioners, and a promotional tool at award ceremonies and conferences.



For information on The Network visit:
www.thenetwork.co.uk