

ETIP: mission accomplished



Patricia Long and Mick Biegel OBE of ETIP. Picture: David Garrad

An innovative scheme that has leveraged nearly £2m into helping train employees in Suffolk and Norfolk and made nearly three thousand training grants has been brought to a successful conclusion.

The Employer Training Incentive Pilot (ETIP) was launched two years ago as part of the Greater Ipswich City Deal. Delivered by Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, as a joint venture with Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and Suffolk County Council, ETIP's role has been to help small and medium businesses, across the two counties to train their employees via courses such as National Vocational Qualifications and accredited training up to Level 4, as well as some non-accredited skills development.

One such company is Geo Therm Ltd., which provides thermographic inspections for maritime, offshore and industrial companies from its Reydon office and is a Suffolk Chamber member.

As a result of an ETIP grant to support two staff members attend training courses, the company's business development manager, Dr. Louise MacCormac, reckons "these have given us a commercial advantage and their value in 2016 was c. £60k. In my experience, ETIP has been one of the most supportive and beneficial schemes of its type."

Another Suffolk Chamber member and ETIP grant recipient, Ipswich-based Liquidline Ltd., which provides coffee machines and juice and water dispensers, was equally happy with the swift turnaround of grant approvals and their positive outcome to the business.

According to Sara Alexander, office manager, the ETIP approach "has been so smooth and supportive. We hate having to chase: customers, suppliers – whatever – and ETIP entirely met its priorities."

John Dugmore, chief executive of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, said "The skills agenda is one of our key strategic themes. "My thanks to the ETIP team of Mick Biegel OBE and Patricia Long for all their hard work.

"We are now analysing in more detail the contribution that their grants have had in improving the skills and aptitudes of the employees involved. The lessons learned will be used to inform any future projects that help incentivise skills development of the local workforce."

Paul Winter, chair of the Greater Ipswich City Deal Board said "I am pleased to hear that the ETIP scheme has helped so many employees across Norfolk and Suffolk to further develop their skills. It is great to see the positive impact that the funding secured for the local area



The Liquidline team

ETIP at a glance

- Run by Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
- 2,900 grants approved
- £500,000 grant money committed towards a total training cost of more than £1.8 million
- Benefited employees from 695 companies across Suffolk and Norfolk

through the Greater Ipswich City Deal has had. It is one of many ways in which the City Deal has responded, and is continuing to respond, to the skills needs of individuals and our local economy."