

Leeds

August 2014

## **Business Secretary praises Siemens commitment to skills and apprenticeships**

Business Secretary Vince Cable MP visited Siemens Mechanical Drives to celebrate the launch of the Government's new campaign calling on young people to "Get In, Go Far" by choosing an apprenticeship. He praised Siemens commitment to developing engineering skills in Yorkshire, specifically through the backing of the newly proposed University Technical College for the city as well as supporting a number of local apprenticeships at the facility in Leeds.

The new campaign launched by the Secretary of State, which is being supported by top employers, coincides with the introduction of 40 new employer-designed apprenticeships in sectors including engineering, hospitality and the legal profession.

At Siemens Mechanical Drives the Business Secretary was able to meet some of the apprentices working in the company's Leeds factory. Siemens currently employs 400 apprentices on its highly successful scheme and is in the process of creating at least 150 more places this year.

The Business Secretary met with the EEF, Kodak and the Local Economic Partnership to discuss matters relating to skills in the region as well as to discuss the future of manufacturing in the UK. Siemens has recently been working with Kodak, Grant Thornton and Leeds City Council to submit plans to the Government for Leeds' first University Technical College specialising in advanced manufacturing and engineering.

The Secretary of State Vince Cable MP said "Engineering is central to Britain's economic future and as the economy recovers the need for more skilled engineers across all the regions of the UK will continue to grow. It is therefore extremely welcome that such an important business hub as Leeds is playing a part.

This University Technical College will not only provide young people with a structured and supported technical education, but with the support of companies such as Kodak, Siemens and Unilever, it will play a pivotal role in furnishing this great city with its next generation of engineers. This is good news for Leeds and great news for the wider economy.”

The Business Secretary met a number of Siemens employees who had started their career journey as apprentices in Leeds. He spoke to the apprentices about their role at Siemens and sought to understand the training they undertook to get the skills needed to contribute to the company as well as the wider economy.

In July, Siemens Mechanical Drives in Leeds announced plans for long term expansion that would see headcount increase by 50 as well as increases to the number of apprenticeships at the site - with plans to invest £1m owing to growing wind and rail markets.

General Manager Simon Nadin commented “Tackling the skills shortage in the UK is absolutely critical to stability and growth in UK manufacturing - which is why we have invested in apprenticeships and are backing a new University Technical College for the region. It was excellent to see the Secretary of State backing young people wanting to earn and learn at our site today - and we now call for even more focus on skills, especially where the shortage impacts SMEs and the wider manufacturing supply chain.”

Siemens Industry Director Brian Holliday added “It’s great to see such a strong focus on apprenticeships for young people working in engineering. It is clear that Yorkshire will see strong manufacturing growth in the next decade. Apprenticeships and vocational training routes are key to securing this growth for the future, both for employers and young people.

-ENDS -

**PHOTO-CAPTION:** Business Secretary Vince Cable MP with apprentices at Mechanical Drives in Leeds, pictured with General Manager Simon Nadin (FL) and Brian Holliday, Director at Siemens Industry

**Contact for journalists:**

Siemens Industry, Media Relations

Paul Addison, tel: 07808 823011

E-mail: paul.addison@siemens.com

**Press pictures**

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