



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010**

### **Cheltenham resident wins coveted Success in Leadership and Management Award at South West Skills Awards**

Simon Bullingham of The Best of Cheltenham is celebrating today after winning the Success in Leadership and Management category 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 Simon, 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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**Notes to editors:**

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**Simon Bullingham**

Six months ago Simon Bullingham, Managing Director of Best of Cheltenham, wanted to improve his company’s success and growth. He introduced a programme designed to enhance staff training and the impact has been huge - including increasing his team from 5 to 12. The company, which promotes and sells advertising space to local organisations, has launched various new services for clients, opened a new office in the Beechwood Shopping Centre and is in the process of building specific training facilities. The Best of Cheltenham’s turnover is forecasted to increase by 60%, more than doubling the total sales figures of the last financial year.

With the help of learning provider, Jemtek Solutions Ltd, Simon restructured his staff and employed new key people, allowing him to work on developing the business. Simon also joined the Graduate Challenge Programme, immediately doubling his initial involvement as it proved so successful. He also agreed to take on an apprentice and has expanded his premises to include a dedicated training room. The Best of Cheltenham is now recommending the service to their own clients, referring around 40 organisations to the Leadership and Management Advisory Service.

**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.