

7th July 2002

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to current and recently-lapsed subscribing members of *isNTO* with another up-date on our progress towards an appropriate place in the emerging Sector Skills Council network, and to inform you of a change in our office location.

With immediate effect, *isNTO*'s office address will be:

Suite 303
Parkgate House
Parkgate
BRADFORD
BD1 5BS
Tel: 01274 391773 Fax: 01274 391828

Meanwhile, we are pursuing two parallel lines of investigation with regard to the SSC network.

In order to create an SSC environment which is closely aligned with trends in information and knowledge management, we need to explore partnerships around the areas of lifelong learning, social inclusion and the knowledge economy.

We are now working closely with *PAULO* – the NTO for community learning, community development and youth work – with whom we share a growing interest in lifelong learning and social inclusion. However, bringing together other relevant partners into an SSC will inevitably take time.

Our concern therefore is to be able to keep our current organisation viable while these negotiations take place. To help with this we are considering creating a joint-venture company with *PAULO*, the *Employment NTO* and the *Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative* – all of which have interests overlapping our own. The purpose of this company would be as a vehicle – credible to funding agencies – to put forward project proposals for external funding.

The potential partners in this venture have a successful and much longer record than ourselves in seeking project funding. Every successful project proposal contributes to our financial viability. These projects could involve all the partners, some of them, or even just one, underwritten by the others. Also, they could involve organisations from outside the partnership.

Whilst setting up a formal arrangement is necessary to make the most of joint working, we are already finding ourselves involved in several co-operative projects useful to our Sector, just by informally sharing interests with the others.

This venture immediately gives us time and space to construct an SSC which meets our requirement for a federally-structured organisation, allowing our employers to be directly served and supported on skills issues.

Not all of the joint-venture company partners will wish to be in the SSC – indeed, one of them doesn't see its future in an SSC at all. *isNTO* must, however, remain in a position to work closely with these organisations and many others (eg: ICT, Health, Local Government) and any SSC we join must be structured to allow this co-operative working.

Alongside all this activity, it is crucially important that we maintain and build upon our support from Sector employers. No SSC can hope to be approved unless it is demonstrably founded on employer support. For us, this means those of you who are subscribers maintaining your membership, and those of you who have lapsed re-subscribing. The office will be happy to advise you on this.

To give a context, I believe it is worth re-iterating *isNTO*'s basic objectives. We work to the slogan:

WORKING TOWARDS A SKILLED AND LEARNING WORKFORCE.

Our business is skills provision and development, therefore we need to:

- Persuade Sector leaders to be actively committed to this
- Reach some measure of consensus how information work is changing and developing
- Create and maintain a comprehensive picture of consequent skill needs
- Agree a collaborative plan for meeting these
- Create and maintain appropriate occupational standards and qualifications
- Create and promote tools to measure how an organisation is doing in terms of skills provision and development

I will keep you informed of developments as they occur, meanwhile if you have any queries don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

John M. Pluse
Chief Executive