

## Southampton Skills Development Zone

An innovative and exciting programme of support is being delivered in Southampton to address the skill and workforce development needs of employers and to provide enhanced routes into work and education for individuals.

Southampton Skills Development Zone (SSDZ), a partnership initiative, was set up by the Chief Executives of the City's largest public sector employers in 2008. Its strategic aim is to enable the workforce development needs and skills gaps identified by public and private sector employers to be met through a single coordinated source of provider information and contact management. It also aims to meet the needs of individuals across the City by increasing employment opportunities for individuals currently unemployed or economically inactive.

To do this the SSDZ is delivering three innovative projects all of which aim to enable the City, its employers and individuals to prosper and grow. The projects are

Newly Unemployed and worklessness. The focus of this project is to develop and deliver a coordinated offer that reaches out to the local communities in Southampton (particularly the priority neighbourhoods) to improve the access and take of job opportunities in the city. Job fairs and assessment days are just two of the activities used to provide up to date information on employment opportunities to the local people.

Apprenticeships. 47 new apprentices' opportunities are being offered across the SSDZ partners. 15 more will start in the New Year. Places are reserved for those individuals in the City age 18-24 who have been out of work at least 6 months, an important target group for the City.

Graduate Retention. A number of activities are being delivered to retain graduate skills within the City and to enable students and graduates to meet their employment and career needs. Activities include paid internships, voluntary and/or paid work and work placements. In addition, Graduate Jobs South, a free graduate recruitment service for small to medium employers. In 2010 over 500 employers have used this service which is supported by the SSDZ.

The SSDZ is coordinated and run by a partnership of some of the city's biggest public sector employers including Southampton University Hospital Trust, NHS Southampton City, Southampton City Council, Southampton Solent University and Southampton Jobcentre Plus.

To find out more please contact **Debbie Dawkins, Southampton Skills Development Zone Coordinator on 02380 319627** or go to [www.southampton-partnership.com/SSDZ](http://www.southampton-partnership.com/SSDZ)