

## **POOLE APPRENTICE HIGHLY COMMENDED AT NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS**

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Poole based Josh Pickering was highly commended in the Young Apprentice of the Year category on July 10 at the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) National Apprenticeship Awards.

Sixteen-year-old Josh is working towards a Young Apprenticeship in Retail with men's fashion store John Anthony in Bournemouth. He collected his award from TV star Amanda Holden at the ceremony.

Josh said: "I'm really pleased to have been highly commended at the national awards. My boss, parents, tutor and my school are really proud of all that I've achieved since becoming a Young Apprentice and it's great for my achievements to be recognised."

Malcolm Gillespie, Regional Director of LSC South West, said: "We are delighted that Josh was highly commended at the national awards making him one of England's top apprentices. This is testament to the outstanding contribution apprentices and their learning providers are making to raise the region's skills levels and improve productivity and competitiveness.

"Josh has positively invested in his future by taking an Apprenticeship and I hope he proves to be a positive role model to others who are considering becoming apprentices."

The awards are designed to recognise employers who are successfully using Apprenticeships to improve business performance, and celebrate the outstanding commitment of individuals who have excelled on an Apprenticeship programme. This year

there was a 40 per cent increase in entries for the national Apprenticeship Awards from 1,000 to 1,400.

Finalists from the South West were also successful in other award categories. Two companies won their respective categories - Pendennis Shipyard from Falmouth in the 'Large Employer of the Year' and Mark Wilkinson Furniture from Chippenham in the 'Medium Employer of the Year'. Apprentice Jacob Stimpson from Plymouth was highly commended in the 'Young Apprentice of the Year' category and apprentice employer Defence Support Group from Warminster was also highly commended in the 'Medium Employer of the Year' category.

The Apprenticeship Awards were held at the Royal Horticultural Hall in Central London.

**To find out more about Apprenticeships, visit [apprenticeships.org.uk](http://apprenticeships.org.uk) or call 08000 150 400**

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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. For further information on the LSC in the South West please visit their website at [www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/southwest/](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/southwest/)

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