

North of the Region representatives shortlisted for prestigious North East Awards

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Twenty individuals and organisations from the North of the region have been shortlisted for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North East's Celebration of Learning and Skills (CoLaS) awards 2007.

The lucky nominees, which include representatives from Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and County Durham, now face an anxious wait to find out if they will be victorious in their particular category, after being selected as finalists from hundreds of North East entries.

The CoLaS awards, which were first held in the North East in 2006, have been designed to honour and reward some of the region's most outstanding individuals and employers, recognising their innovative and progressive approach to skills development and learning excellence.

The 2007 ceremony is set to be the biggest event of its kind ever to be held in the region, with a total of 10 awards up for grabs on the night, covering all aspects of education, employment and skills development, from hospitality and media to recruitment and construction.

A shortlist of three individuals and/or companies has already been drawn up for each award, with the winners, chosen by representatives from the LSC North East and the award's sponsor, set to be revealed live at the Oscar-style ceremony, which is taking place at the Sage Gateshead on October 12.

The shortlisted nominees from the North of the region are:

Northumberland landlady Heather Bolam and Peterlee student Alistair Landers, who are 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 and Newcastle-based young people's organisations, Keyfund Federation and Giantminds, who are competing in the Working in the Community category, sponsored by FE+.

Newcastle Business School and Newcastle-based Croft Technology, which have both been short listed for the Pioneering Recruitment award, sponsored by Barclays.

Newcastle student Asia Shameen, who is hoping to win the Business, Enterprise and IT award, sponsored by Business Link North East.

PCS/The Pensions Service based in Seaham, which is in-line for the Lifelong Learning award, sponsored by unionlearn.

Peter Newcombe, a student from Newcastle, and Sunderland-based Construction trainee Melissa McNaughton who are in the running for the Construction, Manufacturing and Engineering award, sponsored by Construction Skills.

Peterlee dancer Nason Crone, Gateshead College and Gateshead bass player/songwriter Michael Dollan, who will compete for the Arts and Media award sponsored by the Arts Council.

Washington-based firms Nissan and Faraday Printed Circuits, who will go head-to-head in the Investment in Skills category, sponsored by Skills North East.

Peterlee student Andrew Rodenby, who has been shortlisted for the Sports and Recreation award sponsored by Newcastle College.

Blind IT enthusiast Jim Welch from Crook, care manager Linda Gallon who works in Wideopen and reformed drug-addict Craig Hodgson, who currently lives in Newcastle, will also compete for the Outstanding Achievement Award, sponsored by learndirect, which has been decided by public vote.

All short-listed entrants will now be invited to attend the prestigious awards night, where they will join 1,000 other guests, including business leaders, journalists and education representatives, for an evening of regional recognition hosted by TV star Kirsty Gallacher.

Chris Roberts, Regional Director, LSC North East, said: "All of the short listed candidates for this year's Celebration of Learning and Skills 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 is the perfect opportunity for them to receive the recognition and praise that they deserve. I would like to wish all of the finalists the very best of luck."

Mick Keeble, Business Development Director for nominee Croft Technology commented: "We are delighted to be short-listed for our innovative recruitment drive. Croft is a knowledge business. Recruitment of the right individuals is vital to our delivery and growth. We believe it's important to use creative and performance oriented methods to attract candidates with the drive and flair we need. Our experience shows this approach works both in search and selection and in setting internal standards, and our system works across the business for employees at all levels from management to apprentices and graduates."

Gateshead College's Principal David Cheetham said: "We are delighted to be short listed for the Arts and Media award. We were committed to integrating public art into our new Baltic Campus, which is due to open early next year, and were delighted to be able to award commissions to four young, talented, local artists. This is not only a great opportunity for the artists but also for our staff and students who have been able to get involved in some of the work."

For more information about the Celebration of Learning and Skills awards 2007 or to see a full list of all the shortlisted nominees, please visit www.lsc.gov.uk/colas07

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Editor's Note:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational 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 by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

COLAS Awards 2007

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.

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