

## Support for Overseas Workers in the South Hams

The rapid progress of the Langage Energy Centre development in the far west of the South Hams involves some workers from overseas. South Hams District Council has secured funding from the project developer, Centrica Langage Ltd, to provide a range of support to these workers through a handbook of information and services and on-site advice and support.

The funding secured has paid for a Migrant Workers Handbook, researched and written by the South Hams Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), which provides a useful signposting resource covering employment and finance, emergency services, housing and accommodation, health and wellbeing and education and training. In addition, it gives information on how to access a range of other local services, including libraries and volunteering opportunities. The handbook is available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Flemish, Polish, Hungarian, Slovakian and Albanian. The CVS has already undertaken some 'mystery shopper' type exercises to see how service providers deal with enquiries from speakers of other languages.

Approximately 150 of the 570 workers on-site at the development at Langage are from overseas. Around 70% of these overseas workers are European; coming mainly from France, Spain, Portugal and Poland. The majority of workers are living in the Plymouth area and are expected to move on once the development is complete.

In addition to the handbook, the funding secured has also enabled South Hams Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to provide confidential advice to workers on issues such as employment law, their migrant worker status and discrimination, through a Case Worker who is based at the Langage Energy Centre development every Wednesday afternoon. The CAB will be liaising with Police Diversity Officers over any issues that arise.

Cllr Bill Hitchins, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development said:

'Local authorities have a duty proactively to promote good race relations, and have a general duty to promote race equality under the Race Relations Act. It is a real challenge for Councils to find ways to communicate positive and factual messages in an impartial way.'

Securing private sector funding to pay for an important initiative like this is really good news. The handbook will be a useful guide to migrant workers at Langage on what to expect from service providers and will also give an insight into how South Devon communities thrive.'

In addition to the handbook being available on-site at the Langage development, copies are available at Follaton House and in various community facilities, including libraries, health centres and police stations, in the western area of the South Hams and the eastern area of Plymouth.