

## PRESS RELEASE

**FROM: Fiona Bruce MP for Congleton Constituency**

**DATE: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2011**



**MP, Fiona, hails Apprenticeships as ‘win – win’ as she supports Apprenticeship Week.**

At the start of Apprenticeship Week (7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> February), Fiona Bruce MP met with the Minister of State for Skills, John Hayes MP, to promote apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship Week is a great opportunity to show support for apprenticeships and the invaluable contribution they make and to ensure that both employers and schools know about the support available to them from the Government for apprenticeship training.

Fiona Bruce MP said:

*‘As an employer who has taken on trainees for two decades, I know their value to a business, providing as they do a speedy, efficient and cost effective way to recruit and train staff with exactly the right skills, whilst helping to build a cohesive work force and strengthening a firm’s culture – and therefore its competitive edge – vital in these days of tight margins!*

*Apprenticeships also promote improved staff commitment and retention; many of my best staff – including one of my young partners – were trainees with me, just a few years ago.*

*The Coalition Government recognises the importance of strengthening our skills base as a nation both to build sustainable economic growth and to strengthen communities. It therefore understands the importance of giving support to apprenticeships – whatever the size of your business and intends to support a major expansion of the apprenticeship numbers and to boost the quality, credibility and esteem of the apprenticeship system.*

*Locally, Cheshire East Council is leading the way in developing skills through apprenticeships. I recently met some of their ‘A-Team’ apprentices – now over 50, and growing, who are clearly seeing the benefit of this training; as Becky Rollings, who has been through the Council’s apprenticeship scheme says. ‘I knew university was not for*

*me'. What the A-Team apprentices are gaining are valuable opportunities for targeted personal skills development, on-the-job mentoring, and the development of confidence and future career prospects. And as I've experienced in my business, it's also great to have young people around the workplace with all their energy, enthusiasm and fresh ideas'!*

Speaking after meeting with Fiona, John Hayes MP, said:

*'Fiona Bruce is a great champion of developing skills for young people and has had a big influence on my thinking in this area'.*

In response, Fiona said:

*'I call on everyone to get behind Apprenticeship Week. Whilst investing in apprentices does take managerial time, in my experience, it's time well spent. For both employer and employee, apprenticeships really can be win – win'.*

#### **NOTE TO EDITOR**

For more info about the Government's plans to help businesses invest in building their skills base, see the recently published Government paper, **Skills for Sustainable Growth** at [www.bis.gov.uk/skillsforgrowth](http://www.bis.gov.uk/skillsforgrowth)

Picture shows Fiona Bruce MP with the Minister of State for Skills, John Hayes MP.

ENDS