

Lancashire Learners Celebrate Award Wins

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

Blackburn's Sean Cooney, 16, was named Young Apprentice of the Year. Sean is working towards a Young Apprenticeship in Retail with Preston College, and attends Fulwood High School. Eighteen year old Tamima Mulla, also from Blackburn, an Apprentice in Business Administration who works and trains at Blackburn College, was named Apprentice of the Year.

Lisa Jackson, 23, from Preston, was named Advanced Apprentice of the Year. Lisa is carrying out an Apprenticeship in Hospitality and Catering with Huntley's of Smalesbury and trains with North Lancs Training Group Ltd.

Rosy Apple Childcare from Preston and Andrew Williams Plasterers from Burnley were named as joint winners in the Apprentice Employer of the Year category.

Leighton Hollyfield from Cardinal Newman Catholic Sixth Form College in Preston took the Further Education Academic award, and Joseph Packman from Blackpool and the Fylde College was given the Further Education Vocational Award.

They were each presented with a trophy and vouchers by TV presenter Konnie Huq at a glittering awards ceremony at Dunkenhalgh Hotel near Blackburn on 19 May.

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 Lancashire.

"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."

Sandra Whyte, Partnership Director with LSC Lancashire, congratulated the finalists and said: "Tonight is a very special evening, and everyone should be very proud of their achievements. Employers need talented, skilled staff now more than ever and the employers here tonight have shown belief and commitment in encouraging their apprentices, as have staff at the colleges and learning providers who spotted the potential of their pupils. The selection process for these awards is very vigorous, so all the finalists here tonight have done fantastically well to get this far – congratulations to you all."

The winners in each category could now go on to be named North West Regional Winner, competing against winners from Cumbria, Cheshire and Warrington, Greater Manchester and Greater Merseyside. 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 Lancashire heat of the North West Learner Awards 2009 are:

Young Apprentice of the Year

Sean Cooney, Preston

Apprentice of the Year

Tamima Mulla, Blackburn

Highly Commended:

Rebecca Kate Dixon, Blackburn

Sara McAllister, Blackburn

Advanced Apprentice of the Year

Lisa Jackson, Preston

Highly Commended:

Rekisha Lewis, London

Nicola Kershaw, Blackburn

Further Education Vocational Award

Joseph Packman, Blackpool and the Fylde College

Highly Commended:

Carl Molyneux, Blackburn College

Michael Lee, Myerscough College, Preston

Further Education Academic Award

Leighton Hollyfield, Cardinal Newman Catholic Sixth Form College, Preston

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Highly Commended:

Amelia Ankers, Blackpool and the Fylde College

Apprentice Employer of the Year

Rosy Apple Childcare, Preston

Andy Williams Plasterers, Burnley

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.

News Release



Leading learning and skills

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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