



Another success for BiB

A UNIQUE trainee programme has scooped top honours for a North East insurance broker at a prestigious award ceremony to promote education and skills. BiB Insurance of Darlington picked up the Pioneering Recruitment Award at the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North-East's Awards 2007. Held at The Sage in Gateshead, awards were presented by TV personality Kirsty Gallacher. BiB was awarded the accolade after setting up its own in-house trainee scheme, in conjunction with Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Darlington and Richmond School. The initiative was designed to tackle the growing skills shortage in the industry and to attract more young people to the trade.



In the honours, trainees from BiB insurance brokers, James Martin and David Walker, show off the company's Pioneering Recruitment Award

BiB's HR consultant Zanna Bewick said: "We started our trainee programme in 2005 after finding it increasingly difficult to get skilled people to fill our vacancies. Insurance is not perceived as a very trendy career so we also wanted to find a way of encouraging more and more young people into the industry."

The firm joined forces with Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College and Richmond School to target A level students looking to train for a professional career without going to university.

"The scheme has been hugely successful. We have taken on three trainees since it began and have so far employed each one of them," added Zanna.

James Martin, 20, of Richmond, was offered his full-time post as a corporate broker after completing less than half of his two-year in-house training scheme. He said: "Like a lot of young people I wasn't sure what I wanted to do after leaving college. After hearing about the BiB trainee scheme I thought that a career in insurance would be a good move and earning money was a big incentive. Since last September, I've spent a few months in each department to learn about different aspects of the business and I've also started a Chartered Institute qualification."

David Walker, 21, of Darlington, who has also been offered a full-time post as trainee administrative assistant, said: "The trainee programme with BiB really interested me and being paid to train for a professional career was very appealing. All the staff here have really helped and I'm now looking to climb the ladder within the industry."

BiB Group managing director Martin Littleton added: "We recognised the lack of modern apprenticeship courses and the lack of mechanisms for getting young people into the industry and decided to do something about it ourselves. It was wonderful to win this award and it demonstrates that what we have is a sustainable programme that is leading the market in apprentice training. BiB needs to work hard to stay independent and to grow we need a skilled workforce. By working with local schools and colleges and by employing them in local businesses we can help to keep employment in this area."