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Emmerdale's Mark Charnock launches LSC North West Learner Awards 2008 in Cumbria

Around 30 business and education leaders gathered in Cumbria on Friday 18 January to hear how they can nominate apprentices, employers and learners from across Cumbria for the prestigious Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) North West Learner Awards.

Mark Charnock, who plays Marlon Dingle in ITV's Emmerdale, launched the Cumbria round of the awards at the Rheged Centre in Penrith, saying: "I was supported by my mum and dad, a former auxiliary nurse and lathe turner from a mining family, who took out an extension on their mortgage to put me through drama school even though the odds were against me. But, knowing that they were behind me, I committed myself to my vocation as an actor. It's all about being believed in and the sense of achievement at the end of it. My efforts would have been all for nothing if it hadn't been for the investment people made in me."

"Congratulations to you, for those Apprenticeships and the training you invest in, the time and money spent on encouraging people to improve themselves. To give them that feeling of self-worth and a chance of career longevity is wonderful. If someone invests in you and believes in you, it's so much easier to believe in yourself. If you've got that you can't lose."

Jon Power, Economic Development Director, Learning and Skills Council Cumbria, 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. They 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. Training and skills development are very rewarding in themselves but in many cases that achievement represents considerable sacrifice and resilience in adversity. These awards are an opportunity to celebrate achievement, both for the individual and others involved and to raise awareness and offer inspiration to others.”

Employers, learning providers and apprentices from around Cumbria 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 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. In Cumbria, the LSC North West Learner Awards form part of the Excellence in Cumbria Awards, which this year are being run by the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Excellence in Cumbria Awards have run now for many years and celebrate the success of individuals and businesses that invest time, money and effort in learning and development, benefiting both themselves and the Cumbria economy.

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.

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: Mark Charnock, who plays Marlon Dingle in ITV's Emmerdale with Jon Power, Economic Development Director, LSC Cumbria

Ends

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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