

PRESS INFORMATION

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Time is running out to nominate inspiring learners and tutors for a Big Skill Award

BBC sports presenter Ray Stubbs is urging people in the east of England not to miss out on the opportunity to take part in the Big Skill Awards 2009.

The closing date for nominations is 30 April 2009. Only two weeks remain for people in the region to reward those who have changed their life, or the lives of others, through learning, by nominating them for a Big Skill Award and the chance to win £150 of Red Letter Experience vouchers.

Ray, who launched this year's Big Skill Awards across seven counties, said: "When I launched this year's awards I met many people with inspiring learning achievement stories to tell, as well as people who dedicate their time to encourage and support learners.

"I know there will be many more people in the region with equally inspirational stories and I urge people not to miss out on the opportunity to nominate them for an award. These awards are open not just to people studying at college; they are designed to celebrate everyone, aged from 14 to 100, who has made a positive impact on their life by learning a new skill or by training others."

The Big Skill is organised by the Learning and Skills Council in partnership with BBC East. The awards are open to anyone over the age of 14, who lives, learns or provides training in the east of England. There are seven different award categories, and separate winners will be chosen in each of the counties invited to take part. The categories are:

- 14–16 Learner Award
- 17–19 Learner Award



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- Adult Learner Award
- Skills for the Community Award
- Skills for Work Award
- Employer Commitment to Skills Award
- The Learners' Champion Award

Nomination forms are available from colleges and training providers and can be downloaded from www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/eastofengland.

Winners will be selected by a panel of judges in each of the seven counties, including representatives from the LSC, the BBC, and members of local media.

Celebrations of the award winners and all learners will take place across the region in June - compered by BBC presenters and supported by Ray Stubbs. Local schools, colleges and training providers will be on hand to showcase the variety of opportunities available and to encourage people to try their hand at learning a new skill. The events taking place are:

Monday 8 June: Norfolk awards – The Forum, Norwich

Tuesday 9 June: Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes awards – Harpur Square, Bedford

Thursday 11 June: Essex awards – Chelmsford town centre

Monday 15 June: Cambridgeshire awards – Outside Peterborough Town Hall

Tuesday 16 June: Hertfordshire awards – Gordon Craig Leisure Centre, Stevenage

Wednesday 17 June: Suffolk Awards – Outside Ipswich Town Hall

Caroline Neville, Regional Director, LSC East of England. said: “The Big Skill Awards are not just for individual learners, we are also keen to encourage the region’s training providers and businesses to get involved. The awards are an ideal way to recognise and celebrate a company or training provider’s commitment to skills as well as to recognise the learners themselves.”

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Notes to editors

Photos from the launch events across the East of England, with supporter Ray Stubbs, are also available to view and download from Flickr.com, visit <http://www.flickr.com/photos/35765114@N05/>.

A 'how to enter' video for The Big Skill 2009 is available on You Tube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpyTzMg2Jag>.

For further information please contact Lindsey Roffe or Dawn Humphreys at Tribe on 01603 417722 lindsey@tribepr.com / dawn@tribepr.com

The Big Skill 2009

The Big Skill first ran in 2008 and following its success in Norfolk is being rolled out across all six counties in the East of England, with support from Ray Stubbs and Barbara Follett, Minister for the East of England, who both champion the initiative.

Key dates for The Big Skill Awards 2009

5pm on Thursday 30 April 2009 – deadline and closing date for nominations

4 May – 15 May 2009 – judging takes place

June 2009 – The Big Skill showcase events and awards ceremonies take place

About the Learning and Skills Council

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) aims to improve the skills of young people and adults to ensure that England has a workforce of world class standard by 2020.

The LSC:

- provides free training programmes to young people and adults employed in local businesses
- plans and funds education and training in schools, colleges and sixth forms
- provides advice and supports people wanting to continue in, or return to, education
- provides financial support to young people and adults to allow them to continue in education

About BBC East

BBC East is built around six local radio stations and online sites - Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Three Counties (Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire).



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