

Case Study



Leigh UTC

Partnership to deliver high quality apprenticeships



Skills expert Semta has joined forces with The Leigh University Technical College (UTC) in a bid to deliver more high quality apprenticeships in North Kent.

The employer-led Semta Apprenticeship Service has contacted businesses in the UTC's catchment area around Dartford to support them to take on engineering apprentices.

Several local small businesses attended a briefing session at the college to hear about the partnership which will offer Advanced Apprenticeship Programmes including Level 3 and 4 in Manufacturing Engineering.

They discussed the benefits of taking on an apprentice, apprenticeship standards, the forthcoming apprenticeship levy due to be implemented in April 2017 and how on-the-job training can be augmented with the use of the excellent facilities and specialised tutoring at the college.

Steve Leahey, the principal of The Leigh UTC said: "When we set up two years ago, our vision was to deliver engineering apprenticeships. We needed someone with the experience, understanding of the business and the sector so it made perfect sense to work with Semta Apprenticeship Service.

"Employers are already working with our students and building up relationships. Many of those young people want to work locally so in terms of retaining talent, gold standard apprenticeship training makes sense."

Steve Leahey
principal of The Leigh UTC

"There is a real appetite from our business partners to be part of this programme and ideally they would look to recruit our students to take up the vacancies, but there is some nervousness because many haven't taken on apprentices before. This programme gives the college an opportunity to be the conduit to providing opportunities for them to deliver apprenticeships."

Mr Leahey said the UTC already works with around 50 SMEs who provide career talks and work on a range of projects with students so delivering Apprenticeship programmes, which began in September, was a logical step to take.

The Leigh UTC has state-of-the-art facilities for all engineering disciplines, including electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, welding, CAD (Computer Aided Drawing) and CNC (Computer Numerical Control) engineering. In addition to the classrooms and workshops, Mr Leahey said all the tutors had an industry background as well as broad experience in education.

Jay Wright, Leigh's Director of Apprenticeships, said: "We have taken on nine apprentices since September 2016 from Kenard,



Stead and Wilkins, Boddingtons Plastics and Cubic Transportation Systems. They are doing very well and had very positive feedback from their employers about the course and how well the apprentices are settling in. They are applying themselves to their work very well and are an example to other learners.

"One of the employers said that since being with us they have seen a massive change in the outlook of one of their apprentices and that he is really enjoying his time here, as well as understanding the relevance of the work. He said that what we are doing in partnership with Semta Apprenticeship Service is outstanding and it has made a real difference to their apprentices."

ENGINEERING SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

Partnership to deliver high quality apprenticeships



Tom Stone, is an apprentice with Kenard Engineering, which specialise in high precision manufacturing of components for the aerospace, oil and gas and telecoms industries, studying a Level 4 in manufacturing engineering at Leigh.

He said he decided on an apprenticeship: "Because it is hands on and practical and gives me the opportunity to learn skills and then use them in a work environment.

"There is a large workshop at Leigh that has industry standard tools and equipment that we can use and make parts on and learn new processes and learn about new tools.

His colleague Harry Tindall, also from Kenard, said: "I am not really an academic person and I don't think uni would be the best path for me at the moment. I'm also getting paid to learn new skills every day. The UTC has so much equipment to help evolve your skills and make you a better engineer."

"Leigh is enjoyable, with small classes for the apprentices so no-one gets overlooked. I love the hands-on practical work."

Connor Smith
apprentice at Stead and Wilkins



Robbie Boorer of Boddingtons Plastics, an injection moulding company, is also studying level 4 in manufacturing engineering.

"The Leigh UTC has an incredible workshop and facilities available to use to a very good standard. Classrooms and computer rooms have a good atmosphere and it's a good place to

learn," he said. "The teaching staff are very helpful, always giving me advice and showing me new skills to help me improve."

Annette Collins, Head of Semta Apprenticeship Service said: "The Leigh UTC provides an exciting, innovative, business-led, problem-solving curriculum, enabling students to achieve relevant work-related qualifications and transferable skills for future training or employment. The project-based approach develops a deeper understanding of real issues faced by engineers.

"With access to a wide range of expertise within Semta Apprenticeship Service, we can support the whole apprenticeship process from recruitment through to delivery and certification. We will also be able to advise employers and support them through the new apprenticeship reforms - including the apprenticeship levy - as these take shape over the coming months. We are delighted to be working in partnership with such a forward-thinking college."

Mr Leahey added: "The North Kent corridor is expanding rapidly in terms of industry and residential. Companies are finding it difficult to recruit skilled engineers so this partnership between Semta Apprenticeship Service and The Leigh UTC will create new opportunities for SMEs and our students."

Semta Apprenticeship Service has the capabilities to

- identify your business skills needs
- develop tailored apprenticeship programmes
- source and secure all the available funding
- recruit the right apprentice for your business
- source market leading training provision
- deliver ongoing mentoring and support
- provide independent assessment, awarding and certification.

One of Semta's expert team of Apprenticeship Advisers can come and visit your business, or simply talk over the phone to assess how we can support and advise you.

For the hassle-free route to employing an apprentice – talk to us now:

✉ customerservices@semta.org.uk

☎ 0845 643 9001

🌐 www.semta.org.uk/sas