

## Press Release



Learning South West Bishops Hull House  
Bishops Hull Taunton Somerset TA1 5EP  
**telephone 01823 335491**  
**paula\_jones@learning-southwest.org.uk**  
www.learning-southwest.org.uk

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### **West of England trail-blazers challenge stereotypes at work**

Trail-blazing men and women from across the West of England\* will be sashaying down the red carpet for the premier of a new DVD from the Trading Places project that aims to challenge gender stereotypes at work.

Co-ordinated by Learning South West and funded by the European Social Fund and Learning and Skills Council, Trading Places aims to improve access to learning and employment in non-traditional sectors, and improve recruitment where there are significant skills shortages.

With the help of 25 men and women who are already successfully challenging employment stereotypes the project explores the highs and lows of working in four industry sectors; men in social care; women in construction; women in engineering and men and women in retail.

It reveals what makes these men and women a success, in non-traditional sectors. The DVD will be used to train those in positions of influence, with young people and adults, such as careers teachers and Jobcentre Plus advisers, so they can help combat stereotypes.

trading places is funded by:



Learning South West The Partnership to Promote Excellence in Learning  
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Deputy Chief Executive at Learning South West and Project Manager Paula Jones said: "The segregation of men and women at work, into traditional roles, is a key factor contributing to the gender gap in earnings and the continuing skills deficits in the UK, in some sectors. By challenging existing stereotypes and encouraging men and women to take a broader view of work choices Trading Places aims to change this situation."

Mark Williams, Skills Development Manager for the South West Learning and Skills Council, added: "I am delighted to support Trading Places in its aims to challenge gender stereotypes. One of our key challenges within the region is to breakdown traditional employment barriers associated with gender, and all other equality themes such as ethnicity, health, disability, and to be proactive and invest positively in actions to address stereotypical behaviours and policies both with employers and with communities more generally."

"Learning South West have a strong track record of delivering innovative and creative projects which help support individuals in their social and economic inclusion and well-being."

The launch event takes place at The Rookery Manor Hotel in Weston-super-Mare on October 1, from 10am to 3.30pm. The event will premier the DVD and accompanying training materials, provide an opportunity to meet the men and women starring in the film and to learn more about the project.

To find out more about the project visit [www.learning-southwest.org.uk/tradingplaces](http://www.learning-southwest.org.uk/tradingplaces)

**ENDS**

*For further information or to arrange interviews with the project's participants contact PROs Beth Jerrett on 07969355459 or email [jerrettbeth@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jerrettbeth@yahoo.co.uk) or Nick Cashin on 01823 365445 or email [nick\\_cashin@learning-southwest.org.uk](mailto:nick_cashin@learning-southwest.org.uk)*

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## Notes to Editors:

- Learning South West is an independent charity, which is a cross-sector membership organisation. Our members include local authorities, further education colleges, private training providers and voluntary sector organisations. Visit [www.learning-southwest.org.uk](http://www.learning-southwest.org.uk).
- Copies of the DVD can be obtained from Learning South West Administrator Hayley Lazarus on 01823 365435 or email [Hayley.Lazarus@learning-southwest.org.uk](mailto:Hayley.Lazarus@learning-southwest.org.uk)
- \*The West of England includes: North Somerset, South Gloucester, City of Bristol and Bath and North East Somerset.

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