

Business

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news from the Wessex Association of Chambers of Commerce

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Australian charity buys training firm

By Jill Crooks

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AN Australian charity has bought a Wiltshire training company that helps unemployed people back into work.

North Wessex Training is now owned by Campbell Page, which is one of Australia's largest not-for-profit welfare to work providers.

It will run North Wessex Training as a not for profit organisation and any surplus funds will be re-invested into programmes and services.

North Wessex Training has offices in Devizes, Chippenham, Trowbridge, Salisbury and Swindon and is the county's largest deliverer of welfare to work services with 7,400 customers.

The company was set up in 1988 and employs about 50 staff. It runs training courses such as Learndirect and the Government's Work programme as well as tailoring programmes to meet individual needs.

All the employees and offices will be retained as will the name North Wessex Training.

Campbell Page has been selected by the Department of Work and Pensions to be included on a framework for the provision of employment related support services and new contracts will go to companies with a large financial backing which North Wessex Training did not have.

Mary Cripps-Warwick, general manager of Campbell Page in Europe and who is the new managing director for North Wessex Training, said: "What attracted Campbell Page to buy North Wessex Training is the very similar beliefs, values and skills of both organisations."



Mary Cripps-Warwick, general manager of Campbell Page, which has bought North Wessex Training

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Ms Cripps-Warwick turned her back on a lucrative career working in private job agencies ten years ago to devote herself to the welfare to work sector.

She said: "I had worked in the private sector for 15 years. It was a great job where you can earn lots of money

but while on a back packing trip to India with my step-daughter my values changed.

"Having seen people living in poverty it made me think about everything we should be grateful for in the UK and how by helping others we can change people's lives.

"In the private sector employers pay the bills and dictate who they want to recruit, often people who are unemployed are less attractive to employers.

"The welfare to work industry is about reaching the disadvantaged and hard to reach communities."