

TIME TO REGISTER FOR OUR NEW £12M SKILLS PROJECT

It's been years in the planning, but our ambitious industrial training scheme is now only months away from becoming reality.

In September, the Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills (ECMS) will receive the first intake of apprentices at its central 'hub' - the University of Wolverhampton's new Springfield campus - and its four 'spokes', one of which will be at our National Metalforming Centre (NMC) in West Bromwich.

This innovative £12m project is entirely focused on the requirements of employers, as CBM members in all sectors of the metalforming sectors have long been demanding, and will be open to apprentices from across the country.

The ultimate aim is to train the next generation of Toolmakers along with Process & Tool design engineers, who design and develop manufacturing process routes, with tooling for sheet metal components, to meet quality, cost and delivery standards within a safe environment.

To ensure all engineers have the correct skill-set, a Level 6 (degree course) apprenticeship training programme, and a Level 3 apprentice training for tool and die maintenance technicians, will take place at a purpose-built training workshop at the NMC.

A third course - led by CBM member firms and covering the use of welding equipment and sheet-metal joining technology - will be held at Dudley College, another ECMS 'spoke'.

"I hesitate to say it's a dream come true, but it really is," admits ECMS chief executive, Geraldine Bolton. "As long as I've been in the metalforming industry, there have been skill shortages, and unfortunately so many of the well-intentioned initiatives by the government and other bodies failed to address the issue.

"However, for the first time, we have a programme of training designed according to the specific requirements of employers.

Now we move to the final pre-launch phase, where employers decide how many apprentices they wish to attend these courses.



"Anyone needing more detail about these courses, or wishing to register for them, should contact myself at the CBM offices. A dozen CBM members have already expressed a desire to send their apprentices to the ECMS, so I'd urge other companies to get in touch as soon as possible."

Trevor Codner, the ECMS business development manager, has been recruited to engage with employers wishing to register apprentices, and ensure that the courses match their requirements.

"We've built in as much flexibility as possible, so the number of hours apprentices will be at the hub, or one of the spokes, depends on what their employer wants," he says.

"They might train two days a week during their first year, then return to work for the remainder of each week, or take a 13-week block training schedule, then go back to work for the next 13 weeks.

"We've also held discussions about taking apprentices for a full year at a time. Again, because this is an employer-led initiative, we can tailor the training according to the size of the company, where it is based and how many apprentices it employs."

If you would like more information about these courses please contact call us on 0121 601 6350.