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## **Mansfield Apprentice Celebrates at Awards Evening**

A 25 year old apprentice from Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, is celebrating after collecting an award at a prestigious ceremony to celebrate her achievements in work based learning.

Gemma Barrett received the award for the 'Apprentice of the Year' – Advanced Apprenticeship category, sponsored by LANTERN (Leicestershire Training Providers Limited) at the Regional Apprenticeship Awards. The event was hosted by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) East Midlands on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham and recognises outstanding achievements across nine different categories.

Gemma, who now owns 'Carol's Cob' supplying lunch to local businesses and catering for buffets and special events, said: "When I started my training I was employed by Red on the Square in Mansfield, where I trained staff in both the kitchen and bar. I benefited from my Apprenticeship as I gained lots of new skills and qualifications. It also gave me the confidence to open up my own business and I had such a good experience with Charnwood Training Consultants that I have all six of my staff on NVQs so they can benefit as I did. As a manager, I realise how important it is to have high staff morale and I started training staff straight away so that they felt valued and are able to better themselves."

Tom Crompton, regional director, LSC East Midlands, said: "With the Government's recent announcement about Apprenticeships and how they will play a central role in its plans for growing skills in the economy, it's clear to see how vital apprentices and those companies supporting them are in helping to combat the skills shortages across the region. The economy depends upon skilled individuals across the whole spectrum of vocational learning and it is important that we recognise the high achievements in these fields.

"The awards are an opportunity to celebrate just a sample of the excellent results being achieved across the East Midlands. Everyone who has taken part: our learners, training providers and employers should all be very proud of their achievements."

Anne Lindsay, training officer, Charnwood Training Consultants, who nominated Gemma, comments: "Gemma has had a difficult journey throughout her training through no fault of her own. Changing jobs and changing sectors, moving to Harrogate and back and losing her mother and grandfather - she could have given up any one of these points but she remained committed and determined to succeed. Gemma has made phenomenal progress to be the owner of a popular sandwich shop and continues to expand the business into the catering market. She has been an inspiration to me and all at Charnwood. Gemma has come full circle and now supports all her staff on Apprenticeship programmes."

Gemma concludes: "It's not been an easy journey and I've had lots of personal hurdles to overcome. I didn't give up though, I battled through and completed my training, opened up my own shop and in memory of my mum, I named it Carol's Cobs. I want to continue with my learning and developing the business and I know both my mum and granddad would be really proud of my achievements."

Young people taking part in Apprenticeships or an e2e work-based-training programme, nominated by employers, training providers or individuals are recognised at the Regional Apprentice Awards, as well as companies that continue to support staff in Apprenticeship training, for their exceptional achievements.

All regional finalists will go forward for consideration into the LSC's national Apprenticeship Awards 2008 to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008 at The Royal Horticultural Halls in central London.

**Ends**

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

- The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational 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 by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

#### **About Apprenticeships**

- There are currently 244,000 young people aged 16-24 undertaking an Apprenticeship nationally and nearly 18,000 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:

1. 'Apprenticeships', equivalent to GCSE level, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 2; key skills and in some cases a technical certificate
  2. 'Advanced Apprenticeships', equivalent to A-levels, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 3, key skills and a technical certificate
- On 10th May 2004, the Government announced the introduction of Young Apprenticeships for students aged 14-16 and Adult Apprenticeships for those people aged 25 and over. Pilots for both are currently running
  - e2e (Entry to Employment) is designed for young people aged 16–18 who are not currently in education, employment or training. It can also be for people who may require a range of additional support to enable them to progress into education, employment or training.