BIGGEST EVER SEARCH FOR ‘STAR’ APPRENTICES
LSC launches fifth annual Apprenticeship Awards

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The search is on for the nation’s top apprentices as the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) launches its fifth annual Apprenticeship Awards this week at a time when large numbers of people are using Apprenticeships as a way of getting their dream career.

Celebrities such as Alan Shearer, Eric Clapton and Stella McCartney and some of the UK’s most successful business moguls such as John Caudwell (£1.6bn*) and Laurence Graff (£1.5bn), started out as apprentices. The success achieved by these and other favourite role models is a real inspiration. No wonder so many people are looking at Apprenticeships as the route to future success – 180,111 people have started this year alone.

Now in their fifth year, the 2008 Apprenticeship Awards were launched last night and attended by Skills Minister, David Lammy, at the Imagination Gallery in London. The Awards recognise the top apprentices trained by 130,000 organisations in England that employ them, with the winners set to be announced on 10th July 2008 at the Royal Horticultural Halls in central London.

The power of celebrity influence can also be seen in the choices people are making, with hairdressing the second most popular Apprenticeship – not surprising when former apprentice John Frieda is now worth £190m. The influence of TV chefs, like Gordon Ramsay, can be seen with hospitality and catering the fifth most popular choice.
Established Apprenticeships still dominate the most popular options with construction, engineering and business administration all in the top five. However, the amazing variety of Apprenticeships available today can be seen with some more unusual apprentices out there such as farriers, steeplejacks and sea fishing.

Speaking at the launch event, Chris Banks, Chair of the LSC commented: “With nearly a quarter of a million apprentices in England alone, across 80 different sectors of industry, the popularity of Apprenticeships as the route to a successful career continues to grow.

The Apprenticeship Awards are our opportunity to applaud apprentices who are taking their future in their hands and employers who are taking control of the future of their business by investing in skills of their workforce.”

Also speaking at the launch event was 2004 finalist Hannah Worsley, who described how her Apprenticeship has opened doors, both in terms of her career progression and her individual growth. Having started her Management Apprenticeship at Debenhams, Hannah not only excelled in her job but came full circle when she qualified as an NVQ assessor, for the provider who trained her. Aged just 23, Hannah became responsible for more than 30 new trainees; encouraging and inspiring new apprentices through her own experiences.

Five years after completing her Advanced Apprenticeship, Hannah is the Training Manager for KidsUnlimited, a childcare company with 51 sites across the UK. Hannah said: “My Apprenticeship really helped me reach my current role and I am so grateful to all those that helped me get here.”

Apprentices can enter one of four categories: Apprentice of the Year, Advanced Apprentice of the Year, Young Apprentice of the Year and Personal Achiever of the Year.
Employers wishing to enter the Awards can also enter in one of four categories, dependent on the size of the organisation. Categories are: Large Employer of the Year (250 + employees), Medium Employer of the Year (50 – 249 employees), Small Employer of the Year (10 – 49 employees) and Micro Employer of the Year (1- 9 employees).

To enter the Awards, or for more information, call 0800 954 88 96 or visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk/awards. Deadline for entries is 29 February 2008.

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For more information please contact:
Alison Hope, Hill & Knowlton: 020 7413 3756; alison.hope@hillandknowlton.com
Kate Lupton, Hill & Knowlton: 020 7413 3769; kate.lupton@hillandknowlton.com

Notes to Editors
*All wealth figures from Sunday Times Rich List 2007

Celebrity apprentices
Hairdressing
John Frieda
Charles Worthington
Fashion
Karen Millen
Alexander McQueen
Stella McCartney
Sport
Alan Shearer
Sir Alex Ferguson
Food
Gordon Ramsey
Jamie Oliver
Delia Smith
Entertainment
Eric Clapton
Billy Connolly
Alan Titchmarsh
Rolf Harris
Business
John Caudwell
Laurence Graff
Most popular Apprenticeships

Total
1. Construction
2. Hairdressing
3. Engineering
4. Business administration
5. Hospitality and catering

Men
1. Construction
2. Engineering
3. Vehicle maintenance and repair
4. Hospitality and catering
5. Customer service

Women
1. Hairdressing
2. Child Care
3. Business administration
4. Customer service
5. Hospitality and catering

The Apprentice Category winners 2007

Apprentice of the Year
Jonathon Pearson, Preston (Food & Drink Manufacture)

Advanced Apprentice of the Year
Gareth Moor, Morpeth, Northumberland (Electrical Engineering)

Young Apprentice of the Year
Abbigail Kewin, Tyne & Wear (Arts & Design)

Personal Achiever of the Year
Zenal Lika, Atherstone, Warwickshire (Mechanical Engineering)

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.

Skills campaign:
In July 2007, the LSC and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) launched the skills campaign. The campaign - Our future. It’s in our hands - urges people to take control of their future by investing in skills. It is the most ambitious marketing and communications campaign of its kind, and over a three to five year period aims to bring about the cultural change needed to improve the attitudes and aspirations of employers and individuals to learning and skills across England.