

## Solving problems at Jaguar Land Rover (Halewood)

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The Skills for Life Improvement Programme (SfLIP) and Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) are currently working to integrate Skills for Life assessment and training into their own training – with the support of the Business Coaching & Mentoring (BUCAM) Group – based in Liverpool.

Education and Training Manager of JLR, Phil Round, says, ‘We are committed to nurturing a culture where employees at all levels drive continuous improvement. This has worked well in Japanese car factories and is something we want to emulate in our manufacturing plants. To engage the workforce in continuous improvement activities, basic tools are essential. We have tools in place but we’re not sure that everyone has got all the skills to use them effectively. This new project will allow us to assess and then develop the skills needed which we can build into our training programmes.’

As part of the Skills for Life programme, JLR is one of 27 providers from across the country engaged in development projects aimed at making their Skills for Life provision more flexible... that is, more able to respond to the need for personalised learning; more able to respond effectively to demands for learning beyond the traditional classroom. Many providers are looking at ways to support learning in the workplace, particularly for addressing the challenges of Train to Gain.

The main continuous improvement tool used at Jaguar Land Rover is the Ford-developed problem solving process called 8D, which relies on an eight-stage process of problem solving which is all-team orientated. The idea is that all employees are trained in the method itself and then as part of

work teams will be able to carry out effective root cause analysis and solving of problems on the production line. However, as Phil suggests, ‘We assume those solving the problems have got all the necessary skills but it is possible that they haven’t.’

So the Skills for Life Improvement Programme project that is being run by the BUCAM group in Liverpool is to look at the possibility of embedding Skills for Life assessment and training into the 8D training. This has started with a careful analysis of the literacy and numeracy skills requirements of the 8D process, and will then move on to creating a 30 hour module which will embed the required skills into the 8D training. The skills include report writing, some number work, and crucially speaking, listening and communication skills of the kind needed for confidence in team participation. The aim is for the module (which will use a blended learning approach) to be delivered by a local college provider to groups of existing and new workers in the early summer and then, if it is successful, to be made available more widely within the automotive industry via the National Academy for Manufacturing.

It is an interesting model and one which reflects the best of what Skills for Life experts are trying to develop in workplace learning – training which embeds an awareness of Skills for Life into all the business processes, from recruitment and induction through in-house training and appraisal systems to progression opportunities for low-skilled workers. As Phil Round says of what he’s calling the essential skills for problem solving, ‘This product really excites me. It is an innovative way to look at training, as it offers a whole new perspective.’