

SOUTH WEST WATER

Situated in the heart of the West Country, South West Water has for over fifteen years supplied high quality drinking water and waste water facilities to Devon and Cornwall.



Employing in excess of 1,300 staff, South West Water (part of the Pennon Group Plc) wanted to improve the skill level of, and open up career progression opportunities for employees within the waste water function. Graham Dauge, Training Advisor for South West Water, approached Train to Gain for advice about greater access to funded training.

Train to Gain is a free service, funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and delivered throughout the South West by Business Link. Train to Gain Skills Brokers, through an Organisational Needs Analysis, offer businesses impartial advice on their skills requirements and match skills and training needs with providers.

Train to Gain broker, Richard Scutt, talked through the training options and funding available for South West Water employees. It was decided that Train to Gain could be used to fund an NVQ Level 2 in Water Operations, so a suitable training provider and funding to implement the training was established. Following the review, South West Water was able to partner with Cornwall College.

"We have offered training to staff before, but never on such a large scale," comments Graham Dauge, Training Advisor for South West Water. *"To be able to use this new training scheme through*

financial support provided by Business Link and the LSC has really enabled us to offer this NVQ to a much bigger group within the company."

So far, 120 employees have signed up to take part in the training programme, which will be carried out over the next three to four years. *"Nearly 100% of staff invited to take part expressed an interest",* Graham adds. *"For some employees this NVQ will be their first ever formal qualification. It's great to be able to offer them such an opportunity."*

With such a positive response South West Water has had to stagger enrolment to the course, with the first 30 employees already enrolled on the NVQ.

The course will be assessed as part of employees' job performance. NVQ assessors will work alongside staff throughout their regular day-to-day responsibilities, meaning employees are able to achieve a skill qualification with little or no disruption to the running of the business.

Richard Scutt said: *"Offering training to employees at South West Water has been an invaluable asset to the company. Staff are now able to acquire an NVQ L2 and South West Water hope to have a more confident and adaptable team."*