

the magazine

November 2007

The magazine of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for partners interested in learning and skills issues in the North East.



**A special issue to commemorate
the Celebration of Learning and Skills
(CoLaS) Awards 2007**



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Published by the LSC North East.

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Foreword

The Celebration of Learning and Skills Awards, fondly known as 'the CoLaS', are one of the most successful and prestigious award ceremonies in the North East.

This became evident last year after our very first CoLaS awards. For no sooner had we closed the doors to Hardwick Hall, where the 2006 regional final was held, that people began beating a path to the LSC North East to find out what would be happening in 2007. We knew then that we'd hit upon a big idea, which had captured the imagination of the people and the businesses of our region.

Most importantly people were genuinely delighted that the awards represented a fitting way of rewarding employers and individuals who have reached the very pinnacle of innovative, progressive learning excellence and skills development.

However, with that success came a lot of responsibility in deciding how to take things forward. And so the CoLaS awards 2007 had a lot to live up to. With such great expectations there is always a lot of work to do behind the scenes to make sure that the whole process runs smoothly.

So my first big thank you has to go to our sponsors. The role that some of North East's best-known organisations have played in backing our drive to recognise and reward the region's shining stars in education and skills is invaluable. It is perhaps testament to the scale and purpose of the CoLaS awards that these giants of the business and skills world put their weight behind the event and signed up as official sponsors. Their commitment also brought a real community spirit, and knowing that we were working towards one common goal makes me exceptionally grateful.

We've also brought a number of celebrity backers with us along the way - Ray Mallon, Tanni Grey Thompson, Duncan Bannatyne and Jack Charlton are just a few of the household names who have lent their support to the 2007 CoLaS awards by encouraging people and employers from the North East to nominate their own local heroes.

For those of you who were lucky enough to be among the 1,000 or so guests on the awards evening, you will no doubt have witnessed a showcase of the region's most talented up and coming performers. All were winners of 'The Audition' which gave singers, dancers and entertainers the chance to perform live at the awards ceremony and specifically at one of the country's premier venues. I was bitterly disappointed not to have been at the awards evening itself due to a long standing

commitment, which meant that I was out of the country, but I would personally like to thank all those involved.

My congratulations also go to each of our nominees and award winners. As with any occasion of this calibre it is always a tough call to pick out one winner in each category, especially when you are all winners in your own right for the dedication and commitment you have shown in getting this far. I know that each of the judging panels had a really difficult time in selecting just one individual or organisation to be formally recognised for their achievements.

I would like to thank The Sage Gateshead, the awards venue, our guests for helping us to fly the flag for employers and individuals who are raising the standard of education and skills development in the North East. And my final thank you to my very own Marketing and Communications team, as well as those at Fawthrop McLanders who have supported them throughout. I am very proud of their hard work and dedication which has without doubt made this year's event the best yet.

I hope that, regardless of whether you were at the CoLaS awards evening or not, you will enjoy reading about the people behind the awards and how their specific contribution is putting the North East well and truly on the world class learning and skills map.



CA. Roberts.

Chris Roberts, Regional Director, LSC North East

The beginning

- launching the awards 2007

Famous faces carry out the official launch

Residents could have been forgiven for thinking that Hollywood came to the North East back in March 2007, as two of the world's most famous actors, 'Brad Pitt' and 'Angelina Jolie,' visited the region to launch the CoLaS awards 2007.

The CoLaS awards, which were first held in the North East in 2006, returned to honour the skills development and overall

learning excellence of some of the region's most outstanding individuals and employers.

To urge people to nominate employers or individuals with that little bit of star quality, Brad and Angelina, or rather their lookalikes, Jeremy Dyck and Lissa Statham, were guests of honour at the pre-awards launch.

Taking time out of their busy celebrity lifestyles they enjoyed a whistle-stop tour of North East landmarks.



Hollywood came to the North East as Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie lookalikes met Chris Roberts, Regional Director, LSC North East, during the regional launch of the CoLaS awards 2007 at The Sage Gateshead.



The tour of the region saw Brad and Angelina move onto Wearmouth Bridge.



Next was Darlington High Row, where Tom Crompton, Area Director - County Durham and Tees Valley, LSC North East caught up with them.



Tom, Brad and Angelina then set sail on HMS Trincomalee in Hartlepool.

Dedicated website keeps all fingers on the pulse

So that everyone with an interest in the CoLaS awards could keep their finger on the pulse, the LSC North East also unveiled a new website dedicated especially to the event itself.

Designed by the LSC's E-Communications team, the website provided a one-stop gateway to the awards for members of the media, sponsors and nominees.

www.lsc.gov.uk/colas07 contained a wealth of information about the awards, from the launch through to the auditions, the nominees and winners for each award, and our ever important sponsors.

And now the website is the place to go for the photographs and podcast of the night, all of which are free to download.



Finally, the tour came to an end at Stockton Riverside College.

Chris Roberts, Regional Director, LSC North East, said: *"The skills debate is high on the agenda at the moment, and the Celebration of Learning and Skills Awards 2007 will this year showcase achievement and progress on an unprecedented scale, which will really put the North East on the map."*

"The real 'Brad' and 'Angelina' are both mega stars and it was great to be able to bring a touch of Hollywood glamour to the region for the launch, but the real stars at the CoLaS awards will definitely be the nominees."

The audition

- searching for the crème-de-la-crème

Hunting for the region's up-and-coming stars

The search for up and coming stars in the North East to perform at the LSC North East's CoLaS awards 2007 began officially in May 2007.

To leave no stone unturned, the LSC North East launched the region's biggest ever talent contest - 'The Audition'. The prize for the best acts was the chance to perform live on stage, at the prestigious CoLaS Awards ceremony.

To encourage a wide range of talent, the contest was thrown open to anyone, groups or individuals, over the age of 14 from the North East. To help the judges narrow their search, competitors had to record a 60-second audition video clip of the act they wished to perform at the CoLaS awards.

The live Audition

From the initial group of hopefuls a short-list of 19 talented acts was drawn up to go head-to-head for the chance to perform live at the awards ceremony itself.

A live audition was held at Newcastle College's Performance Academy on July 18. The winners were judged by an expert panel from the LSC North East, Galaxy radio and The Sage.

Chris Roberts, Regional Director, LSC North East, said: *"Through 'The Audition' we offered up and coming stars in the North East the chance of a lifetime, to perform live at the largest and most glamorous event ever to be held in the region. This is a fantastic opportunity for them to showcase their talents in front of more than 1,000 people and perform on one of the most iconic and spectacular stages in the country."*





The Word



Ami Vaziri



Amber Calbo Mesalles



Emilie Kate Fleming



Jonathan Rainsforth



Nason Crone



Michelle Smith



Aidan Jaye



Stockton Riverside College

The lucky winners

In total nine talented acts were chosen to perform live at the Sage Gateshead after winning "The Audition" talent contest. They were:

- Rap band **The Word** from Sunderland
- Performer **Ami Vaziri (17)** from Bedlington
- Singer **Amber Calbo Mesalles (19)** from South Shields
- Singer **Emilie Kate Fleming (16)** from Boldon Colliery
- Singer **Jonathan Rainsforth (17)** from South Shields
- Dancer **Nason Crone (19)** from Peterlee
- Singer **Michelle Smith (14)** from South Shields
- Singer **Aidan Jaye (18)** from Boldon Colliery
- **18 performers** from Stockton Riverside College

Chris Roberts, Regional Director, LSC North East, said: *"The Celebration of Learning Skills Awards were designed to recognise and reward the achievements of North East individuals and employers. It seems very fitting therefore that these individuals be able to share the spotlight with a number of young people who have shown equal levels of commitment to the arts and to improving their own individual skills. I want to wish all of our finalists the very best of luck for the CoLaS awards. I'm sure that all of the evening's 1,000 guests will thoroughly enjoy this unique entertainment."*

The sponsors

- backing from big names

Supporting outstanding achievement in the North East

Some of the North East's best-known organisations gave their backing to this year's CoLaS awards. And it was **Skills North East**, the Regional Skills Partnership, which became the first of the region's leading organisations to put its weight behind achievement in our region by sponsoring the Investment in Skills Award, one of ten categories which were available to sponsor.

Skills North East Manager, Sue Hannan, said: *"The North East continues to under-perform relative to the rest of the UK across a range of criteria, including levels of productivity, business start-ups, business survival, innovation and employment. We recognise that improved skills levels are essential to improving on these current statistics and raising the region's economic performance. It seemed only fitting, therefore, that we should show our support for North East individuals and organisations that share this foresight and show similar commitment to skills development."*

Unionlearn, which was launched to help unions open up a wider range of learning opportunities for their members, supported the awards for the second year running, by sponsoring the Trade Union Lifelong Learning Award. This category was set up to recognise a trade union organisation, workplace project, or employer, which demonstrates a strong commitment to creating a learning culture within the workplace and an environment which actively encourages personal development.

Barney McGill, unionlearn Regional Manager, said: *"Much has been achieved in the realm of trade union education and learning over the past few years, but we still want to see unions do more to reach out to all their members who could benefit from study in the workplace or at a local college or learning provider. It is precisely for this reason that the TUC established unionlearn to help unions develop and diversify their provision, and that is also why we offered our support to the CoLaS awards and those organisations that are already proactively encouraging employee development."*

Investment in Skills

north east
england

Skills North East
The Regional Skills Partnership



Sue Hannan, Skills North East and Chris Roberts, LSC North East.

Trade Union Lifelong Learning

unionlearn
with the Northern TUC



Chris Roberts, LSC North East and Barney McGill, TUC.

Barclays plc, which currently serves more than 27 million customers and clients in more than 50 countries was another returning sponsor. They sponsored the Pioneering Recruitment Award to reward innovative and creative thinking in the world of recruitment.

Stella McRae, Community Relations Manager for Barclays, said: *"The opportunity to offer sponsorship for the CoLaS Pioneering Recruitment award particularly appealed to us, because it gives Barclays the chance to reward those individuals that have made a real difference to their local area and have gone out of their way to show support to trainees and the unemployed, who may not otherwise have been given a chance."*

Independent body, **Arts Council England, North East**, which serves to promote the arts as a way of changing lives and creating opportunities, sponsored the Arts and Media Award for the second year running. This award was aimed at recognising a company or individual excelling in the creative areas of broadcast media and video, photography, dance, drama and music, literature, painting, sculpture or writing.

Patricia Stead, External Relations Manager for Arts Council England, North East, said: *"The Arts Council works very hard to develop and promote the arts across England and we believe that the arts have the power to change lives and communities, creating opportunities for people throughout the country. We were delighted to support the CoLaS Arts and Media award and join with the LSC North East in rewarding those individuals that have improved their own lives and communities through a love of the arts."*

FE+, the innovative partnership between Cleveland College of Art and Design, Darlington College, Hartlepool College of Further Education, Middlesbrough College, Redcar and Cleveland College and Stockton Riverside College, provided sponsorship of the Working in the Community Award. This award recognised those who can form and maintain strong working partnerships with others and have created or developed benefits for their local community.

David Wilshaw, Chair of FE+ said: *"FE+ works closely in partnership with local communities by planning and developing provision to provide an inclusive and comprehensive network of education and training to maximise the benefits for all learners. FE+ was delighted to support the CoLaS awards 2007 by sponsoring the Working in the Community Award. This event gave FE+ the opportunity to support individuals and/or employers who work in partnership for the good of their communities to promote inclusiveness and to celebrate their achievements and contributions."*

Pioneering Recruitment



L-R: Stella McRae, Barclays plc, Dorothy Smith, LSC North East and Patricia Stead, Arts Council England, North East.

Arts and Media



Working in the Community



The sponsors

- backing from big names

The Business, Enterprise and IT Award was sponsored by **Business Link North East**, the national business advice and support service. Through this category the organisation, which offers a variety of services designed to help businesses start-up, grow and prosper, looked to reward an individual or company which has made a significant impression on the business world.

Suzanne McCready, Operations Manager (Leading on Skills) for Business Link North East, said: *"Business Link is focussed on delivering a consistently high quality, responsive and dynamic service that allows organisations to take their business to the next level. A key part of this is helping people to make the most of their employees and improve staff performance through skills development. The CoLaS awards are an important event for us to support because it shines the light on, and makes the most of the skills of the North East workforce and ultimately rewards those who are making a significant contribution to the future of the economy."*

Newcastle College, the biggest in the region with 40,000 students and 2,000 members of staff, provided sponsorship for the Sports and Recreation Award. Jackie Fisher, Principal and Chief Executive, Newcastle College, said: *"Sports and recreation is of great importance both to the North East and to the college. The creation of our new £16m Lifestyle Academy has enabled us to blend the standards required by industry, with vocational courses that will help us to further build our capacity to nurture and develop the future workforce of the sporting sector, ahead of the 2012 Olympics."*

"These awards are a fantastic opportunity to recognise the dedication and hard work of the thousands of people who not only excel in their sport but also realise the importance of continuing their studies in order to be the best they can be in their chosen field."

Construction Skills, sponsor of the Construction, Manufacturing and Engineering CoLaS award, is the Sector Skills Council for construction. Representing every part of the construction industry, from architects to bricklayers, in every part of the UK, the organisation covers every part of the skills agenda - from grants to college places.

Becky Jefcoate, Marketing Manager of Construction Skills, said: *"We were delighted to sponsor the Construction, Manufacturing and Engineering award. The North East has a tremendous record, both historically and today, in innovation in this sector."*

The region is dotted with great landmarks which demonstrate the skills and imagination of generations of architects, engineers and builders. The Sage Gateshead, the venue for the CoLaS award ceremony, is a perfect example of this."

Business, Enterprise and I.T.



Chris Roberts, LSC North East and Suzanne McCready, Business Link North East.

Sports and Recreation



Construction, Manufacturing and Engineering



The Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Award was sponsored by **Assessment North East**, established in 1994 to provide an assessment service to organisations seeking the Investors in People Award which advocates continuous improvement through people.

Alison Davies, the organisation's Senior Business Solutions Manager, said: *"Assessment North East is supporting the Hospitality, Travel and Tourism award to encourage and recognise the investment in people and skills in the lead up to the 2012 Olympics. This sector will have huge pressures placed upon it in the lead up to the Olympics. Businesses and individuals will need to develop their skills if they are to perform on the world stage. This award celebrates the achievement of the very people who can help the North East deliver the level of service required to successfully capitalise on such an event."*

Finally, sponsorship for the Outstanding Achievement Award came from **learndirect**, which has a mission to use technology to transform the skills and employability of the working population, in order to improve the UK's productivity.

Liz Kitson, Performance Director for learndirect North East, said: *"Since the year 2000 learndirect's flexible learning programmes have been utilised by more than 82,000 individual adults in the North East. Individuals have wanted to improve their existing skills or learn new ones, and employers have wanted an innovative way to develop the skills of their workforce. The LSC North East's drive to recognise and reward individuals and employers such as those we have worked with is an admirable cause and one which we are absolutely thrilled to support."*

To find out more about each of our CoLaS Award sponsors visit www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/NorthEast/News/colas07/sponsors07

Hospitality, Travel and Tourism

assessmentnortheast



Alison Davies, Assessment North East and Gillian Miller, LSC North East.

Outstanding Achievement

 **learndirect**[®]



Gillian Miller, LSC North East, Sally McMahon and Liz Kitson, learndirect.

The nominees

- putting forward the best achievers

The nominations come flooding in

With a total of ten awards up for grabs, covering all aspects of education, employment and skills development, from hospitality and media to recruitment and construction, the floodgates were officially opened for CoLaS award nominations at the end of May 2007.

Each award was aimed at individuals over the age of 14 (as of April 1, 2007), as well as any size or type of employer in the North-East. Entries were restricted to two per individual or business, with all short-listed entrants invited to attend the Oscar-style awards night.

From the hundreds of entries a shortlist of three individuals and/or companies were drawn up for each award category, with the winners chosen by representatives from the LSC North East and the award's sponsor.



Chris Roberts launches the drive for nominations for the 2007 CoLaS Awards.



The final selection

The short-listed finalists were:

Northumberland landlady **Heather Bolam**, Hartlepool student **Sarah Peacock** and Peterlee student **Alistair Landers** were in line for the Assessment North East sponsored Hospitality, Travel and Tourism award.

The Bridge Women's Education and Support Centre in Chester-le-Street, along with Newcastle-based young people's organisations, **Keyfund Federation** and **Giantminds**, competed in the Working in the Community category, sponsored by FE+.

Newcastle Business School, Newcastle-based **Croft Technology** and Darlington-based **BiB Insurance Ltd** were all short listed for the Pioneering Recruitment award, sponsored by Barclays.

Newcastle student **Asia Shameem**, Middlesbrough-based entrepreneur **Lisa Stallard**, and Stockton student **Matthew Davison** were all short listed for the Business, Enterprise and IT award sponsored by Business Link North East.

PCS/The Pensions Service based in Seaham, Darlington based engineering firm **Cummins** and Communication Workers Union representative **Kevin Phillips** from Middlesbrough, were in the line-up for the Lifelong Learning award, sponsored by unionlearn.

Peter Newcombe, a student from Newcastle, Sunderland-based Construction trainee **Melissa McNaughton** and **Caroline Ellerton** from Darlington were in the running for the Construction, Manufacturing and Engineering award, sponsored by Construction Skills.

Peterlee dancer **Nason Crone**, who studies at East Durham and Houghall Community College, **Gateshead College** and bass player/songwriter **Michael Dolland**, were in-line for the Arts and Media award sponsored by the Arts Council England, North East.

Washington-based firms **Nissan** and **Faraday Printed Circuits**, along with Saltburn-based **Cleveland Potash**, went head-to-head in the Investment in Skills category, sponsored by Skills North East.

Sport and exercise student **Andrew Rodenby** from Peterlee, Hartlepool boxer **Mick Hadfield** and Redcar student **Shaun Ahmed** competed for the Sports and Recreation award sponsored by Newcastle College.



Faraday Printed Circuits



BiB Insurance Ltd



Keyfund Federation



Nason Crone



Heather Bolam



Mick Hadfield

The nominees

- putting forward the best achievers

Outstanding Achievement Award

The LSC North East and learndirect gave the general public the chance to choose who they thought should be crowned this year's 'Outstanding Achiever' by opening up the award category to a public vote for the very first time.

Among the four hopefuls competing for this particularly prestigious award were:

Jim Welch, 57, who currently lives in Crook, has overcome serious disabilities to excel at using computers and is now using his experiences to help others to do the same.

Despite losing his sight suddenly five years ago, he taught himself to touch-type and has since completed three word processing courses at Crook Community Learning Centre.

Linda Gallon, who works in Wideopen, began retraining for a career in care in her 30s, while caring for her severely ill husband. When her husband died, she refused to sink into depression and instead focussed on her work, gradually achieving promotion from activities co-ordinator to a position in residential care management.

Building on her experiences while caring for her husband and as a testimony to the passion she feels for the care sector, Linda also works voluntarily to support the Carers Centre and the North Tyneside Network Board of the Tyne and Wear Care Alliance.

Lyndsey Melvin, 16, who currently lives in Middlesbrough, has spent much of her life in foster care and has overcome serious attitude problems to excel in her studies. In fact, her attitude was so bad that she was expelled from mainstream education, attacked care workers and even spent time in Newton Aycliffe Secure Unit. However, Lyndsey has worked hard to turn her life around and has since become a model student at Cleveland College of Art and Design, where she will soon begin a Level 2 Diploma.



Jim Welch



Linda Gallon



Lyndsey Melvin



Craig Hodgson

Craig Hodgson, who currently lives in Newcastle.

Craig lost his mother to cancer when he was 18 years old and soon found himself homeless. While living on the streets and in hostels he was drawn into the dangerous world of drug abuse and soon developed an addiction to heroin. Four years ago however, Craig decided that it was time to turn his life around and started a taster course in music at Newcastle College. Since then he has also successfully completed a Foundation Degree, all the while balancing his studies with a heroin rehabilitation programme.

Craig is currently beginning a gap year, during which he hopes to work voluntarily with young people living in hostels, tutoring them in DJ'ing and Recording Techniques, and he will return to Newcastle College in 2008 to complete a one year top-up for his Degree.

Liz Kitson, Performance Director for learndirect North East, said: *"After reading each individual's story I'm sure it was a tough decision to select just one winner for the 2007 Outstanding Achievement Award and I certainly did not envy the public voters."*

Chris Roberts, Regional Director, LSC North East, said: *"We appealed to people from across the region to nominate themselves or someone they know, who deserved the star treatment. All of the short listed candidates for this year's CoLaS awards were chosen due to their proactive approach to skills development and learning excellence. They truly are the shining stars of the North East education and skills sector and CoLaS was the perfect opportunity for them to receive the recognition and praise that they deserve."*

For a full list of this year's award winners turn to page 21.

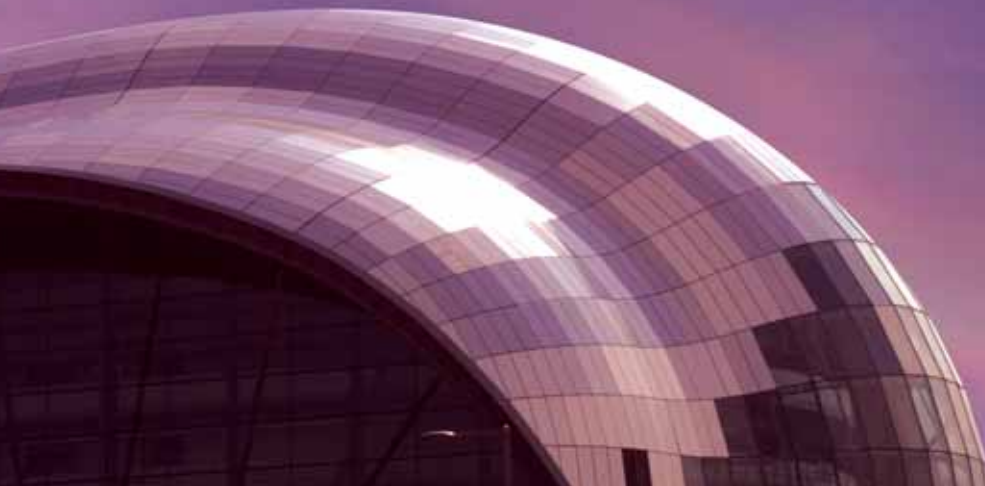
The night

- making it a glittering occasion

A spectacular ceremony to remember

The Sage Gateshead was a fitting venue to host the CoLaS Awards 2007. The impressive building has already become an iconic new landmark on Tyneside and provided the perfect backdrop for the CoLaS glittering award ceremony.

With its informal atmosphere and unrivalled views out across the Tyne, The Sage Gateshead is perhaps one of the city's greatest social spaces as well as a regional music centre of international standing.



All of the finalists were present at the spectacular Oscar-style CoLaS awards ceremony, where they were joined by 1,000 other invited guests, including the region's business leaders, employers, politicians and journalists, as well as representatives from the education sector and the families and friends of the nominees.

The evening of entertainment and recognition of achievement was hosted by television personality Kirsty Gallacher, who is no stranger to skills development. After graduating from the London College of Fashion, Kirsty began her career as an editorial assistant at Sky Sports, progressively gaining new skills which enabled her to move in front of the camera.





The night

- making it a glittering occasion

Right: The night was kicked off by successful rap group, **The Word**, led by chemistry teacher Amer Sheikh, along with three talented students from Thornhill School in Sunderland and a backing choir of 70 school children from Diamond Hall and Richard Avenue Primary Schools in Sunderland.

Below: Singer **Ami Vaziri** who wowed the audience with her performance of 'I Don't Need a Man'.



Right: **Jonathan Rainsforth**, who is no stranger to treading the boards, having enjoyed various stage roles including a lead performance in *Les Miserables* at the Whitley Bay Playhouse. As well as performing 'Rent', Jonathan also treated the audience to a rendition of 'To Where You Are'.



16 year old **Emilie Kate Fleming**, who aspires to become a professional singer, sang the popular classic 'Summertime.'



'Saturday Night Fever', one of three performances throughout the evening, by students from **Stockton Riverside College**, a Centre of Vocational Excellence in Performing Arts.



Entertainer **Michelle Smith**, with the Pussycat Dolls' version of 'Sway'.



Award winning performer **Amber Calbo Mesalles** from South Shields impressed the packed auditorium with her version of 'Almaz.'

The night

- making it a glittering occasion

Right: **Aidan Jaye**, an increasingly successful vocalist who has recently signed a record deal with The Junk Label London and who sung the all time favourite 'Wonderful World.'

Below: Another electric performance by students from Stockton Riverside College, this time from the tap dancers.



The winners

- congratulating our shining stars

Inspirational individuals and companies

With a total of ten main awards up for grabs, plus two special awards, the atmosphere on the awards evening was electric, as a combination of nerves, anticipation and excitement filled the air. And although every single one of the nominees was worthy of recognition, there could only be one winner in each category.

Scooping the prize for the Pioneering Recruitment award, sponsored by Barclays plc, was Darlington company **BiB Insurance Ltd**, which impressed the judges by establishing a highly successful training programme and increasing its recruitment of young people.

Loftus-based company **Cleveland Potash**, operators of the UK's only potash mine, were honoured for their long term commitment to training young people, by being named the

winner of the Investment in Skills award, sponsored by Skills North East.

Middlesbrough postal worker **Kevin Phillips** was presented with the Trade Union Lifelong Learning award, sponsored by unionlearn, in recognition of his hard work on behalf of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) Live and Learn project. This has included helping a number of workers at the Cannon Park sorting office to undertake digital photography, basic computing and CLAIT courses.

Hartlepool boxer **Mick Hadfield** won the Sports and Recreation award, sponsored by Newcastle College, after successfully balancing his in-the-ring training with an electrician's apprenticeship for construction and development firm Gus Robinson Developments.



Winner of the Pioneering Recruitment award - BiB Insurance Ltd.



Winner of the Investment in Skills award - Cleveland Potash Ltd.



Winner of the Trade Union Lifelong award - Kevin Phillips



Winner of the Sports and Recreation award - Mick Hadfield

The winners

- congratulating our shining stars

Gateshead student **Michael Dollan** was victorious in the Arts and Media category, sponsored by Arts Council England, North East, thanks to his work with CoMusica's Music Spark's programme, which promotes learning through music and drama and offers work-based training at The Sage Gateshead for people with learning disabilities.

Asia Shameem, who is profoundly deaf and uses British Sign Language to communicate, was recognised for her outstanding academic success at Newcastle College and work teaching sign language to her fellow students, by winning the Business, Enterprise and IT award, sponsored by Business Link North East.

Sunderland teenager **Melissa McNaughton** won the Construction, Engineering and Manufacturing award, sponsored by Construction Skills, after becoming the first person to pass the full construction qualification at Springboard North East, despite being homeless throughout her studies.

Heather Bolam, owner of the New Inn public house in Haltwhistle, Northumberland, won the Hospitality, Travel and Tourism award, sponsored by Assessment North East, after rescuing the pub from financial failure and transforming it into a successful customer focused venue.



Winner of the Arts and Media award - Michael Dollan.



Winner of the Business, Enterprise and IT award - Asia Shameem.



Winner of the Construction, Engineering and Manufacturing award - Melissa McNaughton.



Winner of the Hospitality, Travel and Tourism award - Heather Bolam.



Winner of the Working in the Community award - Giantminds.

Not-for-profit Newcastle organisation **Giantminds** was successful in the Working in the Community category, sponsored by FE+, receiving recognition for its deliverance of an accessible enterprise education programme for young people aged between 11 and 18.

Outstanding and lifetime achievements

One of the most surprised winners of the night was care worker, **Linda Gallon**, who won the public vote, sponsored by UFI/learnirect, to be crowned Outstanding Achiever 2007.

Linda, 55, from Newcastle said: *"I absolutely adore my work. Being a carer is the best job in the world and the rewards you get are absolutely priceless. That said I am delighted to have received this award and feel that I must share it with everyone who has supported me over the years, particularly my late husband, whose love and encouragement gave me the confidence to reach for my dreams."*

The other big winner was retired teacher **Philip Gordon**, who spent 30 years working in the education sector and has had a monumental impact on the lives of thousands of students. Philip's devotion and enthusiasm toward his geography teaching and instrumental role in improving the performance of Walker Technology College, earned him the LSC North East's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

Ashley Winter, Regional Chair, LSC North East, said: *"All of the shortlisted nominees for the 2007 Celebration of Learning and Skills awards have fantastic stories to tell and all are highly deserving of having their achievements recognised in such a high-profile way. However, there could only be one winner in each category and I am confident that we have chosen a group of highly inspirational individuals and companies who can serve as role models for others across the North East. I would like to congratulate them and hope they keep up the good work in the future."*



Winner of the Outstanding Achiever 2007 - Linda Gallon.



Winner of the Lifetime Achievement award - Philip Gordon.

CATEGORY SPONSORS

Pioneering Recruitment



Working in the Community



Trade Union Lifelong Learning



Arts and Media



Business, Enterprise and I.T.



Construction, Manufacturing and Engineering



Hospitality, Travel and Tourism



Sports and Recreation



Outstanding Achievement



Investment in Skills



EVENT SUPPORTED BY



A big thank you to all of the sponsors of the Celebration of Learning and Skills Awards 2007

Learning and Skills Council
North East

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© LSC November 2007.

Published by the Learning and Skills Council.

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Publication enquiries: 0845 019 4181

Publication reference: LSC-P-NER-070018