



Lighting the way for apprenticeships

A 22 year old woman from Sefton Council has been named the APSE Highways and Street Lighting Apprentice of the Year.

Michelle Gillespie, a street lighting electrician, who started her career as an electrical apprentice with Sefton council in August 2005 competed against other apprentices from across the UK.

Cllr David White of Stockport Council, APSE's Roads and Highways Group Chair, who was one of the judging panel said "**Michelle is really a credit to the industry. Many young women would be put off by entering a career in a predominantly male environment but Michelle viewed that challenge as one more reason to be better than the rest. I am delighted she has won this award.**"

The awards are designed to recognise the investment in apprenticeships by local authorities and in particular in the area of Highways and Street Lighting which suffers from skills shortages. The two other finalists that made it through to the awards were Philip Waddington of Kirklees Council and Scott Birse of Falkirk Council.

Ray Wescott of MEWS who sponsored the awards said "**Investment in training and skills is a 'must do' for the Highways and Street Lighting industry. We are really proud to sponsor these awards that showcase the very best in apprenticeship training by local councils**"

Ends

APSE is the Association for Public Service Excellence which works with over 250 local authorities throughout the UK.

The apprentice of the year awards are open to councils across the UK and have been arranged by APSE for the second year running in recognition of local authority investment in training and skills

The Prime Minister Gordon Brown called for an apprenticeship opportunity for all young people who would benefit from it on Saturday 1 March 2008. APSE responded by calling for local councils to be encouraged to meet targets for apprenticeships.

Photographs of the winner and finalists are available for press use.

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