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New project manager helps break the ice for migrant workers.

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Karen Cole has been appointed to manage an exciting new project to help migrant workers throughout Somerset improve their English language skills. The ICEBreakers project is being run by Taunton based charity, Learning South West, and is funded by the European Social Fund via The Learning and Skills Council.

The aim of the ICEBreakers project is to provide an accessible path for migrant workers to acquire the basics of the English language.

Karen Cole, who previously worked for a number of large voluntary sector organisations said:

“Migrant workers are vital to the South West economy and without access to workers from EU countries many businesses in Somerset could not survive. But for the workers themselves, not being able to communicate effectively in English can make life very difficult”.

The ICEBreakers project will make a real difference - working closely with Somerset businesses employing migrant workers, the project will support fellow employees to work with migrant workers in the workplace on improving their English skills, using a specially-designed, multimedia basic language programme (known as ICE – Induction to Communicating in English). In turn the coaches will be trained and supported by a network of specialist English language teachers who have specific expertise in teaching *English for Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL).

“The benefits of this approach should be tangible for everyone concerned” adds Tim Boyes-Watson, chief executive of Learning

South West. “By mastering the basics of English, migrant workers will be able to communicate better not only with their supervisors and work colleagues but also with their neighbours and the wider community. The coaches will gain new and valuable skills that can be used elsewhere in their workplace. And employers will reap the benefits of a skilled and motivated group of workers who businesses and who will be motivated to undertake further ESOL qualifications”.

For more information or to get involved with the ICEBreakers project, please contact Karen Cole, Project Co-ordinator. Tel: 01823 365436 or e-mail karen_cole@learning-southwest.org.uk

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PHOTO CAPTION:

Discussing details of the ICEBreakers project: from left to right Sarah Keadell of the Learning and Skills Council, Karen Cole Learning South West Project Co-ordinator and Tim Boyes-Watson, Chief Executive of Learning South West.





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