

## Local entertainers reach finals of regional talent contest

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Three talented entertainers from Tyne and Wear are now one-step closer to fulfilling their dreams, after being short-listed in a large-scale regional talent contest, organised by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North East.

Since May performers from across the North East have been polishing their act before submitting their entry to the LSC North East's regional talent search, The Audition. From the initial group of hopefuls we now have a short-list each of whom will now compete for a chance to perform live at the iconic Sage Gateshead, as part of the Celebration of Learning and Skills (CoLaS) Awards 2007.

A total of 19 talented acts, including Felling comedy act Just Paul, aka Paul Connelly (43), Bedlington dancer Ami Vaziri (17) and Wallsend singer Dave Turner, have now been short-listed for the competition, and will battle it out at the live audition to be held at the Newcastle College's Performance Academy on July, 18.

The winners, as judged by an expert panel from the LSC North East, Galaxy radio and The Sage, will then take to the stage at the Oscar-style CoLaS ceremony on October 12<sup>th</sup>, where they will be billed alongside a number of other famous names, including the evening's guest compere, television star Kirsty Gallacher.

Chris Roberts, regional director, LSC North East, said: "Through 'the Audition' we are offering 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. I would like to wish Paul, Ami, Dave and the other 16 finalists, the very best of luck in the Audition finals and in their future careers."

For more information about the Celebration of Skills Awards 2007 visit [www.lsc.gov.uk/colas07](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/colas07).

***ENDS***

**Editor's notes:**

'The Audition' finalists are:

Singer Charlotte Reid (18) from Sunderland

Rap band The Word from Sunderland

Singer Steven Lawrence (26) from Washington

Dancer Ami Vaziri (17) from Bedlington

Comedian Paul Connelly (43) from Gateshead

Singer Dave Turner (23) from Wallsend

Singer Ryan May (16) from Jarrow

Singer Michelle Smith (14) from South Shields

Singer Amber Calbo Mesalles from South Shields

Singer Emille Kate Fleming (16) from Boldon Colliery

Singer Jonathan Rainsford (17) from South Shields

Singer Taryn Wastell (15) from South Shields

Singer Alisha Ward from East Durham and Houghall Community College, Peterlee

Singer Marie Guffery from East Durham and Houghall Community College, Peterlee

Dancer Nason Crone from East Durham and Houghall Community College, Peterlee  
Presenter Dan Hyland from East Durham and Houghall Community College, Peterlee  
Plus 3 groups from Stockton Riverside College Performance Company involving 20 students

*Celebration of Learning and Skills Awards 2007, flying the flag for employers and individuals who are raising the standard of learning and skills development in the North East.*

The Celebration of Learning and Skills is one of the most successful and prestigious award ceremonies in the North East. Currently in its second year, the 2007 ceremony will be the biggest ever held in the region, when 1,000 guests will enjoy a spectacular ceremony at the iconic sage in Gateshead. The region's business leaders will join key employers, politicians, journalists, representatives from the education sector and the families and friends of the nominees for an evening of entertainment and recognition of achievement.

These awards are for employers and individuals who have reached the very pinnacle of innovative, progressive learning excellence. Open to anyone over the age of 14 at any level of education, and any size or type of employer in the North East, CoLaS aims to recognise and reward investment and success in skills development.

The LSC 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.

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