



Leading learning and skills

the magazine

Autumn 2007

Skills Minister David Lammy
opens the Sussex Skills Festival
Full story on page 3

The magazine of the Learning and Skills Council
(LSC) for partners and people interested in
learning and skills issues in the South East

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Cover photograph: Skills Minister, David Lammy, opens the Sussex Skills Festival at Brighton Racecourse. Full story on page 3.

the magazine

Editorial

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Welcome

Welcome to the second issue of *the magazine*, the regional newsletter for the South East.



The past few months have been an active period for the Learning and Skills Council. The Skills Pledge (page 8) and the Skills Campaign (pages 4-5) have already been launched and the Leitch Implementation Plan has been published.

This September saw the launch of the Framework for Excellence pilot in which 16 colleges and providers are participating in the South East and, last but not least, we are conducting a trail of the new Adult Learner Accounts (page 6) along with the East Midlands.

The last few months have witnessed significant changes to the machinery of government with the creation of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), both of which replace the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The new Secretary of State for DIUS, the Rt Hon John Denham MP, is based in the South East as the constituency MP for Southampton Itchen.

Alongside these changes we have seen the completion of the further Education (FE) Bill which will see the new arrangements for regional governance replace the current local LSC area ones.

The year ahead will be one of tremendous challenge as we work with colleges and other providers to adjust to significant changes to the funding, prioritisation and organisation of provision. These will have significant impact on both 14-19 year olds and adults as well as employer provision.

There will also be special priorities for us to focus our attention on – both externally (such as Train to Gain performance in the region) and internally (such as our Investors in People accreditation). Whilst all this change is taking place we continue to promote the achievements of young people and employers involved in our Apprenticeship programme.

I hope that you continue to find *the magazine* of interest and we continue to welcome your news and feedback.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry Ball". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Henry Ball
Regional Director

UK Skills Minister champions learning in Sussex

David Lammy MP, the new Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills, officially opened the three-day Sussex Skills Festival, together with television presenter Fred Dinenage.

David officially welcomed VIPs and young people to the event at Brighton Racecourse, which helps school pupils to find out about potential future careers. Organised by LSC Sussex and supported by SEEDA (the South East England Development Agency), over 5,000 young people attended the event.

David, appointed to the newly created position by Gordon Brown this summer, discussed his own determination to learn new skills following a tough upbringing and said it was a privilege to be an official champion of lifelong training now.

He said: "Part of striving towards a new skills agenda in the UK is shifting perceptions about practical and vocational career options. I'm delighted to be opening this fantastic event, which is showcasing the many varied job opportunities young people have at their disposal today. Skills festivals like this, show real options for students and the types of exciting hands-on careers available."

ITV Meridian news presenter, Fred Dinenage, is a key supporter of the Skills Festival and encouraged young people to log on to a



David Lammy shows young people how to build a future at the Sussex Skills Festival

new website [www.myfuturesussex.com] which can help them find the right courses once they leave school.

Young people at the festival were able to try new skills while visiting a number of interactive stands. An eight-foot robot encouraged visitors to check out engineering careers while tasty cakes

were being cooked by potential chefs in the hospitality area. Other industry sectors being showcased ranged from construction to firefighting, retail to tourism, media to business and care to education.

David Smith, Area Director, LSC Sussex, said: "This event was inspirational – over 60 interactive exhibits ensured young people, parents and adults could find out about possible career opportunities within a dynamic and exciting environment. Every exhibitor offered people the chance to explore their skills – or discover some new ones!"



Fred Dinenage with two young chefs at the Sussex Skills Festival

New Area Directors for Thames Valley and Surrey



LSC Thames Valley has a new Area Director following the departure of David Ansell.

Bob Walding, formerly Area Director of Surrey, has replaced David who takes up the position as Deputy Director for Learning and Skills at OfSTED.

Bob said: "I am looking forward to the exciting challenges and opportunities in my new role. I aim to continue to build upon our success, with our partners, colleges and other training providers."



Following this move, David Smith, Area Director for LSC Sussex, has additionally taken on the role as Area Director for LSC Surrey.

David said: "I am delighted to be given the extra responsibility of leading the LSC in Surrey. Much has been achieved by the LSC with a record number of young people in learning and a record number of Apprentices."

Our Future. It's

Last December Lord Leitch published his 'Review of Skills' in the UK and set an ambitious challenge for the UK to become a world leader in all levels of skills. His report states that, if the challenge is met, the UK will increase its position in the global economy and, on the journey, far exceed many of its current targets and aspirations with a key milestone being set by Lord Leitch as the year 2020.



Central to Lord Leitch's findings is that individuals and employers need to recognise the value of training and skills. As a result, the Skills Campaign aims to transform the way people think, feel and act about learning and skills so that over time, the demand for it and investment in it, both in terms of time and money, from basic skills to Levels 2, 3, 4 and beyond, is improved.

Peter Marsh, Regional Skills Director, LSC South East, explains: "One of the key ways that we can increase and focus the effort towards meeting these aims is by transforming the way individuals and businesses value learning and skills.

This is becoming increasingly important in an environment where we need to increase dramatically not only the level of demand for learning, but also the amount of money that people and employers are prepared to invest in it."

Partners

The LSC, working with the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills, and the Sector Skills Development Agency on behalf of the Further Education system, is the driving force behind the Skills Campaign, supported by a raft of national, regional and local partners across the learning and skills

sector. The campaign's ambition is to work with every organisation interested in promoting skills to ensure that the message is heard by everyone in England.

Hearts and minds

Peter Marsh continues: "The Skills Campaign slogan '**Our future. It's in our hands**' is an overarching message that will flow through everything that we do. All current LSC marketing and communication campaigns will be aligned under the Skills Campaign banner so that there is a consistent and concerted push towards engaging the hearts and minds of learners and employers in the UK."

Campaign delivery

The campaign - which includes high profile TV advertising - focuses on reaching adults who may not traditionally learn and employers who may not ordinarily train their staff, directing them to the relevant services, programmes and funding. For example, parts of the campaign targets employers, directing them to the Train to Gain services. Similarly the overarching message can be used to promote the Adult Learning Grant. It is designed to be a simple, effective and powerful way of promoting all the services delivered by the LSC and our partner organisations.

in our hands.



Since the launch in July 2007, 170,000 people have contacted the Skills Campaign hotline.

Peter Marsh concludes: "We need to work together to make people sit up and listen. To make people realise that if they want to succeed in life, everything is in place to help them, they just have to reach for it.

The onus is on the individual, they just have to take the first step themselves.

Put simply, the Skills Campaign aims to create a belief in people that they have the capacity to learn better skills and by doing so, improve their working life, now and in the future."

For further information about campaign resources and advice on their use, our partners should visit www.lsc.gov.uk/campaignresources

To find out more about the Skills Campaign e-mail: skillscampaign@lsc.gov.uk or call 0800 011 30 30.

Adult Learner Accounts

The new Adult Learner Accounts will help adults in England to improve their skills, through personal information, advice and guidance.

Learners in some parts of the South East are the first to trial the Government's new Adult Learner Accounts, which give learners greater choice and control over their learning. Participants will receive free, independent advice on training options up-front.

Trials to test the accounts began in September 2007 and around 4,000 accounts will be available to help learners over the age of 19 gain full Level 3 qualifications, including National Vocational Qualifications and BTEC National Diplomas.

Learner Accounts will help put the learner at the heart of the learning and skills system, which will in-turn create more demand-led learning.

Since the trials launched, over 600 calls have been made to the Adult Learner Account information helpline, and 235 people have registered an interest in opening an account.

What is an Adult Learner Account?

It's a new way to help adults to plan their learning. By opening an account the learner will receive:

- High quality, free, independent advice and guidance about what and where to study

- A welcome pack containing information about training providers offering Adult Learner Accounts and the range of courses on offer in their area
- A statement which includes details of the qualifications that are to be studied, a full breakdown of the costs of the programmes and details of who has contributed towards the cost (for example employers, college support funds, LSC etc) plus any additional learning support or financial support being received such as Adult Learning Grants

How do you qualify for an Account?

Learners must be aged 19 or over and enrolling on a full time Level 3 programme of study (equivalent to an NVQ 3, two A levels, a BTEC National Diploma, or an Access to Higher Education course) with a provider participating in the trial in the South East or East Midlands area.

Why has the Adult Learner Accounts trial come about?

We want to demonstrate to learners the full value of their learning, the contributions made by them, the LSC and the additional elements that learners are often unaware of. The expectation is that once learners have an understanding of the full value of the investment being made in their programme, they will be more committed to it and more likely to complete the programme and be successful.

How do learners register for an Adult Learner Account?

Anyone interested in opening an account should call FREE on **0800 092 0229**.

learnirect will provide advice and guidance about the learning opportunities available, what the learner can expect, the benefits of obtaining Level 3 qualifications and the careers and employment opportunities this opens up.

nextstep provide a similar service to learnirect but offer a locally based face to face service, and have more knowledge about local employment and learning opportunities.

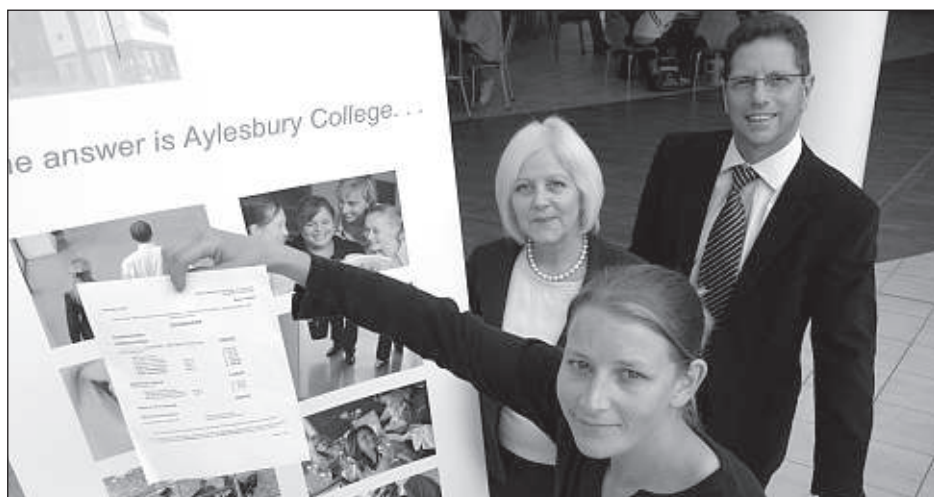
What happens once a learner has registered for an Adult Learner Account?

A holding account is created and an information pack about Adult Learner Accounts is posted to the learner. The pack contains details of how to activate the account on enrolment, a list of providers participating in the trial and information on claiming the Adult Learning Grant.

Are Apprenticeships and Train to Gain included in the trials?

Adult Learner Accounts are an offer to individuals and do not include Apprenticeships or Train to Gain as these are a service to employers.

Aylesbury College launches their Adult Learner Accounts. Front to Back: Learner, Helen Lewis; Principal of Aylesbury College, Pauline Odulinski and Area Director of LSC Thames Valley, Bob Walding



For more information about Adult Learner Accounts visit www.lsc.gov.uk/adultlearneraccounts

Brighton rocks

Brighton Institute of Modern Music (BIMM), a 'rock and roll' college established in 2002, recently doubled in size with the opening of a second campus, called BIMM West, which gives the college an extra 9000 square foot facility and the ability to teach over 900 students.

The original BIMM site was founded by four directors – Bruce Dickinson, Sarah Clayman, Damian Keyes and Kevin Nixon – who collectively have sold over six million records worldwide and enjoyed 50 chart hits.

Courses range from one-year diplomas to BA honours degrees, with students specialising in guitar, bass, song-writing, drums or vocals, or focusing on the touring and management side of the music industry. Every curriculum includes business modules. Bruce said: "The biggest myth musicians have is that someone will wave a magic wand and sort out the business side. We believe in empowering the artist."

All students take part in weekly, live performance workshops and have 'masterclasses' with top-selling artists. Jarvis Cocker, Kaiser Chiefs, Mark Knopfler and Scissor Sisters are among those who have visited recently, and successful band The Kooks came out of BIMM.

The competitive element of the college peaks in the quest to appear on the annual compilation album; last year, 160 demos were sent in by students hoping to make the final cut of 12. BIMM Principal Vaseema Hamilton is particularly pleased when Level 2 students' tracks show up on the CD.



Learners playing bass



Mark Knopfler gives a masterclass to the students

"The students on our Level 2 diploma are full-time and from local schools. They're often people who didn't really connect with academic schooling," Vaseema explained.

BIMM has worked in partnership with colleges such as Central Sussex and City College, Brighton and Hove, as well as the University of Sussex, since its inception. Now BIMM is taking one of those partnerships a stage further – by advising on a two-year diploma which will be run by BIMM at the Haywards Heath campus of Central Sussex College.

The course, equivalent to two A Levels, has been specially designed for students to be able to gain a qualification in professional musicianship while studying other A Level options.

Russell Strutt, Principal of Central Sussex College, said: "The diploma is an exciting and innovative new qualification. It will give young people a thorough grounding which combines both theoretical and practical learning, equipping them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to continue in further or higher education, and for long-term employability."

New state-of-the-art music studios, designed in collaboration with BIMM, are currently being built as part of a £24 million re-development of the Haywards Heath campus.

Is training at the top of your business agenda?

“The UK must ‘raise its game’ on skills if it is to sustain and improve its position in the global economy and get on track to achieve world class skills by 2020” Lord Leitch



Gordon Brown addresses the Skills Pledge launch event. From left to right sitting down: Sir Digby Jones, Skills Envoy; Alan Johnson, former Education Secretary and Sir Michael Rake, Chair for the Commission for Employment and Skills

The Skills Pledge was launched earlier this year and a celebratory event involving the first 150 signatories to the pledge was held at the Grosvenor Square Marriott Hotel, London in June 2007.

The event was addressed by Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP and Sir Digby Jones, the Government's Skills Envoy.

Base Connections Telemarketing from Woking in Surrey was one of the first businesses to sign the Skills Pledge. Director, Julia Scott, said, "Developing our people has significant benefits for the business. Our approach to training has a hugely beneficial impact on staff retention. In an industry where turnover rates can be as high as 100% annually, our turnover was only 19% last year."

What is the Skills Pledge?

The Skills Pledge is an opportunity for the leaders of a business or organisation to show publicly and demonstrably the importance they place on investing in the skills of their people.

- The Skills Pledge is a voluntary, public commitment from employers to encourage and support their employees to improve their skills and gain qualifications
- At the heart of the pledge is a commitment to help those employees who need them, to gain literacy, numeracy and work towards relevant, valuable qualifications to at least Level 2 (equivalent to 5 good GCSEs). The purpose is to ensure that all staff are skilled, competent and able to make a full contribution to the success of the organisation

- The benefits of signing up to the Skills Pledge cover the whole organisation:
 - For those employees who do not already have a full Level 2 qualification, the Government will provide funding to help them gain basic literacy and numeracy skills as well as their first full Level 2 qualification
 - Support from an impartial Skills Broker
 - Free training through the Train to Gain service
- The Skills Pledge is open to all employers of all sizes in the private, public and voluntary sectors

Exactly what would the commitment be?

The minimum commitment we ask of all organisations making the Skills Pledge includes the suggested wording:

On behalf of (company/organisation name), I, as Chief Executive, Executive/Chief Operating Officer [or other board member], make a commitment that we shall:

- *actively encourage and support our employees to gain the skills and qualifications that will support their future employability and meet the needs of our organisation;*
- *actively encourage and support our employees to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, and with Government support work towards their first Level 2 qualification in an area that is relevant to our organisation;*
- *demonstrably raise our employees' skills and competencies to improve organisation performance through investing in economically valuable training and development.*

Signed
.....

How do I make the Pledge?

For a direct route to a more successful and profitable business, register your interest in making the Skills Pledge by calling: **08000 15 55 45** or register your details on **www.traintogain.gov.uk**

CooperVision, a company who clearly sees the benefits of Train to Gain

A Southampton based company is celebrating after 46 of its employees gained a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 in Business Improvement Techniques (BIT) through the Train to Gain service.

CooperVision Manufacturing Limited, a leading global company that makes contact lenses, honoured the event by holding a presentation at their Hamble site, where the successful learners were given their certificates to recognise their hard work.

Commenting on the success of their staff, CooperVision's Training and Development Manager, Ruth Grossett, said: "We wish to engage our team members in continuous improvement activities across our business, as we believe this is an essential component

in retaining a competitive manufacturing organisation. The BITs NVQ provides new skills for our team members which result in tangible business benefits from both a hard and soft perspective."

CooperVision, which has 1,800 employees, is expanding the BITs NVQ training opportunities to an additional 200 members of staff through the Train to Gain service.

CooperVision's employees received their training through providers, Basingstoke College of Technology (BCOT). Alison Clark,



BCOT's Workforce and Development Manager, said: "CooperVision identified a business need for areas of Business Improvement in their production lines.

In meeting that need, a strong collaborative partnership between us and the company was formed which proved to be extremely successful and capitalised on the current Train to Gain service through the LSC."

ESF funding turns a dream business idea into reality



Rani Bilkhu, a mother of four from Slough, has realised her full potential after receiving financial support from the European Social Fund (ESF). Eighteen months ago Rani didn't know what career path she wanted to take, but now she is running her own thriving business offering advice and information to companies across the South East on cultural awareness.

As the 39 year old explains: "One day when I was doing some voluntary work with the Gurdwara, a Sikh place of worship, I took a call from a local mental health consultant seeking some advice with a delicate situation involving a Sikh patient. I was able to give the doctor some useful information. This got me thinking:

if a highly educated professional like a consultant didn't understand the basics about Sikh faith and culture, then there must be others who didn't really understand."

This realisation was the catalyst for Rani to set up some kind of service or agency offering information and advice. However, turning this idea into a viable business was the real challenge.

Rani enrolled on a number of ESF funded courses for women who want to start up their own business. The courses were being run by Aurat Enterprise, a Slough based organisation, which is funded by ESF and the LSC, which aims to promote education amongst women from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

"I found the approachability and flexibility that the courses offered to be fantastic - people listened and understood my needs. In addition, childcare was provided and paid for by Aurat, making the transition from 'Mummy' to 'Business Woman' a lot easier," said Rani.

ESF has a budget of £276 million in the South East in the current programme

(2000-2006) which has been extended into 2008. This means that in excess of 445,000 people and 33,000 businesses in the South East, such as Rani's, have benefited through ESF.

Rani currently operates her business, Cultural Insight, from her home, but is hoping to move into office premises. Her clients currently include Thames Valley Police, where she delivers cultural awareness courses to staff.

As for her future plans?

"I would eventually like to franchise Cultural Insight, which would enable other women or men from across the country to start their own business and make other communities more aware of cultural similarities and differences."

For more information on Cultural Insight call 07958 603541 or visit www.culturalinsightuk.com

For more details on ESF visit: www.esf.gov.uk

A day in the life of...

John Underdown, Hampshire 14-16 Co-ordinator at Paragon Training, Fareham.



John Underdown

My name is John Underdown and I am the Hampshire 14-16 Co-ordinator for Paragon Training. The company provides work-based training and Apprenticeships for over 1,000 young people across southern England.

My role is to co-ordinate all of Paragon's training programmes for 14-16 year olds throughout Hampshire. This includes liaising with schools to develop vocational programmes for pre-16 year olds, co-ordinating the company's Young Apprenticeship offer and recruiting young learners.

The Young Apprenticeship (YA) programme was introduced three years ago and is a government initiative which allows bright young people to undertake a vocational qualification alongside their GCSEs. It is aimed at young people who have a genuine interest in pursuing a career in a selected trade, with a view to achieving an award that is equivalent to five or six GCSEs. It gives them an insight into the industry and the prospect of permanent employment with an Apprenticeship by the time they leave school.

Paragon Training has been offering this opportunity to pupils in Hampshire since the outset, and we have seen over 200 young people register for the various Young Apprenticeships over the past three years.

I am going to give you an insight into the life of a training provider through my role.

8.15 am

My first appointment for today is at a school in Southampton. I arrive to set up for a presentation I am giving about the Young Apprenticeship programme.

Two hundred children walk in quietly and listen as I talk about the programmes we offer in Hampshire, which are Young Apprenticeships in the Motor Industry, Marine Engineering and in Retail. I have brought along two of our current young apprentices from the school to answer questions. They are a great help and an inspiration to the Year 9 students.

9.00 am

After the assembly, I meet with the vocational co-ordinator of the school in her office. This is something that I do regularly at all of the schools we work

with. We discuss any queries and concerns regarding the young apprentices who are currently with us, and I feed back to her on their progress.

9.30 am

My next visit is at a nearby garage where a young apprentice is on his two week work experience block. This is part of his 50 days of work experience, which all young apprentices must complete as part of their programmes. The service manager is very happy with the young apprentice's progress during his placement. The lad is very keen and has excellent time-keeping skills and is clearly enjoying getting stuck in.

10.15 am

Back at the Paragon Centre in Fareham – tea break. I catch up with two young apprentices from the first cohort, who

now have full-time jobs and are working towards their Advanced Apprenticeships with us. One of the highlights of my job is seeing the progression of learners and how they have developed their personalities.

11.00 am

A social worker and a young person interested in our courses arrive for me to show round our facility. He would very much like to join our Level One Mechanics course at the beginning of the next academic year, so, after talking to him, we decide he could take part in a six week taster to see if the course suits him.

I show him round the Motor Vehicle workshop and classrooms and introduce him to staff. He is particularly interested in a motor powered go-kart, which one group is making and hope to race later in the year.

12.00 noon

Back at my desk I call my colleague Jeff at our Weymouth head office, he is the Dorset 14-16 Co-ordinator. We discuss how our respective recruitment is going.

1.00 pm

I drive to one of our local colleges for an Engineering Network Meeting, which is a sub-group of the Portsmouth Consortium. We discuss how we are to implement the new diploma and discuss wide-ranging strategies.

2.00 pm

Then it is time for lunch!

3.00 pm

One of the nicest parts of my job is the once termly Schools Council meeting. One elected pupil from every pre-16 class attends. The chairperson is a talented young lady who has just completed her Young Apprenticeship in Marine Engineering called Alice Le Good. Alice recently won Young Apprentice of the Year at the South East LSC Awards and was a finalist at the National Apprenticeship Awards.

4.30 pm

This evening I am attending a careers event at a local school with one of Paragon's Training and Recruitment Advisors. Paragon regularly attends careers events to offer advice about options post-16 and to promote the Apprenticeship route.



A group of students at Paragon Training, Fareham

I load my car with booklets about the courses we have on offer, application forms and a couple of machine parts, as well as the usual branded material such as pens to give away. I agree to meet my colleague at the school ready for the careers event.

5.00 pm

We arrive and set up our table and stand, and have time to chat to other providers, colleges and, of course, our colleagues from Connexions. We have a quick bite to eat and away we go.

6.00 pm

Parents and pupils from Year 11 start to arrive, and my colleague and I spend our time in deep discussion with them about the Motor Vehicle and Marine Engineering apprenticeships we have on offer at our Fareham Centre.

8.00 pm

After another successful event, we pack up our stand and head for home.



For more information about Paragon Training, visit their website:

www.paragontraining.co.uk
or call freephone:
0800 783 2545.

To find out more about apprenticeships visit:
www.apprenticeships.org.uk

John Underdown with group of students in Marine Building, Paragon Training

South East success at National Apprenticeship Awards 2007

The achievements of employers and apprentices from the South East were recognised when they celebrated success at the Learning and Skills Council's National Apprenticeship Awards 2007.

The glittering event held in London, hosted by BBC television presenter Nick Knowles, saw Horsham-based **Farthings Veterinary Group** announced as the winners in the Small Employer of the Year category.

Farthings Veterinary Group has enjoyed a rapid expansion in their business in recent years, thanks largely to their commitment to Apprenticeships. They are currently training three apprentice nurses in their growing workforce of 30.



Victoria Nebbett

Two apprentices from the region, Southampton-based **Alice Le Good** and

Victoria Nebbett from Ashted in Surrey, were also presented with runners-up awards in the Young Apprentice of the Year and Apprentice of the Year categories respectively.

This was not the first taste of success for either young apprentice. 22 year old hairdresser, Victoria and 16 year old marine engineer, Alice, were both winners in the equivalent categories at this year's LSC South East Learning and Skills Awards.

Victoria, who is a Senior Hair Stylist at Monroe Hairdressing in Leatherhead, Surrey, said:

"I love my job and choosing to do my Apprenticeship was definitely the right decision. Due to my success, I have entered a number of competitions and won the prestigious national 'Wella Trend Vision for stylists under 30' award. This also gave me the opportunity to compete in the world finals which I could never have even imagined."

Alice changed her career plans after completing a Young Apprenticeship in Engineering, and is now about to begin an Advanced Apprenticeship in Boat Building with Southampton Yacht Services. She said:

"I thought about going to university to study law, but my Apprenticeship has opened my



Alice Le Good

eyes to a new career. I've decided to work in the marine industry as an engineer or a boat builder. I also hope to start my own business one day."

The application process for entries for the 2008 LSC South East Learning and Skills Awards will open soon.

The Awards will culminate in a prestigious event at Ascot Racecourse on Thursday 22 May 2008.

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