

Diversity in workforce celebrated with award

AWARDS

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DIVERSITY among North East companies' workforces will be celebrated as part of this year's CIPD North East of England HR&D Awards.

Among the 10 hotly contested categories in this year's awards, the Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace Award will be sponsored by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

Judges are looking for regional businesses that can show their commitment to equality or have developed a diverse workforce.

Tom Capeling, chief fire officer of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, said: "Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service is delighted to support the CIPD Awards again this year. The awards provide an excellent opportunity to showcase and collectively celebrate innovative, forward thinking organisations from across the North East that are leading the way in the HR&D field."

"Their success demonstrates how well we are performing in the region and helps us all to continuously improve."

"We chose to sponsor the Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace Award as this award is particularly special to us. It very much reflects our



> Tom Capeling, chief fire officer, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

values and what we stand for as an employer and service provider in Tyne and Wear. We are particularly proud to support organisations who share our values, having won the award twice in recent years.

"We are great believers in investing in diversity and inclusion initiatives to ensure that the places in which we work and live allow every individual to flourish and reach their full poten-



tial, impacting upon the overall success of the organisation.

"Ensuring we are a diverse and inclusive organisation that embraces the talent of every member of staff enables us to take on the challenges we face with a talented workforce."

Last year's winner of the award, The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, showed its ambition to develop a diverse workforce.

The Trust were chosen by judges for their Project Choice scheme – one

which enables young adults aged 16-24 to gain employability skills through work experience placements.

CIPD North East chair Louise Leonard Cross said: "CIPD has played a central role in setting the diversity agenda and developing debate. In recent CIPD research 83% of respondents stated their organisation had a strategy, policy or guidelines in place to support diversity and inclusion."

"There is a compelling business case for organisations to look beyond legal compliance to a value-added approach enabling competitive benefits to be gained from developing good practice. This value-add approach is what we will be looking for in applications in this category."

This year's winners will take to the stage at this year's awards show, delivered by The Journal and associate sponsors Nigel Wright, which takes place at the Hilton Newcastle Gateshead. Last year's dinner attracted over 370 guests and this year, Metro Radio stars Steve and Karen, will lead the evening at which ten awards categories will be presented to regional hopefuls.

Details of how to enter the awards will be available each Thursday in The Journal until April 23, the day before closing date for entries.

To enter, log onto www.thejournal.co.uk/cipdawards. Alternatively contact Lesley Hampson, events manager on 0191 201 6435 or email lesley.hampson@trinitymirror.com.

ENTRY INFORMATION

Celebrate the profession, celebrate the region – CIPD North East of England HR&D Awards

The 2015 CIPD North East of England HR&D Awards are open to all types of organisations, regardless of size or sector. The winners will be announced on 11th June 2015 at an awards dinner at the Hilton Newcastle Gateshead hosted by Steve & Karen of Metro Radio. The categories are:

- People Development Award
- Learning & Development Programme Award
- HR&D Technology Award
- Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace Award
- HR&D Team of the Year Award
- Employee Engagement Award
- Health & Wellness Award
- Change Management Project of the Year Award
- Reward & Benefits Award
- SME HR&D Award

■ The deadline for nominations is April 24 and it's completely free to enter! To enter or for more information log on to www.thejournal.co.uk/cipdawards or contact Lesley Hampson, event manager, on 0191 2016435 or email lesley.hampson@trinitymirror.com

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A word from associate sponsors, Nigel Wright

How to get diversity and inclusion on the agenda

WE live in culturally diverse times and recognising and accepting diversity today is an integral part of life. Perhaps because of this, in the business world, recognising and accepting diversity is sometimes taken for granted.

This was highlighted in a recent

Deloitte report which revealed that diversity and inclusion were most commonly rated as the least important issues for HR decision makers.

The underlying attitude here is conceivably: "We're a modern business and it's highly unlikely that any of our employees would feel discriminated against in the workplace, so we don't need to prioritise diversity and inclusion initiatives."

But sadly, when organisations dig under the surface, they often find that certain non-inclusive attitudes still prevail. What has become apparent over the last 12 months is that businesses which excel at promoting diversity in the workplace all have a common attribute – the diversity dialogue is driven from the very top of

the organisation.

One of last year's CIPD finalists, Gateshead College, offered a great example of a top-down driven diversity initiative. The college's leadership recognised that in order to truly fulfil its diversity promise of Everyone Matters...Celebrate Individuality, they needed to work harder to tackle 'the most challenging diversity strand', sexual orientation.

The college appointed its Deputy Principal as Senior Lead Champion for LGBT diversity. This individual then launched a number of initiatives including writing weekly LGBT themed staff newsletters, raising LGBT issues at board meetings, and participating in community events such as LGBT History Month and

Pride.

Another way organisations have made diversity and inclusion part of a wider organisational priority, is by developing external projects that support diversity in the community.

This is exactly what last year's CIPD award winners The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust did. Its Project Choice programme helped a number of young adults with learning difficulties gain employability skills through work experience placements.

Both of these of approaches to dealing with diversity and inclusion at work have a real impact on changing attitudes and help to create healthier, harmonious working environments.

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