

Cheshire Learners Celebrate Award Wins

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Four learners are celebrating after being named as winners in the Cheshire and Warrington heat of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North West Learner Awards.

Crewe's Ashley Bratt, 18, was named Apprentice of the Year. Ashley is carrying out his Apprenticeship in Children's Care, Learning and Development at Rascals preschool and day nursery and trains with Total People Ltd. Nathan Wilson, 21, from Chapel-En-Le-Frith, a multi-skilled engineering technician with AstraZeneca who studies with Total People and South Cheshire College in Crewe, was named Advanced Apprentice of the Year.

Joseph Maguire from West Cheshire College took the Further Education Academic Award, and Joshua Johnson from Reaseheath College won the Further Education Vocational Award.

Bentley Motors in Crewe was named Apprentice Employer of the Year for the second year running.

They were each presented with their trophies by TV presenter Konnie Huq at a glittering awards ceremony at the Mere Golf and Country Club near Knutsford.

Konnie, who has a degree in economics from Cambridge University and spent more than 10 years hosting popular children's TV show Blue Peter, told the assembled audience of the importance of education and skills. "To us, education and training are basic rights. My parents came to the UK from Bangladesh in the 1960s to give me and my sisters a better start in life, otherwise I would have grown up in a Bangladeshi village with no education. You have no control over where you're born, and everyone here is lucky to have the opportunities available to them in Cheshire and Warrington.

"I've filmed for Comic Relief in Africa where children play schools and pretend they can read and write, because they want so much to be able to do it for real. There are

so many people in the world who just don't have the chance to learn or develop skills, and we should value our opportunities every day. Everyone here has done that, and by doing so you have proved what hard work can achieve. Congratulations to all of you."

Liz Davis, LSC Area Director for Cheshire and Warrington, congratulated the finalists and said: "Thank you for joining us to celebrate the successes of our learners and apprentices. In Cheshire and Warrington, we need a bedrock of businesses who invest in people, especially in times of an economic downturn. Investing in employees will boost the success of business in our region, and better skills mean better jobs and better lives. The best thing about learning is there are no losers – you are all winners tonight."

The winners in each category could now go on to be named North West Regional Winner, competing against winners from Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Greater Merseyside and Lancashire. Winners in the Apprenticeship categories could also go on to the National Apprenticeship Awards final, which will be held at Old Billingsgate in London on 16 July.

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Notes for Editors

The winners in the Cheshire & Warrington heat of the North West Learner Awards 2009 are:

Apprentice of the Year Ashley Bratt, Crewe

Highly Commended:
Maxine Hollis, Winsford
Oliver Ince, Winsford

Advanced Apprentice of the Year Nathan Wilson, High Peak, Derbyshire

Highly Commended:
Paul Hulmes, Frodsham
Laura Doran, Sandbach

**Further Education Vocational Award
Joshua Johnson, Reaseheath College, Nantwich**

Highly Commended:
Michael Turner, Priestly College, Warrington
Saraphina Thomas, West Cheshire College, Chester

**Further Education Academic Award
Joseph Maguire, West Cheshire College, Chester**

Highly Commended:
Megan Tyler, Priestly College, Warrington
Sarah Hopwood, Sir John Deane's College, Northwich

**Apprentice Employer of the Year
Bentley Motors Ltd, Crewe**

About the Learning and Skills Council

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.

About the North West Learner Awards 2009

The LSC's North West Learner Awards recognise the achievements of further education learners, apprentices and apprentice employers from across the region. The awards comprise Apprentice of the Year, Advanced Apprentice of the Year, and Young Apprentice of the Year, the Further Education Academic Award, the Further Education Vocational Award, plus awards for apprentice employers. Winners in each category are honoured at awards ceremonies in Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Greater Merseyside and Lancashire; they then go on to compete for the North West Region Award for their category and those in the Apprenticeship categories are also considered for the national Apprenticeship Awards.

Learning and Skills Council **North West Region**
Arndale House Arndale Centre Manchester M4 3AQ
T 0845 019 4142 F 0161 261 0370 www.lsc.gov.uk

News Release



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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

For more information contact Juliet Shaw on 07837 360470, e-mail

Juliet@resourcemarketing.co.uk, or Luisa Pastore at LSC on 0161 261 0434, e-mail luisa.pastore@lsc.gov.uk

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