

November 2008

MP backs Black Country Apprenticeship showcase

A road show event to promote apprenticeships which toured the Black Country supporting hundreds of young people has won the backing of Ian Austin, Minister for the West Midlands.

Hundreds of young people and their parents visited The Real Apprentice 2 showcase which toured Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Walsall throughout November.

The aim of the event along with a DVD promoting apprenticeships was to raise awareness of the 5,000 apprenticeships available to school leavers and to encourage them to think about their post-16 training options.

Mr Austin, MP for Dudley North met staff from BCTG (Black Country Training Group), who together with the Black Country Learning and Skills Council organised The Real Apprentice 2 showcases.

Mr Austin, who has said his priority is to help safeguard the security of families in the Midlands and the companies on whom the region's jobs and prosperity depend, gave his support to the apprenticeship drive.

He said: *"As we all know Britain is facing a period of immense economic challenges, and while they might have been caused by events overseas, they're having a real impact on families here in the West Midlands.*

"But we must keep a clear focus on the future and invest in our workforce which means equipping apprentices with the right skills to enable them to have the flexibility and resourcefulness that all employers seek.

"These showcases and the DVD are exactly about helping drive up skills. I want to see a region which continues to attract more business, investment and job creation including apprenticeships."

Across the Black Country there are around 5,000 apprenticeship opportunities, in more than 40 different occupations, funded by the Black Country LSC, available to young people.

Chris Luty, BCTG director, added: "We welcome Ian Austin's support for The Real Apprentice 2. We held four Real Apprentice showcases in March and because they proved so successful we ran them again in November we are now looking at the possibility of a West Midlands-wide event to make young people aware of good training options available to them when they leave school."

Anyone who wants to find out more about The Real Apprentice 2 can call free on 08000 321 222 or go to www.therealapprentice.org

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Pictured I-r is Chris Luty BCTG director and Ian Austin MP for Dudley North and Minister for the West Midlands.



Notes to editors:

BCTG (Black Country Training Group Limited) works with a range of training organisations across the West Midlands delivering a range of publicly and privately funded training initiatives.

BCTG works closely with a range of public and private organisations, including the Learning and Skills Council, which support many of our activities.

BCTG has four main aims:

1. Engaging with young people and adults to take up vocational learning
2. Working with employers to help develop the skills their business needs to succeed
3. To improve the quality of education and training delivered in the West Midlands
4. Building partnerships across all the stakeholders interested in improving education and training.

BCTG offers a wide range of information, advice and training services to suit the needs of young people, schools and training providers and employers.

For more information go to www.bctg.org.uk

For media inquiries call Jane Williams on 01902 751565 or 07961 048613

