

Richmond Business Awards 2016

IT support firm chief proud to scoop best practice prize



Mark Lilleyman getting his award

Numbers of out of work young falls

THE number of Richmond's young claiming jobseekers allowance has dropped over the last few months but the number of older claimants is the same, says the Job Centre.

There are now 185 claimants aged between 18 and 24 in the borough, and 1,280 unemployed people aged over 25. Alison Chivers, partnership manager for Kingston and Richmond job centres, said the fact that fewer younger people were claiming jobseekers benefits was a good sign, but there was still plenty more to be done to get people into work.

She said: "We have a good source of apprentices in the borough and we would work with each one individually. We are finding a lot of local employers are coming into the job centre and having a face-to-face interview with us to find the right people for the jobs."

RTT Reporter

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IT SUPPORT firm Tech Division Limited were the winner of 2015's Best Professional Practice award at the Richmond Business Awards, and managing director Mark Lilleyman said it gave him such a sense of accomplishment because starting a business was one of the hardest things he has ever faced.

Mr Lilleyman said running a micro-business is difficult because you are expected to be a "jack of all trades".

He said: "You're the marketing guru, the business strategy expert, and, oh yes – the bins need emptying too. Growing a micro-business in the headwinds of the recession is even more difficult.

"The problems of obtaining finance are still there, and even customers with cash reserves have been very careful in how they spend it.

"So every penny needs to be justified; no contract is 'in the bag' until the paperwork is signed – and that takes much longer than it used to."

The tech director praised Rich-

mond's business community for being so closely bound together, and the Chamber of Commerce for bringing entrepreneurs from different businesses together and allowing them to network and work through common problems.

He said: "As I say, we smaller types need all the help we can give each other."

He added: "We intend to use this award, and the goodwill from our customers, as our base to grow.

"Richmond's a wonderful place to start a business – with the river and parks, Heathrow nearby, and the city a short train ride away, it's in an enviable position, and no wonder that many hi-tech companies are interested in setting up base here."

The Best Professional Practice Award sponsor is Bluebird Care, which provides support for people with physical disabilities.

Founding member Maria Leonard said: "We're passionate about providing high quality, value for money services.

"We believe that the ability to provide these services is dependent upon excellence in professional practice.

"We want to support and encourage

other businesses within the borough with these aims."

Anne Newton said: "Experienced Chamber professionals from all walks of business are sought to mentor our local start-up and SME businesses from across the borough of Richmond upon Thames.

"The objective of this local initiative is to fast track our local businesses' growth via professional and experienced businesspeople, who willingly invest their time locally.

"Business owners will need this mentoring service more than ever now as economic conditions straighten, and so please go ahead today and make that difference by joining the Chamber and our highly regarded mentoring team.

"Our next mentoring orientation session to accredit new mentors is Tuesday afternoon, July 18, at RACC."

Those interested in joining the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, and to keep up-to-date with the latest in what is going on, can do so via their website by completing the online process at <http://richmondchamberofcommerce.co.uk/join-us>. The website also contains video highlights of last year's awards.

In brief

July 4, Monday – Exclusive members only: Chamber Group Mentoring Programme (five sessions). Richmond Borough Chamber of Commerce, 6pm – 7.30pm. This exclusive chamber members only group mentoring programme, led by our experienced chamber mentor Norman Jackson, is an resource for local SME business owners.

July 5, Tuesday – Exclusive members only Chamber Group mentoring programme (two sessions) Group mentoring sessions, led by our experienced chamber mentor Stefan Kadlubowski, providing a confidential forum to discuss business issues and take onboard new perspectives.

July 11, Monday – Chamber Business Workshop: Apprenticeships. Investing in the next generation. This workshop will demonstrate how you can invest in the next generation and how apprentices can add value to your business.

July 14, Thursday – Chamber Business Evening with leading UK motor Journalist Gavin Green at Lexus Business Centre in Twickenham

July 19, Tuesday – Chamber Business Masterclass: Using behaviours to manage customer or colleague conversations

July 21, Thursday – Chamber Business Breakfast with the Bank of England at Le Salon Privé

August 2, Tuesday - Chamber Coffee Morning at Organic Mind in Richmond, Enjoy this Chamber coffee morning at Organic Mind and connect with local business owners while testing some of the exclusive treatments this unique store has in offer.

August 2, Tuesday - Chamber Workshop: Mindfulness and Work-Life Balance. The principles of Mindfulness can help individuals and businesses to enhance motivation and teamwork whilst at the same time reducing stress and creating a more positive environment.

A banner for the Richmond Business Awards 2016. It features the text 'Richmond BUSINESS AWARDS 2016' in large white letters on a blue background. Below this, there are logos for 'Richmond Twickenham TIMES', 'St Mary's University Twickenham London', 'minesoft', 'NatWest', 'THE LENSBURY', 'VEOLIA', 'bluebird care', and 'BUTTERWORTH'. The background of the banner shows a group of people smiling and clapping.