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Final Call for Apprentice and Employer 2008 Award Entries

The search is on as the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) hunt for Nottinghamshire's top apprentices and employers for the Apprenticeship Awards 2008. The deadline for entries is just days away as final entries must be received by the closing date of Friday 29th February 2008.

The awards will culminate with a glamorous celebration event, as hundreds of apprentices and employers head to the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham on 20th May 2008 for the largest regional celebration of young people, employers and learning providers involved in vocational learning.

The Apprenticeship Awards are held annually to celebrate the success of apprentices who have made a real difference to their future and to the organisation they work for. They also recognise the work of employers who are successfully tackling skills shortages to build their future workforce through Apprenticeships. The event is also used to recognise personal achievement by Entry to Employment (e2e) learners who have successfully overcome personal barriers and obstacles.

Woodborough Hall received the award for the Nottinghamshire 'Employer of the Year' (10-49 employees) category, at last year's event. Des Sweeney, executive head chef said: "Apprentices are an integral part of the business and our ongoing development, which has seen us awarded with Investor in People award in 2003. We try to encourage people to

gain training and working knowledge that will benefit them in the future and Apprenticeships are the best way to do that.”

Mick Brown, area director, LSC Nottinghamshire, said: “This event becomes bigger and better every year. It’s a fantastic opportunity to recognise individuals and the businesses investing in them, proving how successful and vital Apprenticeships are, not only to the success of their business but also the UK economic performance. It’s also a wonderful opportunity for Nottinghamshire to showcase its talents at both the regional and national Apprenticeship Awards demonstrating what the East Midlands has to offer.”

Employers are eligible to enter one of four categories depending on their company size: Micro (1-9 employees), Small (10-49 employees), Medium (50-249 employees) and Large (250+ employees). They are assessed on a number of criteria including implementation of the Apprenticeship programme, clear demonstration of the way Apprenticeships have benefited their business and the level of support provided to their apprentices.

In addition to the employer awards, there are four categories open to individual apprentices - Apprentice of the Year, Advanced Apprentice of the Year, Young Apprentice of the Year, and Personal Achiever of the Year.

To enter the awards, or for more information, call 0845 058 0490 or email realsuccess@headstorm.co.uk. All completed applications must be made before 29th February 2008, with all the finalists attending the East Midlands awards ceremony. All regional winners will go forward to judging for the LSC’s national Apprenticeship Awards 2008, with an awards ceremony on 10 July 2008 at the Royal Horticultural Halls in central London.

- Ends -

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Notes to Editors: -

- There are currently nearly a quarter of a million apprentices working in over 130,000 organisations in England alone, across 80 different sectors of industry.
- Across the region there were 17,148 apprenticeships in 2006/07 and planned participation for 2007/08 is expected to rise to 21,931.
- Images of last year's awards are available upon request.

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers. Visit www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands

Skills campaign:

In July 2007, the LSC and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) launched the skills campaign. The campaign - Our future. It's in our hands - urges people to take control of their future by investing in skills. It is the most ambitious marketing and communications campaign of its kind, and over a three to five year period aims to bring about the cultural change needed to improve the attitudes and aspirations of employers and individuals to learning and skills across England.

Apprenticeships:

There are currently 255,500 young people aged 16-24 undertaking an Apprenticeship nationally and nearly 19,000 in the East Midlands. They can choose from over 180 career paths in 80 different sectors of industry and commerce.

Apprenticeships provide 16-24 year-olds with a mixture of on and off-the-job training while they are being paid. For employers, Apprenticeships offer the opportunity to improve their businesses bottom line through the tailored, relevant training of highly motivated young people.

There are two levels of Apprenticeships:-

- 'Apprenticeships', equivalent to GCSE level, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 2; key skills and in some cases a technical certificate
- 'Advanced Apprenticeships', equivalent to A-levels, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 3, key skills and a technical certificate

Entry to Employment:

e2e is a work-based learning programme that is aimed at young people aged 16-18 who are not participating in any form of post-16 learning. It is designed to help develop motivation and confidence, personal effectiveness, basic key skills and to give a range of opportunities to gain vocational knowledge, skills and understanding. The aim is that the young people will progress into an Apprenticeship programme, further learning and/or a job.