

JOBCENTRE PARTNERSHIP HAILED

Coach costs: Funding for companies that offer their security staff the 'security practitioner' qualification has been available for some time, Skills for Security reports. It has negotiated new funding that will let employers recoup most of the cost of training the 'skills coaches'. These assess and mentor security officers in the workplace. A two-day course for coaches explains how to steer officers to the security practitioner qualification. That's designed for officers who have already completed their initial training, have some experience, and are ready to go further. To pass, you show workplace skills and competencies, not by attending a traditional training course. SFS Chief Executive, David Greer, said: "This means that employers can now engage in the knowledge that the cost of up-skilling their workforces at both operative and supervisory levels will be minimal." □

Pictured left to right at Ilford JobCentre in Essex are James Purnell MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, and Wilson Chowdhry, MD of local guarding company AA Security.

The occasion was the signing of one of the first Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs) agreements in the UK. Briefly - they featured at the November 2007 annual Skills for Security conference - it's a deal between Jobcentre Plus and employers: the Government gets disadvantaged people ready for work; and employers with vacancies give them a fair shot at the job, whether through interviews, work placements, work trials and mentoring. Wilson Chowdhry said afterwards: "AA Security has benefited from a long-term relationship with the JobCentre. We have found their professionalism

and comprehensive source of potential recruits have enabled us to adapt to the exponential growth our company has undergone in recent years." He put the company success partly through employing people through JobCentre Plus: "The sifting service they offer which reduces our recruitment times and the training subsidies provided, enable us to embark on well financed training for our security officers - this has reciprocally induced a loyalty and confidence in staff that has resulted in a 9pc staff turnover rate (exceptional in an industry known for its 35pc churn rate) and 100pc client retention." □



National NVQs: TQ Workforce Development recently embarked on national training with Chubb Security Personnel, to deliver NVQs to the contractor's security officers and staff. Jane McKenna, Chubb's Director of Training and Development said: "We're really pleased with the training they've developed for us and how simple it's been to use them." TQ adds that it works with employers, large and small, and can provide qualifications specifically for the security sector including National Vocational Qualifications. TQ are one of the first to use 'electronic portfolios' where all assessment evidence is stored on CD instead of the usual folders and paper. □

FIRE, LIGHTING COURSES

The Fire and Security Association (FSA) and Fire Protection Association (FPA) have launched jointly developed, training courses for fire detection, alarm and emergency lighting systems.

The modular courses are described as part of a wider partnership between the two associations. It's designed to meet training requirements of those involved in the design, installation, commissioning and servicing of associated systems. Howard Passey, FPA Education and Training Director said: "Having had success in delivering fire risk assessment courses in partnership, we are confident this new range of accredited, modular training courses will be embraced by the industry and help to develop competencies in fire alarm, detection and emergency lighting systems." The courses, endorsed by the Institution of Fire Engineers and Institution of Engineering Technology, were officially launched at IFSEC 2008. Stefan Hay, Head of the FSA said: "Access to, and availability of, quality training for the fire systems sector has been very poor to date. We are committed to rectifying this and to ensuring that sector employees are skilled and competent. Feedback from our members, industry contacts and our collective in-depth knowledge of the sector, identified the need for such a new approach and we are, understandably, excited by the potential." □



Stefan Hay



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