

## COLAS is CLASS

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A prestigious awards ceremony which recognised the unsung heroes of learning and skills has scooped a top award itself at the North East PRide Awards.

The Celebration of Learning and Skills (CoLaS) Awards, organised by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North East in association with Fawthrop McLanders, won the Best Event at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) PRide Awards held at the Newcastle Gateshead Hilton at the weekend.

The CoLaS awards also won the Silver Award (second place) in the public sector category at the awards.

And because the curtain came down for the final time on the CoLaS awards at The Sage Gateshead in April, winning the award has come as the icing on the cake for all those involved.

Chris Roberts, Regional Director, LSC North East, said: “The Colas Awards were one of the most prestigious awards ceremonies in the region and one of the most important because they recognised all the effort that individuals and employers put into raising skill levels in the North East.

“During these difficult economic times, ensuring that we have the skills we need to compete and succeed has never been so important and this is what CoLaS was all

about: recognising and celebrating achievement and success in learning and skills raises awareness about the benefits and encourages others to participate.”

Julie Calvert Head of Marketing and Communications at the LSC added “I am delighted that all the hard work that went into organising the awards and indeed into winning them has been recognised. I would personally like to thank to all those people who nominated, took part, performed on stage on the night and to all the North East organisations who made the Awards possible through sponsorship, and finally I am so proud of my team who through their dedication and innovation have been recognised for the efforts.”

Sally Keith, Chair of CIPR North East, said: “A CIPR PRide Award is a hallmark of professionalism and success – it identifies, recognises and rewards the outstanding achievements of those working in the PR industry outside of London. To win a CIPR PRide Award is a tremendous achievement and I congratulate all of this year’s winners.”

While CoLaS is no more, its legacy lives on thanks to the overwhelming support from the many supporters who asked for it to return. The team at Fawthrop McLanders have been working hard to keep the spirit of COLAS alive and have secured sponsorship to enable the CLASS (Celebration of Learning and Skills Success) Awards to go ahead next year on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April at the Sage Gateshead.

These all new awards, which will take place at The Sage Gateshead on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, will keep the CoLaS flame burning in their search for individuals and businesses who have reached the very pinnacle of learning and skills success. The search is now on to find the acts and nominations for the 13 categories.

Angus McLanders, Managing Director, Fawthrop McLanders said: "The final CoLaS celebration was a spectacular end to four years of learning and skills awards and the successful realisation of momentum built through the years. It is a fitting and fantastic achievement to be recognised by the CIPR for outstanding work with the Public Sector and also with a Gold Award for the Best Event. These accolades prove that the CoLaS showcase was not only the region's biggest awards ceremony but also the best.

"Our team is currently taking forward The Celebrating Learning and Skills Success (Class) Awards to continue the annual celebration of learning and skills in the North East. Nominations and Audition entries are now open and we are looking forward to celebrating the very best the region has to offer again next April."

An integral part of the awards were the live performances which took place on the night following a search for top North East talent, in association with Dance City in Newcastle.

Chosen to perform in front of more than 1,200 prominent guests following a live audition were singer Jamie Lambert, from Washington; The Early Birds, a 60s inspired pop band from South Tyneside College; singer Leanne Tonks, from South Beach, Blyth; The Performance Group from The Joanne Banks Dancers and Tae Kwon Do experts the Chi Demo Team, both from Spennymoor; and more than 30 students from Stockton Riverside College.

To find out more about the categories, to upload an audition tape or nominate an employer or individual, visit [www.theclawards.co.uk](http://www.theclawards.co.uk).

**ENDS**

**Picture caption (l to r):**

Kim Flynn, from the Learning and Skills Council, pictured receiving the award with Andy Thevarokiam from Fawthrop McLanders, from Chris Rushton, Head of Journalism and Public Relations, Sunderland University.

This year's sponsors were: Tyne Metropolitan College; Middlesbrough College; North East NHS; Sembcorp; NEPIC; National Skills Academy; South Tyneside College; Bishop Auckland College; Derwentside College; East Durham College; New College Durham; Learndirect; Stockton Riverside College; Darlington College Business First; Investors in People North East; Premium People Recruitment; One NorthEast; Meridian Marketing; North East Chamber of Commerce

This year's winners were: Young learner of the Year: Jade Stiff; Adult Learner of the Year: Colin Todd; Skills for Work Award: John Chester; Apprentice of the Year: Joe Pearson; Personal Achiever of the Year: Lee Curry; Lifetime Achiever: Christine Graham-Scott; Outstanding Achiever of the Year: Lisa Bourne; Small Employer of the Year (up to 49 employees): Kerry Sweet Ingredients Ltd; Medium Employer of the Year (50 - 249 employees): Fenhams Ltd; Large Employer of the year (250+ employees): Frank Haslam Milan (North East) Ltd; Pioneering Recruitment: Innoveight; Workforce Commitment Award: Piramal Healthcare (UK) Ltd; Outstanding Employer of the Year: South Tees Hosiptals NHS Trust.

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.

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