

## **Aylsham's Phillip East named Apprentice of the Year**

A 20-year-old from Aylsham has been named Norfolk's Apprentice of the Year by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

Phillip East is a customer service engineer for Openreach, part of the BT Group, and is responsible for the provision and maintenance of local access communications networks within an engineering team. He joined the company on an Advanced Apprenticeship in 2005 from Easton College which he completed in August.

Phillip said: "Doing the Apprenticeship has allowed me to develop core skills so that I can get better at my job and progress within the company. I've also had fantastic opportunities I otherwise wouldn't have had which have made a huge difference to my confidence and overall ability. I've completed training with the Territorial Army's 81<sup>st</sup> signal squadron, built a mini-telephone exchange to simulate 999 calls, worked with the Scouts and educated children about the environment."

Phillip has also taken on responsibility for coaching and mentoring other apprentices at Openreach, and has helped with their inductions and organising team events as well as more routine duties such as carrying out safety and quality checks on their work.

He said: "It's been really rewarding to coach more junior apprentices and be involved in their development. I've also helped them with their training and in learning skills for their job. If they have any issues, it's sometimes easier to talk to someone who has recently been in the same position as them."

While on the course, Phillip has gained a BTEC in telecommunications and was the first in his team to complete an NVQ in ICT. He is currently working towards a degree in Business Management through the Open University.

In recognition of being named Norfolk's Apprentice of the Year, Phillip was presented with a certificate and a £50 voucher by the Area Director of LSC Norfolk Graham Brough.

Mr Brough, Area Director of LSC Norfolk, said: "Phillip has achieved so much on his Apprenticeship, not least being able to help to use his experience to help other apprentices.

It's great to see that he is continuing to learn by studying for a degree that will further improve his skills and allow him to progress within the company."

In March this year, Phillip went to Tanzania with the BT Apprentice Challenge to help build a school and raise money for local children to get access to food and an education.

He said: "The challenge Africa trip was a truly amazing experience, not only did we manage to make a difference to local African communities, but I have been able to apply my new skills into the work place. The experience I have acquired through the challenge Africa trip and the apprenticeship have provided me with a fantastic stepping stone for the future, with the skills and ability to tackle life's challenges.

An apprenticeship is ideal for someone who wants to learn while they earn, get on the job training and skills, as well as real future job prospects."

- If you are interested in finding out more about Apprenticeships, visit [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)