

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership strengthens skills team

Cumbria's strategic economic body has appointed three education and skills experts to take forward one of the county's key economic drivers.

Craig Ivison, Charlotte Crozier and Caroline Ledward have joined the team at Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership to help implement the county's Skills Investment Plan up to 2020.

The skills plan for the county, drawn up in consultation with employers and local education and training institutions, aims to improve skills levels, increasing the county's workforce and assisting employers.

It includes key targets for 2020, such as increasing apprenticeships within the county from 5,000 to 6,000 per year and the number of working age people with level 4 qualifications by 9,000.

The LEP's new Head of Employment and Skills Craig Ivison is responsible for ensuring effective, collaborative partnership working to meet the skills needs of employers in the county. He is also playing a key role in ensuring that employers and training providers are ready to maximise the benefits of the new Apprenticeship Levy.

Caroline Ledward's role as Cumbria LEP's 16-19 NEET Manager will involve working with employers, partners and wider stakeholders to address skills issues and support direct training provision for young people not in employment, education or training.

As Sector Skills Manager Charlotte Crozier will act as a link with employers to help analyse future skills needs to ensure more local people can gain the right qualifications to remain in Cumbria to work.

"Cumbria has a successful track record of employers, training providers and agencies working together to secure a high quality, relevant skills offer for their communities," says Craig Ivison.

"We want to build on this effective collaboration and continue to develop a vibrant skills system that responds to the current and future needs of our economy."

The team has major objectives in aligning the skills offer to the needs of employers, young people, the current workforce and those not currently in employment.

George Beveridge, Chair of the Board at Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, says: "The LEP is playing an increasingly active role in the provision of skills development and training opportunities. We need to respond to economic demand for higher level skills in key industries and the addition of Charlotte, Caroline and Craig will accelerate that process. We warmly welcome them aboard."

Cumbria LEP has established an Employment and Skills Advisory Group to bring employers and education and training providers together and drive the skills agenda in the county forward.

For further details about Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, go to www.cumbrialep.co.uk

Ends

For media information please contact Karen Gardner at Osprey Communications on 015394 42436 or email karen@ospreycommunications.co.uk

Notes for editors

- **About Craig Ivison**

Craig Ivison from Cockermouth has held a number of senior roles within the education and training sector including Vice-Principal of an Academy, Education Advisor to a Multi-Academy Trust and Post-16 Advisor within a Local Authority School Improvement Team.

He also worked as a National Policy Manager for Apprenticeships and was a Partnership Manager for the Learning and Skills Council in Cumbria, helping to plan and fund post 16 education and training across the county.

- **About Charlotte Crozier**

With over twelve years' experience in skills, training and education, Charlotte Crozier from Maryport has fulfilled various management roles with responsibilities for apprenticeships, employability and business development. Having worked for Intraining, Learn Direct and Impact Housing, Charlotte has the extensive expertise in apprenticeships and employability.

She has been at the forefront in delivering skills to people in Cumbria and have a thorough understanding of what is needed in our region and how we get there.

Charlotte says: "Cumbria has the potential to become one of the fastest growing economies in the UK and I am really excited to be a part of the skills development agenda and implementation team delivering this."

- **About Caroline Ledward**

Caroline Ledward qualified with a degree in secondary education and youth and community work from St Martins College Lancaster, now part of the University of Cumbria. Caroline has held a range of practitioner and management roles linked to education, skills, career management, youth work and youth support services. She was based in Central and East London in her early career but has worked and lived in Cumbria for the past 15 years. Caroline has previously worked for Inspira Cumbria, its predecessor Connexions Cumbria, the county's 14-19 development team and Cumbria County Council.

Caroline says: "I have always been passionate about supporting young people to achieve their personal and career aspirations, so I am determined to make a real difference through this exciting new role."

- Cumbria LEP provides a strategic lead for all activities contributing to the growth and vibrancy of the county's economy and where appropriate takes positive action, using the skills, capability and networks of LEP partners.
- The LEP is keen to work with all partners and stakeholders (private and public) to undertake actions, secure funding and implement initiatives to support sustainability and growth of Cumbria's economy.
- A copy of the Cumbria Strategic Economic Plan is available at: www.cumbrialep.co.uk/what-we-do/sep/