

# The Northern Echo

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## **500 vacancies at firms found for Electrolux staff**

FIVE hundred unadvertised jobs have been found by a team brought in to help workers at a cooker factory that will close.

The Electrolux factory, in Spennymoor, County Durham, will close in the New Year so production can be moved to Poland.

Nearly one-tenth of the 500- strong workforce were made redundant in February.

The next 200 employees will leave in July when the manufacture of freestanding cookers transfers to Poland.

Before they are made redundant, they will attend a jobs fair to fill vacancies at other companies.

The jobs have been sourced by Right Management, a company that retrains staff and finds jobs for redundant workers.

Right Management was brought in by bosses at the plant after the closure was announced last December.

A company spokesman said: Right Management has been working its way around the region's manufacturing centres and has identified 500 jobs that hadn't been advertised.

They know we have the manufacturing skills and experience.

About 95 per cent of our workers are trained to NVQ level two. When the closure was announced, a support group was set up. It consisted of representatives from One NorthEast, Sedgefield Borough Council, Durham County Council, JobCentre Plus, Business Link North-East, the Learning and Skills Council, the North-East Chamber of Commerce, Engineering Employers Federation and Right Management.

County Durham Development Company managing director Stewart Watkins, who is chairman of the response group, said: The likes of Nissan and Cummins have said we can come along and take your guys off the shop floor.

If there is going to be change, let's put into place as much help and support as we can to make it as painless as possible.

That is what we have done by bringing on board Right Management as well as the public sector support. More than 90 per cent of the workers leaving in July wanted to go at that time, Electrolux human resource manager Simon Thomas said.

We didn't want people to think they had been chosen to go first.

A number of people wanted to retire at the earliest opportunity.

Another group wanted to get on the job market sooner rather than later.

There are other people who want to do other things, such as becoming self-employed, and we are helping with training for them to do that. The company has also set up a next move centre on the plant, which helps with basic skills.

Employees are even being offered the chance to learn to drive.

Companies that will be affected by the Electrolux closure, such as cleaning teams, have also been invited to the jobs fair.

Most of the remaining 250 workers after July's redundancies will work on built-in cookers until December, when the factory will have only a skeleton staff.

The jobs fair takes place at Wednesday, June 25. Companies with vacancies can contact 0191- 301-3478.