



Image above: Joanna Woolf, Chief Executive of Cogent SSC; Allan Laing, Chief Executive of Pentagon; Philip Jones, CEO of National Skills Academy Process Industries; Jules Burgess-Wilson, Director, Catalyst Science Discovery Centre; Roger Langford, Regional Skills Manager, National Skills Academy Process Industries; Claire Curtis-Thomas, MP for Crosby.

NORTH WEST LAUNCH SET TO BOOST REGIONAL ECONOMY

Employers, training providers and skills brokers from across the region attended the North West launch of the skills academy, which was held at the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre in Widnes on 11th July, and carried out by Claire Curtis-Thomas, MP for Crosby, who outlined how the skills academy is set to foster a partnership approach.

“The process industries, along with other sectors, are being seriously hampered by skills shortages,” she said.

“The Government is committed to working with business to tackle the problem and we are delighted that the National Skills Academy Process Industries has chosen to establish one of its regional spokes in the North West region. It is set to be a real force in helping the industry upskill its existing workforce.”

Phil Jones explained some of the practical measures the skills academy was taking to help employers: “To give an example of how we work, an employer might approach us to carry out a training needs analysis to look at bringing skills levels up to the desired level. If the training they need already exists, we would work with a broker such as Business Link to help them access that, and if they needed bespoke training we would work with a training provider to develop a specific programme, delivered in bite-sized chunks that fit with the needs of a 24/7 working environment.

“We can also help an employer set up apprenticeship schemes, whether that involves an SME who wants to take on one young person a year or a global organisation with the capacity to take on twenty or more.”

Speaker Allan Laing, Chief Executive of the privately-owned fine chemicals manufacturer Pentagon said: “The process industries are strategically important to the region, with over 77,000 employees working in the processing, energy and nuclear industries, and we welcome the skills academy’s decision to establish a base here.

“As an industry we are well aware of the problems we face and we look forward to working closely with the team to build a training and development framework that will benefit the whole of the process industries and everyone working within them.”

The North West Regional Skills Board, which will be made up of employers and other stakeholders, is in the process of being recruited and will be the body that drives our activities throughout the North West region.

