

Apprentice awards promise success tomorrow for today's winners, says LSC

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The achievements of 12 young apprentices have not only won them prizes but have also shown they can have a bright future.

Broadcaster Richard Bacon awarded the outstanding efforts of four apprentices and eight runners up at the London Learning and Skills Apprenticeship Awards 2007. He also gave awards to two businesses and four other runners-up for their investment in apprentices.

The awards ceremony was held at the Savoy Hotel, The Strand on 30 May and around 250 guests attended the ceremony. They included learners and family and friends, employers, training providers and Learning and Skills Council (LSC) staff.

According to London director of Learning and Skill Council, David Hughes, the training the prize winners have received means they will reap more rewards in the future.

He said: "Research shows that if you have high-quality training you also have more control over your career.

"But training means more than that. Not only are these young apprentices helping their own futures; they're helping the productivity of their employers and they're helping the growth of London's economy. It's a win-win-win situation.

"The ceremony was a great occasion, especially for family and friends of the winners. And it showed that we ought to celebrate success more often. I'm happy to give apprentices and businesses the recognition they deserve."

At the ceremony, BBC 5-Live presenter, Richard Bacon told the guests that his career was helped by becoming an unofficial apprentice to TV personality Johnny Vaughan on a television show.

He went on to tell the apprentices: "The fact that you have demonstrated that you are willing to learn on the job will put you in good stead for the rest of your career."

There were 21 finalists who were selected from over a hundred entrants from all over London by a panel of judges. They included small and large and private and public sector employers, employees and schoolchildren, between the ages of 15 and 28 years.

There were awards for three categories who were outstanding apprentices and one category for individuals who overcame personal obstacles. Two awards were aimed at large and smaller businesses. Winners received a trophy and all finalists were presented with a framed certificate. The short listed finalists have been put forward to the National Apprenticeship Awards.

The LSC is encouraging employers to take on apprentices as one means of giving London the skills to compete globally.

More information on the winners and runners-up Apprentice of the Year

The winner of this Apprenticeship award is helping women succeed in a field where they are under-represented. The Apprentice of the Year is Megan Parry, 19, from Catford, **Lewisham**. She has completed the AON and Comms Level 1 and CSCS (Health and Safety) in painting and decorating at **Lewisham College**. She worked at the decorating company, A Womans Touch based in the Isle of Dogs, Tower Hamlets.

Megan said: "I'm shocked and surprised to win." She went on: "I feel now that I am an apprentice, it will definitely help me in my future career as a painter and decorator. The Apprenticeship has not only given me practical skills but has boosted my confidence when dealing with people."

Company owner, Kerrie Keeling said: "As soon as she started work it was clear that Megan is a keen and hard working person. Her standard of work as a first year Level 1 was far better than some Level 2 and 3 students I had previously employed. Megan has been an asset to our company especially as a role model to young people."

Runner-up is Kerri Dumble, 19, from Biggin Hill, Kent. She is an apprentice hairdresser with hair salon and learning provider, Rush, based in **Croydon**.

Ketan Kanani, 21, Plumstead, **Greenwich**, is also a runner up. He is studying for his Foundation Modern Apprenticeship in Business at STA Travel, Drury Lane, London. STA Travel's partner organisation in the Apprenticeship is Jobwise Training based in **Islington**.

Young Apprentice of the Year

The youngest winner is 16-year-old Perry Waters, from Watford, who won the Young Apprentice of the Year. Perry is an apprentice mechanic at Rickmansworth Sports Cars in Watford. He started in September 2005 and will complete his Level 2 vehicle fitting qualification in June. His employer's partner organisations in the Apprenticeship are based in **Hillingdon**. Skillnet, Hillingdon Training Ltd., and Northwood School.

He believes that his Apprenticeship has made a big impact on him. He said: "I now know where my life is going. I am much more confident and mature. I even pop in at the garage in my spare time. The Young Apprenticeship has given me a head start over other school leavers."

Commenting on Perry, Skillnet's Robin Johnson said: "Perry is highly regarded both by his peers and those in his workplace. His professional attitude to attendance, punctuality and practical work has impressed everyone and he has acted as a good advertisement for the apprenticeship scheme.

Runner-up is Martell Stirling, 15, from Tottenham, **Haringey**. He is training for a BTEC 1st Diploma in Art & Design at publishing company, Red Hot Online Ltd, Southwark. The Apprenticeship partners are the College of North East London and Northumberland Park Community School, both in **Haringey**.

Also runner-up is Obayed Ahmed, 16, from Brixton, **Lambeth** is completing his NVQ Level 1 in Business and Administration at the housing association, City West Homes. The Apprenticeship partner organisations are Camden ITeC in **Camden** and Stockwell Park High School and the Council for Administration, both based in **Lambeth**.

Advanced Apprentice of the Year

The Advanced Apprentice of the Year is Adam Brown, 21, from north **Hillingdon**. He is studying to obtain an NVQ Level 3 in Information and Communications Technology while working for Openreach. The Apprenticeship partner organisation is Accenture in Staffordshire.

Adam said: "Before I joined BT's Openreach, I lacked self-belief and confidence. The apprenticeship has changed me as a person. I now have direction in my life and immensely enjoy going to work. I am achieving things I never thought possible two years ago."

His manager, Maggie Bliss said: "'Consummate' is how I would describe Adam Brown the apprentice. Already, his achievements go far above and beyond his core Apprenticeship.

"The quality that differentiates achievement from leadership is sharing. Adam has consistently shown himself to be a leader through his support of those around him. This inspirational quality allows others to feel that they too can aspire and achieve their own goals."

Kingsley Fixon-Owoo, 21, from **Hounslow**, is studying for an HND in Building services Engineering at London South Bank University and is a runner-up. He is an apprentice engineer at **Hounslow-based** Ecovert FM, the facilities management arm of a French, multi-national construction company. The Apprenticeship partner organisation is South Thames College, **Wandsworth**.

Also, runner-up is Lucy Rouillon, 19, from Edgware, **Harrow**. She is studying for a NVQ Level 3 technical certificate at NHS London. Tottenham Court Road. The Apprenticeship partner organisation is Sanity, **Camden**.

Personal Achiever of the Year

Personal Achiever of the Year is Ylber Neziraj, 20, from Forest Hill, **Lewisham**. He is on an electrical installation advanced apprenticeship at **Lewisham** Council. After coming to England from a war-torn Albania at aged 13, he survived without a family and without being able to speak English. The Apprenticeship partner organisation is Carshalton College, **Surrey**.

On winning the award, Ylber said: "I feel excited, nervous and pleased." He also said: "I have had to overcome many obstacles to reach this point in my life. I have grown in confidence at work and at college and can now communicate well with people of different ages and backgrounds in my new language – English. I want to create a secure future and build a life for myself and contribute to society."

Ylber's tutor, Deon Robinson at Carshalton College commented: "The amount of effort and determination to succeed is outstanding and something which should be rewarded. Even when circumstances could have prevented his success, his self-belief and hard work will enable him to achieve his ambitions."

Runner-up is Davinia Alexander, 28, from **Westminster**. She is doing a Business and Administration Level 2 while working in housing for **Southwark** Council. The Apprenticeship partner is Westminster Kingsway College, **Westminster**.

Another runner-up is Fiona Fay, 22, from Hoxton in **Hackney**. She is working toward an FMA Business Administration and Key Skills in AON, Communication and IT while at the Central Training Academy in Bethnal Green. The Apprenticeship partner organisation is Central Training Academy, **Tower Hamlets**.

The Small and Medium-sized Employer of the Year

The Small and Medium-sized Employer of the Year is Kesslers International, a design and manufacturing business based in Stratford, **Newham**. Out of over 240 employees, they currently have 14 apprentices. Over the last five years, they have trained 29 apprentices mainly in engineering and woodworking. The Apprenticeship partner organisation is Inner London Training, **Waltham Forest**.

Group Deputy chairman, George Kessler said that they need skilled people to achieve shorter lead times and operate more effectively than their competitors in the Far East. Concerning Apprenticeships, he commented: "We're pleased about the recognition of the effort of our apprentices and apprentices in general. Our survival depends on getting good people and apprentices and retaining them."

Commenting on Kessler, Inner London Training's managing director, Roger Smith said: "Kessler International is one of our exemplar organisations working closely in partnership with us to ensure that the learners' experience is as good as we can make it. The success rate of our apprentices at Kessler is very high and many of the senior workers and managers passed through the Apprenticeship Programme."

Runner-up is Lifestyles Health and Fitness, in Hayes, **Hillingdon**. The fitness centre has two apprentices out of its five employees and wants to provide a place for a new apprentice every year. The Apprenticeship partner organisation is Uxbridge College, **Hillingdon**.

Another runner-up is Red Hot Online Ltd., a publisher based in Borough in **Southwark**. The Apprenticeship partner organisation is the College of North East London, **Haringey**.

Large Employer of the Year

Winner of the Large Employer of the Year is railway engineers, Tube Lines, based in Canary Wharf, **Tower Hamlets**. They have 94 apprentices out of a staff of just under 3,500. The Apprenticeship partner is Four Counties Training, **Ealing**.

Their Apprentice Co-ordinator, Charlotte Oliver said: "A leading company needs a sustainable talent base to maintain its position in the market. Tube Lines strategy to develop home grown talent, allowing a ready supply of valuable resources, reducing recruitment costs and promoting excellence from within, which further improves company image and ultimately contributes to achievement of business objectives."

Four Counties Training programmes manager, Marilyn Sang commented: "Tube Lines have an excellent approach to work-based learning. They benefit the wider community through recruiting young people and are especially pro-active in encouraging applications from ethnic minority groups and females in order to tackle the under-representation of these groups within engineering."

Heathrow Airport Ltd., **Hounslow**, is a runner-up. They have 138 apprentices in retail, customer service, warehousing, business administration and hospitality out of the 5,300-plus employees.

Another runner-up was the BT Centre, Newgate Street, EC1, in the **City of London**, who have 862 apprentices in IT, Telecoms and business administration out of their 99,000 employees. The Apprenticeship partner organisation is Accenture (UK) Ltd., Staffordshire.

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For further information and attendance requests please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

The judging panel comprised:

- Rod Kenyon, Director at Centrica
- Louise Routh, Marketing and Communications Manager at Connexions - London South
- Mark Hart, Communications Manager at Connexions North London Partnership Ltd
- Anthony Kendall, Director at Social Action Radio
- Ali Kaye, Director at WBLA
- Chris Hayes, Director for London Jobcentre Plus
- Penny Allen, Learning & Quality Director at LSC London Region
- David Boyer, Partnership Manager at LSC London West
- Priti Gaberria, Partnership Manager at LSC London East
- Varsha Mistry-Hand, Partnership Manager at LSC London East
- James Miller, ESF Network Manager at LSC London North

About the Learning and Skills Council Apprenticeships Programme:

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds and promotes Apprenticeships. There are currently approximately 12,000 young people aged 16-24 undertaking an Apprenticeship in about 60 different sectors of industry and commerce in London.

There are two levels of Apprenticeships:

- 'Apprenticeships', equivalent to GCSE level, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 2; key skills and in some cases a technical certificate
- 'Advanced Apprenticeships', equivalent to A-levels, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 3, key skills and a technical certificate

An opinion survey carried out last year by BMRB on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) showed that 71% of people in the UK agreed that on-the-job training provided them with the necessary skills for their career. 62% of respondents stated that they had benefited most of all from a mixture of formal and work based training. The survey questioned more than 2003 respondents in England, Scotland and Wales about their attitudes to learning and skills.

LSC

The Learning and Skills Council exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality 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 young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.