

Norwood is making the Skills Pledge

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Norwood has been praised for signing up to a Government scheme which encourages organisations to invest in their employees' futures. By making the Skills Pledge, Norwood has publically demonstrated its commitment to its staff and their training needs.

People who work for the Charity have long been actively encouraged to gain skills and qualifications which will help them progress up the career ladder. For example, members of staff who work with adults and children are offered the chance to complete a City and Guilds National Vocational Qualification in health and social care.

Ellen Olsen, Norwood's Learning and Development Manager, said: "Like many organisations, the most valuable resource Norwood has is its 1,200 dedicated members of staff.

"We are committed to giving them every chance to achieve their career goals, and will continue to offer them all the support they need. After all, the result is that we will be able to provide the best possible service to thousands of children, adults and families who rely on us each year."

As part of its learning and development programme, Norwood also organises training courses, meetings and conferences for staff working across the organisation. Meanwhile, a pilot being launched next month will give staff based at Norwood's head office in Stanmore the chance to take on a role in an operational service for one day each year.

Paul Holme, National Director, Skills for Employers at the Learning and Skills Council, wrote to Norwood congratulating it on the 'leadership' it has shown in making the Skills Pledge.

"This public commitment to support all your employees to develop their basic skills and enable them to work towards relevant, valuable qualifications will contribute towards making the nation's workforce world leaders in skills," he said. "The purpose of the Skills Pledge is to ensure that all your staff are skilled, competent and able to make a full contribution to the success of your organisation."

Case study: Michelle Nelson



Michelle Nelson has progressed from being a cleaner to a C Grade Support Worker in just four years. The 48-year-old married mum of four, from Chigwell, originally trained as a hairdresser but, after taking a break of 14 years to raise a family, she decided to rejoin the workforce and accepted the job at Norwood as a cleaner in a residential home in Illford.

Encouraged by her managers, who observed that she interacted really well with service users, she began her Level 2 NVQ in health and social care at the beginning of last year and completed it within seven months.

"I also did my Learning Disability Qualification at the same time, and it was quite a hard slog," she admitted. "But I thoroughly enjoyed it, and was really glad I was given the opportunity. I loved the challenge, and found it very interesting."

She received her certificate from Russell Young, a Norwood service user to whom she gives regular support, at a ceremony in May.

Michelle says her next goal is to complete a Level 3 NVQ, and become a B Grade Support Worker. "I'm very proud of myself," she said. "I feel I am capable of doing a lot more, and don't want to stop there."