



CHANGING THE FACE OF EDUCATION WITH NEW RETAIL DIPLOMA FOR 14-19 YEAR OLDS

Twin Group is playing its part for London in a major new government development that will change the face of education in England.

Training provider Twin Group, based in Lewisham, is helping to develop the government's new flagship learning programme, the Diploma in Retail, which will be piloted in schools from 2010.

The Diploma in Retail is one of several new Diplomas that will allow 14-19 years olds to study a broad programme, mixing practical skills and qualifications with work experience and more traditional learning such as GCSEs and A-Levels. It will give young people the chance to explore different areas of learning that will keep their options open whilst achieving the skills and knowledge that employers are looking for.

Fourteen Diplomas are being created in a number of key industry sectors that are important to the UK economy and employ hundreds of thousands of people. Twin Group is part of the Diploma Development Group (DDP) that is working on the Diploma in Retail.

Retail employs 380,000 people in London, as well as being the largest private sector employer in all of the UK, with an annual turnover of £265 billion, employing three million people in 290,000 businesses.

Beth O'Shea, Development Manager for Twin Group said '*Twin is delighted to be developing this important new training initiative for young people. We have many years' experience in delivering quality, useful vocational training for learners of all ages and sectors of society – especially the under-skilled, non-academic and unemployed.*

She added, '*We'll use our expertise, plus our wide network of retail employers all over London, to make our input to the DDP on the Diploma in Retail highly effective and relevant to these young learners.*'

The Diploma is being coordinated by Skillsmart Retail, the Sector Skills Council for Retail, which aims to monitor and improve skill levels in the industry. It is responsible for developing National Occupational Standards that form the basis of all vocational qualifications and endorsing those qualifications as fit for purpose.

Anne Seaman, chief operating officer of Skillsmart Retail, said, '*The Diplomas represent one of the biggest changes to education in England in the last 50 years. They are a unique blend of theoretical and practical learning that gives young people the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge valued by employers. The Diploma in Retail will specifically help them to learn more about retail careers and to close the skills gap for employers.*'

She continued, '*Twin Group is playing an extremely important part in making sure that the Diploma in Retail meets the criteria required to make it a success for pupils, parents and retailers alike.*'

For more information on the Diploma in Retail, visit www.skillsmartretail.com. For more information on Twin Group, visit www.twinuk.com.

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--- NOTES FOR EDITORS ---

Founded in 1993 by twins Caroline and Jacqui Fox, Twin Group has since grown into one of the leading language, training and travel services providers in the UK. It offers a wide range of UK-based and international programmes, from English language colleges to professional internship programmes for international students coming to the UK; and from gap-year volunteering in developing countries to our many government-funded training courses for UK learners. Twin provides over 25,000 people a year with the opportunity to change their lives through work, languages, training and travel.

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