

## **Launch of the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning**

### **New College Durham**

#### **Case Study - Peterlee factory launches welding academy to tackle skills shortage**

FACTORY bosses have launched a new project to tackle a shortage of welders.

Caterpillar is aiming to turn out up to 50 welders a year thanks to the venture launched at its learning centre in Peterlee.

The scheme, at the firm's site in the North West Industrial Estate, aims to help meet the shortfall of skilled welders in the region.

The plant machinery company says it and other companies struggle to attract and retain workers who can carry out the task.

The Welding Academy classes will bring students up to Caterpillar standards and include qualifications. Existing staff will be among those welcomed to the sessions.

The course includes a three-month theory section followed by a shop floor placement.

So far 10 candidates have completed their studies, a further three months of hands-on training and are now working in the factory.

Another 10 students have started their course.

The classes are being run with the support of Infinite Learning and Development (ILD) and New College Durham.

Chris Fairs, human resources manager at Caterpillar, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to partner with Infinite Learning and Development and New College Durham to train and qualify people in welding and fabrication who have had no previous experience.

"These skills are in high demand across the region and this modern facility will help us to source the skills we need as we go forward."

Keith Corbett, of ILD, added: "This new Welding Academy will not only address the needs of Caterpillar, but also the general shortage of highly trained welders in our region.

"Companies throughout the North East of England will now have the opportunity to have their employees trained to the same high standards that Caterpillar demand of their own employees."