

Highest achievers to be recognised at new Skills for London Awards

Date of issue 11 February 2008
Publication number LSC-PR-LOR-0806
Embargo until

The search is on to find the highest achievers in London in the learning and skills sector. The Skills for London Awards 2008 will showcase the talent and achievements of learners, employers and organisations in the Further Education sector across London, at an event to be held at the Covent Garden Royal Opera House on 5 June.

London still has the lowest employment rate in the UK, by increasing skills levels, more people will access jobs, reducing skills gaps and the level of social deprivation currently seen in the inner city. Employers are finding that by increasing the skills of their workforce the businesses are becoming more productive and profitable and their employees are more motivated and have greater job satisfaction. Getting better skills also increases individual's chances of getting a better job; salary and leading a more fulfilled an independent life.

This year there will be 14 awards on offer. The Award categories are:

Learners

- **Young Apprentice of the Year**
- **Apprentice of the Year**
- **Advanced Apprentice of the Year**
- **Personal Achiever of the Year**

Thousands of people have taken up the opportunity of becoming an apprentice in over 80 different industry sectors. The search is on for the best apprentices of the year in four categories.

- **Train to Gain Learner of the Year**

This award will celebrate the achievements of learners who have developed their skills and qualifications on-the-job by taking part in an LSC funded Train to Gain course.

- **Skills for Life Learner of the Year**

This award will recognise the learners that have succeeded in developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills, vital skills for communication and work.

Employers

- **Apprenticeship Employer of the Year**

This award will recognise employers that have committed to developing their staff under an Apprenticeship Programme. There are four categories: micro employer (between 1-9 employees); small employer (10-49 employees); medium employer (49-249 employees); large employer (over 250 employees).

- **Train to Gain Employer of the Year**

This award will recognise employers that have committed to developing their staff under the Train to Gain Programme. There are three categories: small employer (less than 49 employees); medium employer (49-249 employees); large employer (over 250 employees).

Providers

- **Training Provider of the Year**

This award will recognise organisations that are offering exceptional and innovative training and education.

David Hughes, LSC Regional Director for London said:

“Learning is a vital activity – it’s an integral part of life, we are all learning all the time. All of us need to learn new skills to get ahead and compete in London’s labour market. New skills are the route to employment, a better job, independence and prosperity. But some people go that bit further and are an inspiration to us all. The Skills for London Awards are about those people; people who have shown real leadership, dedication and, even, personal courage to get on and learn new skills which will hold them in good stead for many years and help to meet the growing demands of businesses in London.”

Harvey McGrath, Vice-Chairman of the London Skills and Employment Board, said:

“London's diversity and global labour market require a focus on high quality job-focused skills training so Londoners can take full advantage of the opportunities our capital offers. These awards will, for the first time, truly demonstrate and recognise excellence in our learning and skills sector and I encourage everyone who feels they have excelled in the industry to come forward.”

Rod Kenyon, Director of British Gas Engineering Academy, Chair of the LSC London Region and member of the Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network, said:

“We need to raise the esteem of work-based learning, particularly about Apprenticeships. Awards ceremonies like the London Skills Awards help to do this by showcasing excellence in training and recognising those who support it, employers and training providers. I encourage employers, training providers and beneficiaries of training to enter these Awards.”

There will also be a commendation for each award, granted at the discretion of the judges. The winners will go forward to the LSC National Awards later this year. Entry forms are available on the following website <http://www.skillsforlondon.org/awards.html>.

Deadline for entries is 29 February 2008.

-Ends-

Notes to Editors

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. It is responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. It has a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Its vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. It works nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

Train to Gain

Train to Gain is a service from the Learning and Skills Council, helping businesses get the training they need to succeed. An important element of the Train to Gain Service is skills brokerage that offers free impartial advice, and helps find the best training solution from high quality and responsive training providers to meet business needs. Train to Gain is important because skills shortages continue to have a negative impact on UK productivity and competitiveness in the face of fast-growing economies. Train to Gain aims to encourage all businesses and individuals to value and realise the benefits that learning and skills can bring and to invest appropriately. It is expected that by the end of 2010, over 500,000 learners will have achieved a first full Level 2 qualification through Train to Gain (equivalent to 5 GCSEs A* - C). For more information visit <http://www.traintogain.gov.uk/>

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are nationally designed training programmes for those who have already left full time education or are already in employment. They provide a combination of on and off-the-job training whilst being paid. There are two levels of Apprenticeships: the Apprenticeship and the Advanced Apprenticeship which typically take between one and three years to complete.

Apprenticeships are intended to provide an integrated programme of learning leading to the acquisition and application of the skills, knowledge and understanding required by employers. The completion of an Apprenticeship framework shows both current and potential employers that the holder has achieved competence in the skills covered by the Apprenticeship, has demonstrated the knowledge required by the Apprenticeship and has attained the level of transferable skills required by all Apprenticeships.

The content of each Apprenticeship is designed by Sector Skills Councils, Sector Bodies and their employers in accordance with the design principles of the Apprenticeship Blueprint. The Blueprint provides the specification for Apprenticeships and will be used by Sector Skills Councils to design and revise Apprenticeship frameworks.

For more information visit <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/>

Media Enquiries

For further information please contact:

Lynn McSweeney
Learning and Skills Council
020 7904 0663
07810757172

Lynn.McSweeney@lsc.gov.uk