



PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 3rd June 2010

Exeter company wins coveted Skills Pledge Award at South West Skills Awards

Flybe is celebrating today after winning the Skills Pledge Award at the South West Skills Awards, which took place last night (2 June).

The prestigious ceremony, which took place at Sandy Park conference centre in Exeter, was presented by BBC's former chief news correspondent, Kate Adie, OBE. Kate, who is the current presenter of Radio 4's *From Our Own Correspondent*, delivered a keynote speech about her own experience learning essential skills on the job.

This journalistic theme was reinforced by compere Clinton Rogers, the BBC's Chief Somerset Correspondent.

The South West Skills Awards recognise and celebrate the achievements of apprentices, learners and employers who have excelled in the region.

Run by the Skills Funding Agency and the National Apprenticeship Service, the evening combined the Skills Awards with the South West regional heat of the National Apprenticeship Awards.

Paul Lucken, Skills Director for the Skills Funding Agency South West said: "I would like to extend my congratulations to Flybe, the other winners of the evening and also to the shortlisted candidates.

"The effort and contribution made by this year's winners have clearly made a positive impact on the organisations in which they work, their own personal development and, in turn, the wider South West economy. It is important to note that all entrants make the South West a better place for us to live and work – and that it is something worth celebrating."

Further information about the South West Skills Awards can be found at:
<http://www.skillsawards.org.uk/>

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Flybe

The multi award-winning Exeter-based Flybe airline is Europe's largest and most successful regional airline and the UK's No 1 domestic airline. Its success stems from developing not just its business but also its 3000 staff who are based in the UK, Ireland and France. The company is committed to operating at an extremely high and regulated standard and its philosophy of 'Improving Skills Improves Productivity' is underpinned by its training provision.

In 2007 it began creating its world-class training academy. Since then many thousands have attended - not just Flybe staff but also staff from companies throughout the world - gaining new skills, accredited qualifications, a desire to do their job well and an ambition to succeed. The same year Flybe became the first airline and first employer in the South West to sign the Skills Pledge, publicly demonstrating its commitment to training. It also established an academic partnership with Exeter College and the University of Exeter.

Since that time funding has been found for 700 Flybe staff to complete either NVQs, NCs, VRQs and foundation degrees in leadership management, cabin crew, customer service, airside operations, engineering and teacher training.

The South West Skills Awards

These awards recognise the achievements of individuals at every stage of life and career. By acknowledging the diverse learners and training opportunities in the region, the Skills Funding Agency hopes to encourage more learners and organisations to take part in learning initiatives that not only support individual development but contribute to stronger economic and workforce prosperity.

Sponsors for the South West Awards

Train to Gain Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by Business Link and Train to Gain

Skills Pledge Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by Skills Pledge

Third Sector Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by European Social Fund

Success in Leadership and Management Award – sponsored by Train to Gain

Apprenticeship Awards – sponsored as a whole by City & Guilds

Apprentice of the Year Award – sponsored by EDI
Young Apprentice of the Year Award – sponsored by Unilever
Advanced Apprentice of the Year Award – sponsored by EAL / EMTA Awards Ltd
Micro Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by Skills for Care
Small Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by BT
Medium Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by Sellafield Ltd
Large Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by BAE Systems

Skills Funding Agency:

The Skills Funding Agency is responsible for channelling funding swiftly, efficiently and securely to further education colleges and other providers, primarily in response to customer (employer and learner) choice on programmes such as Train to Gain. It operates through customer focused services: *National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)*, *Employer Skills Services*, *Adult Advancement and Careers Service*, *Learner Skills Services*. The Skills Funding Agency is an agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

National Apprenticeship Service (NAS):

The NAS was announced in January 2008 and officially launched in April 2009. Reporting to the Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Department for Education (DfE), the service will drive forward the Government's ambition for Apprenticeships. The service aims to bring about a significant growth in the number of employers offering Apprenticeships.