

Region's top Apprentices and employers announced

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The region's top apprentices and employers were rewarded on Friday night at Bright Sparks 08, the awards ceremony for the East of England Apprenticeship Awards. After months of searching the winners were finally announced along with highly commended entrants for each category by BBC's Stewart White.

The Apprenticeship Awards are organised and funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). They are designed to reward employers in the region who successfully use Apprenticeships to improve their business and to recognise the achievements of people currently on, or have recently completed, an Apprenticeship.

Entries were up by over 30% for the Apprenticeship Awards and judges faced a tough decision when it came to choosing the winners.

Caroline Neville, Regional Director of the Learning and Skills Council East of England, said: "All of the entries for this year's East of England Apprenticeship Awards were of a particularly high standard so I would like to congratulate all of the businesses and individuals who made it through to the final. Each and every one is an example of what wonderful things are happening in our region and the opportunities and advantages that Apprenticeships create for businesses and individuals.

I hope other young people and businesses in the region are inspired by our winners' tales of determination and drive to succeed in their chosen career and that businesses can appreciate the rewards of investing in Apprenticeships."

Finalists enjoyed an exclusive ceremony at Stansted's Radisson SAS Hotel complete with the hotel's famous wine angels. Circus and street entertainers, caricaturists and magicians wowed guests who were treated to a delectable 'round the world' buffet.

Companies and apprentices from across five counties won in seven categories:

Personal Achiever of the Year

- **Winner:** Chad Hogben from Swaffham, Norfolk
- **Highly Commended:** Niki Hayler from Hatfield, Hertfordshire
- **Highly Commended:** Ashley Peace from Colchester, Essex

Apprentice of the Year

- **Winner:** Charlotte Nelson from Saffron Walden, Essex
- **Highly Commended:** Dayle Warren from Bedford, Bedfordshire
- **Highly Commended:** Daniel Ward from Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

Advanced Apprentice of the Year

- **Winner:** Janet Mansell from Stevenage, Hertfordshire
- **Highly Commended:** Matthew Summers from Kings Lynn, Norfolk
- **Highly Commended:** Phillip East from Aylsham, Norfolk

Micro Employer of the Year

- **Winner:** Atlas Computer Systems in Southend, Essex
- **Highly Commended:** Boldero & Filby Hair & Beauty in Kings Lynn, Norfolk
- **Highly Commended:** Bliss in Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire

Small Employer of the Year

- **Winner:** Fatal Attraction in Sudbury, Suffolk
- **Highly Commended:** Mitchell and Rollins in Dereham, Norfolk
- **Highly Commended:** W F Capps-Jenner in Lowestoft, Suffolk

Medium Employer of the Year

- **Winner:** Kings and Barnhams in Fakenham, Norfolk
- **Highly Commended:** John Michael Hair Design Group Limited in Ipswich, Suffolk
- **Highly Commended:** Specialised Management Services Limited in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk

Large Employer of the Year

- **Winner:** Kier Residential in St Neots, Cambridgeshire
- **Highly Commended:** Thomas Cook UK Travel Ltd in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
- **Highly Commended:** MBDA UK in Stevenage, Hertfordshire

The East of England winners and highly commended names are automatically taken forward to the national judging process. National winners will be announced in London on 10th July.

- Ends-

Notes to editors

LSC

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.