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Emmerdale's Christopher Villiers launches LSC North West Learner Awards 2008 in Greater Merseyside

Over 40 business and education leaders gathered in Merseyside yesterday to hear how they can nominate apprentices, employers and learners from across Greater Merseyside for the prestigious Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) North West Learner Awards.

Christopher Villiers, who plays Grayson Sinclair in ITV's Emmerdale, launched the Greater Merseyside round of the awards at the Tate Liverpool yesterday, saying; "I'm honoured to be launching these awards in Merseyside today as I'm a great believer in developing skills and rewarding people who do well. As well as acting, I run an extras agency, and I depend on my staff to make it a success, and I've learnt that investing in employees is essential. Any kind of reward on merit for people who stick their head above the parapet is hugely important, for both employees and employers, and that's why I'm here today."

Linda Dean, Partnership Manager, LSC Greater Merseyside, hosted the event and said: "These Awards are critical in highlighting the hard work of our young learners, the quality of the training provision you deliver and the important part played by employers. The Apprenticeship Awards are a fantastic opportunity to applaud apprentices who are taking their future in their hands, and also employers who are taking control of the future of their business by investing in the skills of their workforce."

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"I think it is important that we fully appreciate how important, and what a difference, recognition and awards actually make."

Employers, learning providers and apprentices from around Greater Merseyside are being urged to nominate individuals and companies for the six award categories, which are

Apprentice of the Year, Young Apprentice of the Year, Personal Achiever of the Year, Employer of the Year, Further Education Vocational Learner of the Year and Further Education Academic Learner of the Year.

The awards cover all the North West LSC's five sub-regions – Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Greater Merseyside and Lancashire.

Each of the sub-regions will host their own round of the awards, which recognise and reward excellence in learning, skills and achievement in individuals and organisations in their area. They also develop links between local businesses and learning providers.

The North West Learner Awards are held in conjunction with the LSC National Apprenticeship Awards. Now in their fifth year, the National Apprenticeship Awards recognise and reward both employers and apprentices who are successfully using Apprenticeships. This could be to improve their business performance and tackle skills shortages; where a contribution to the workplace has exceeded employers' expectations and resulted in measurable benefits; or for individuals who have overcome difficulties to succeed through their Apprenticeship.

The quality of entries to the National Apprenticeship Awards, from both employers and apprentices, has been outstanding, with over 1,100 entries received in 2007 alone.

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The winners in each of the categories from the sub-regions of the North West Regional Awards will go on to compete for the North West Regional Award in their category and could then be short listed for the National Apprenticeship Awards final, which will be held at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London on Thursday 10 July 2008.

To enter the awards or make a nomination, go to www.apprenticeships.org.uk/awards or e-mail awards@resourcemarketing.co.uk

Picture caption: Linda Dean, Partnership Manager, Learning and Skills Council Greater Merseyside, and Christopher Villiers, Emmerdale's Grayson Sinclair, launch the North West Learner Awards 2008 in Merseyside.

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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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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