

## Press Release

### APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS LAUNCHED – EAST MIDLANDS

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#### Scores of Apprentices in the East Midlands

If every person in the East Midlands who started an Apprenticeship this year stood arm-to-arm, they would stretch from Nottingham to Leicester, according to the National Apprenticeship Service which is today launching its seventh annual Apprenticeship Awards.

More than 21,800 people in the East Midlands began an Apprenticeship in 2009 – an increase of 29% over the last three years. The Awards celebrate these starters and all of England's apprentices, along with the businesses that employ them.

Karen Woodward, regional director of the National Apprenticeship Service, said: "The Apprenticeship Awards recognise the achievements of individuals engaged in training and the organisations that invest in them.

"Apprentices provide a real boost to Britain's economy, helping businesses secure a supply of people with the skills and qualities often not available on the external job market. They bring fresh ideas and innovation to organisations and help to increase staff retention."

Research shows that employers who hire apprentices can recoup their investment in as little as 18 months, with apprentices continuing to make a positive financial contribution to a business if retained. Trade sectors such as hospitality, retail, construction and business administration generally have the shortest payback period, with engineering and social care taking no more than four years.

Kevin Brennan, Minister for Further Education, Skills, Apprenticeships and Consumer Affairs, said: "I'm delighted to support the annual Apprenticeship Awards and have seen first-hand the benefits that apprentices bring to businesses of all different sectors and sizes.

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To find out more about Apprenticeships, visit [apprenticeships.org.uk](http://apprenticeships.org.uk) or call 08000 150 600

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“Let’s reward apprentice employers and young people in the East Midlands for their hard work and commitment and I’d encourage anyone who knows an apprentice or organisation that employs one to make a nomination.”

Iain Wright, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for 14-19 Reform and Apprenticeships said: “The Awards highlight apprentice success stories from all over the country. I congratulate these inspirational apprentices who are making such a difference in the organisations where they work.

“Apprenticeships are an excellent option for young people and these award winners demonstrate the hugely positive impact apprentices can have on employers and their communities.”

Minister for the East Midlands Phil Hope MP said: “This year’s Apprenticeship Awards is a great chance to celebrate what a contribution these fantastic young people are making to our region’s economy.

“Apprentices can bring so much to a workplace. They are eager to demonstrate their skills and attributes, and have so much energy and enthusiasm.

“I had the good fortune to meet some at an engineering firm in the region recently, when I launched my campaign, Backing Young East Midlands. I heard at first hand how they had helped to strengthen the company’s position as a world leader in its field.

“Backing Young East Midlands is about encouraging employers to give young people their first break in the world of work. Offering an apprenticeship is an excellent way to do this.”

Paul Boulton, 24 and from Alfreton in Derbyshire, won 2009’s Advanced Apprentice of the Year Award. After taking an Apprenticeship in Management and Team Leading with Barnardo’s, he has become a store manager at one of the charity’s shops sending sales rocketing by 70 per cent and helping to grow the team of volunteers to more than 50.

Paul’s training has instilled in him the need to focus on the personal development of his team: “I’ve ensured that the confidence and morale of each of our volunteers has greatly increased,” said Paul. “They feel effective members of the workforce and I’ve encouraged the majority to embark on their own work-based training qualifications. Many volunteers have moved into employment.

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“That’s why I’m backing the Apprenticeships Awards,” said Paul. “They help recognise the huge impact apprentices make every year to organisations across England.”

To nominate an employer or apprentice in the East Midlands for an Award, go to [apprenticeships.org.uk/Awards](http://apprenticeships.org.uk/Awards) or call 08000 150 600 to find out more about Apprenticeships. Entries close on 27 February 2010.

**Ends**

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Notes to editors:

**Fun Facts:**

**21,800** people equates to 23 miles of people if they stood arm-to-arm.

**21,800** is more than the population of Retford (estimated at 21,314 in the 2001 census).

1. National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

The NAS was announced in January 2008 and officially launched in April 2009. Reporting to the Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the service will drive forward the Government’s ambition for Apprenticeships. The service aims to bring about a significant growth in the number of employers offering Apprenticeships.

The NAS will assume total responsibility for the delivery of Apprenticeships that includes: Employer Services; Learner Services; and a web-based vacancy matching system. This online system enables individuals to search and apply for live vacancies and allows employers, and their training providers to advertise their vacancies to a wide range of interested applicants.

The service has ultimate accountability for the national delivery of targets and co-ordination of the funding for Apprenticeship places. It will act to overcome barriers to the growth of the programme and assume responsibility for promoting Apprenticeships and their value to employers, learners and the country as a whole.

2. Apprentice figures reflect the provisional number of Apprenticeship Framework starts from 1 August 2008 – 30 April 2009. They are based on the home postcode of the learner and rounded to the nearest hundred.

3. A telephone survey covering 102 employers was published in November 2008 by the University Of Warwick Institute for Employment research. A net present value of an apprentice was calculated by summing the future benefits derived by the business from employing an ex-apprentice and deducting the net costs of training.

4. The 2010 Apprenticeship Awards celebrate the achievements of apprentices and employers from all over England. Nominations begin on 2 December 2009 and close on 27 February 2010. The regional winners will be announced in June and invited to a national final in July.

Nomination categories are:

- Young Apprentice of the Year
- Apprentice of the Year
- Advanced Apprentice of the Year
- Micro Employer of the Year
- Small Employer of the Year
- Medium Employer of the Year
- Large Employer of the Year
- Macro Employer of the Year

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