

Learning and Skills Council announces winners of National Apprenticeship Awards 2008

- Rachael Hoyle and Victoria Snook, both from Preston pick up awards

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The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has announced the winners of the National Apprenticeship Awards 2008. Now in their fifth year, the Awards are designed to recognise the hard work and commitment of people who are currently undertaking, or who have recently completed, an Apprenticeship, as well as the employers who are successfully using Apprenticeships to improve business performance.

Rachael Hoyle of Preston won in the Advanced Apprentice of the Year category. Victoria Snook, also of Preston, was a winner in the Personal Achiever of the Year category, after previously scooping the same award in the Lancashire leg of the North West Learner Awards and the overall North West title.

The apprentice award categories seek to celebrate apprentices' commitment to developing their skills and experience through Apprenticeships, whilst the employer award categories seek to celebrate employers' commitment to developing their workforce through Apprenticeships.

This year's National Apprenticeship Awards attracted a record number of entries, with almost 1,400 individuals and companies all over England vying to be named Apprentice or Employer of the Year at last night's ceremony. Representatives from the various employers joined the rest of the finalists at the Royal Horticultural Hall in Central London, where TV star Amanda Holden presented the Awards (Thursday 10 July).

Amanda Holden says: "I'm so happy to have been involved in this year's National Apprenticeship Awards. I believe that Apprenticeships can help to unlock England's talent

and, having judged various people's 'talent' for a while now, I can say I'm truly honoured to have been part of this particular ceremony.

"On a personal level, I'm also extremely proud to see two young, independent women doing so well in their respective fields; they really have shown that it's not always a man's world out there! I just hope that everyone sees tonight's winners as shining examples of how young people can have a positive influence on this country."

John Denham MP, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, says: "For many people, skills and learning are the key to improving their lives – whether getting into and on at work, improving their job prospects or simply putting more money into their pockets.

"Apprenticeships have been 'key' in making that happen over recent years, but we need to go even further. Our aim must be to raise skill levels and in turn boost the job prospects of people in the UK and Apprenticeships are vital if we are to give everyone the skills they need to succeed in the global economy."

John Korzeniewski, Regional Director of the LSC in the North West says: "The awards have been a great opportunity to recognise the dedication and success of not only the winning apprentices, but all apprentices across the North West tonight. The Apprenticeship programme gives people and businesses real opportunities to succeed, with enthusiastic young people and dynamic employers teamed with a supportive delivery system. The awards have highlighted this success, showing what a real difference Apprenticeships can provide."

Rachael Hoyle, who clinched her Advanced Apprentice of the Year title following her Advanced Apprenticeship in Aerospace Engineering, says her Apprenticeship helped solidify her career in an industry traditionally dominated by men. Rachael says: "If I'm honest, I didn't always want to be an engineer or work with aircrafts, and as my schooling drew to a close, I felt so unsure of what the future held. But when I looked into Apprenticeships alongside other possible courses, Apprenticeships really appealed to me

as it would mean beginning a career while learning from people who are experts in their own right. I felt I could get involved in real work while applying my favourite subjects, like physics and maths, and continuing to learn.”

To find out more about Apprenticeships, visit apprenticeships.org.uk or call 08000 150 400

- Ends -

Notes to editors:

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.

Winners in the apprentice categories are announced as follows:

Young Apprentice of the Year

Winner – Luke Power, Sports Management, based in Greenwich, London

Highly Commended – Rachel Freestone, Aerospace Engineering, based in Coventry, West Midlands

Highly Commended – Josh Pickering, Retail, based in Dorset, South West

Apprentice of the Year

Winner – Claire Harrison, Pharmaceuticals, based in Skipton, Yorkshire and Humberside

Highly Commended – Sarah Abbott, Cookery, based in Mickleton, West Midlands

Highly Commended – David Khan, Retail, based in Ainsley Estate, East Midlands

Advanced Apprentice of the Year

Winner – Rachael Hoyle, Aerospace Engineering, based in Preston, North West

Highly Commended – Gemma Barrett, Hospitality, based in Mansfield, East Midlands

Highly Commended – Jacob Stimpson, Boat Building and Maintenance, based in Mannamead, South West

Personal Achiever of the Year

Winner – Victoria Snook, Hairdressing, based in Preston, North West

Highly Commended – Mark Brookes, Teaching/Sport, based in Balsall Common, West Midlands

Highly Commended – Jessica Daisy Clark, Electrical Installation, based in Millom, North West

Winners in the employer categories are announced as follows:

Large Employer of the Year (250+ employees)

Winner – Pendennis Shipyard, Super-Yacht builders, based in Falmouth, South West

Highly Commended – British Gas, Energy, based in Staines, London

Highly Commended – BT, ICT, London

Medium Employer of the Year (50 – 249 employees)

Winner – Mark Wilkinson Furniture, based in Bromham, South West

Highly Commended – Arden Hotel and Leisure Club, Hotel and Leisure, based in Solihull, West Midlands

Highly Commended – Defence Support Group, Vehicle Breakdown and Repair, based in Warminster, South West

Small Employer of the Year (10 – 49 employees)

Winner – Arcana Hair and Beauty, Hair and Beauty, based in Milton Keynes, South East

Highly Commended – The Ark Day Nursery, Childcare, based in Halifax, Yorkshire and the Humber

Highly Commended – Delta International, Height Firm, based in Oldham, North West

Micro Employer of the Year (1 – 9 employees)

Winner – Kingscliffe Day Nursery, Childcare, based in Loughborough, East Midlands

Highly Commended – Complete Computer Systems, ICT, based in Leeds, Yorkshire and the Humber

Highly Commended – Forum Computers, ICT, Lincoln, East Midlands

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LSC website: www.lsc.gov.uk

All media enquiries please contact:

LSC

Debbie Newell on 0161 261 0434, deborah.newell@lsc.gov.uk

The Write Angle on 01772 250505

Stephanie Lord: stephanie@writeanglepr.co.uk

Hollie Roberts: hollie@writeanglepr.co.uk