

EDI students take centre stage at the national VQ awards

It was a day of celebration across the United Kingdom to recognise the achievements of national VQ learners at this year's VQ Day event, held on 24 June. Now in its second year, VQ Day raises the profile of VQs and celebrates vocational achievements. The annual event was marked by a number of national showcase events in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

EDI's Chairman Richard Price and CEO Nigel Snook, joined leading figures from the world of education and representatives from providers, schools and colleges across England to celebrate the outstanding achievements of this year's vocational learners at an event hosted by Hackney Community College, a Centre of Vocational Excellence for business and construction.

EDI were proud to sponsor VQ Day and were delighted that two of the 18 English regional VQ Heroes were EDI achievers, beating off fierce competition from over 400 nominations. VQ Heroes are selected as a result of demonstrating exceptional skills or achieving outstanding results in a vocational field. Natalie Hewis was named VQ Hero Young Learner of the Year for the East of England after completing an EDI NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Customer Care with Protocol Skills, and Paul Cockram, EDI NVQ level 2 in Heritage Care and Visitor Services student at Sussex Downs College, was voted VQ Learner of the Year for the South East.

As part of a week long national radio campaign to celebrate VQ Day EDI students talked about the personal and professional benefits that their achievements have brought them, whilst many other students joined fellow VQ learners to recreate the VQ logo in well known British backdrops.



Celebrity chef James Martin hosted the Hackney Community College event, welcoming the 18 regional VQ Heroes and guests, including MPs Kevin Brennan, David Willetts and Stephen Williams. The regional VQ Heroes were invited to collect their certificates, followed by the national award winners' announcement.

The occasion was made memorable by the atmosphere created by the college - vocational zones were set up for guests, ranging from motorsports to hair and make-up, with visitors encouraged to try their hand at a range of vocational skills. The entertainment was provided by the college students who put on a fashion show and played live music, creating a lively and visual spectacle.

With 300,000 more people gaining VQ awards in 2007-8 compared to 2006-7, and more than twice as many pupils achieving VQs in schools in 2007-8 compared to the previous year, VQ Day is proving to be a highly significant and momentous event as more and more UK learners opt to improve their personal and professional skills.

Nigel Snook, Chief Executive at EDI commented:

"VQ Day presents an excellent opportunity to give vocational achievers the recognition they deserve, and EDI fully supports this initiative. Vocational qualifications have an increasingly important role to play in today's society. We all have a responsibility to ensure that learners and employers are aware of the opportunities to improve the skills of the workforce now and in the future; VQ Day helps to highlight these possibilities".



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