



**The Employment Related Services Association (ERSA), the membership body for the employment support sector, is pleased to announce the 2019 ERSA Employability Awards.**

**This awards pack includes;**

- The entry application process and deadlines
- Tips on writing a good award entry
- Award categories and criteria
- A list of winners from 2018

The awards, now in their seventh year, aim to celebrate and champion best practice from across the employment related services sector, highlighting the day-to-day hard work and dedication of individuals and organisations in the sector working together to help jobseekers in their journey towards, into and progress in work.

The ERSA Employability Awards welcomes applications from all organisations supporting jobseekers into employment or to progress in work, including the criminal justice system, health service, housing associations, employers, local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, training providers, Information, Advice and Guidance, colleges or universities. **You do not have to be a member of ERSA and there is no charge to apply.**

The ten award categories designed to showcase the breadth of work taking place within the sector are;

- Disability and Health Employment
- Youth Employment
- Innovation
- Partner of the Year
- Adviser of the Year
- Team of the Year
- Large Employer of the Year
- Small or Medium Employer of the Year
- Significant Achievement
- Lifetime Achievement

If you have any queries about the awards criteria or the process, please do get in contact with Jack Thurston, Networking and Membership Officer via [Jack.Thurston@ersa.org.uk](mailto:Jack.Thurston@ersa.org.uk) / 0 203 757 9415

Please take a moment to read this guidance carefully ahead of the submission process.

- The ERSA Employability Awards welcomes applications from all organisations supporting jobseekers into employment or to progress in work, including the criminal justice system, health service, housing associations, employers, local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, training providers, Information, Advice and Guidance, colleges or universities. **You do not have to be a member of ERSA and there is no charge to apply.**
- There is no minimum or maximum number of award categories that any one organisation can enter. For each award that you wish to enter, please complete an online submission via Survey Monkey. Only entries submitted in this format will be considered by our judges.
- Supporting evidence must be referenced within you **no more than three sides of A4.**
- It is advised that entrants complete their submissions in a Word document before entering it into Survey Monkey, to ensure they have a copy.
- A document based on best practice from previous award winners is available to all entrants. This also contains advice on common pitfalls identified by previous award judges.
- If nominating an individual for an award, applicants must upload a good quality photograph. The photograph will be used during the awards ceremony, if the individual is successfully shortlisted.
- The online submission form will **open at 12pm on Friday 8 February 2019 and close at 5pm on Friday 15 March 2019.**
- Any entry received which has not met the entry criteria as set out in this paper may be automatically rejected from further consideration. When entering a specific award category, you should therefore take notice of the desired criteria for the award in question, to ensure that your entry meets the requirements.
- For the Lifetime Achievement category, you do not have to be currently working with the person you are intending to enter.
- A panel of independent judges will consider the entries. If a judge's own organisation has entered an award, he or she will withdraw from the judging panel for that category.
- The judging process will consider the relative merits of each application against the criteria for the award in question. Only information provided as part of each entrant's respective application will be considered. The decision of the judging panel with regard to those shortlisted for an award, and those that actually receive an award, is final.
- Entrant organisations will be notified as to whether they have been shortlisted as a finalist for any award which they have entered prior to the awards ceremony. Shortlisted finalists will be offered a maximum of two tickets per award to the awards ceremony, free of charge. It is expected that at least one representative of each shortlisted entrant will attend the awards ceremony. Additional tickets can be purchased; these will go on sale at the end of April.
- Entrants who are not shortlisted will also be notified. Following the awards ceremony, we will be offering entrants' guidance, on request, in terms of how they might further improve their entries to have a better chance of success in future years.
- **Award finalists will be announced at the ERSA AGM at the end of April, and then by press release.**
- Award winners will be announced at the awards ceremony which will take place in central London in June 2019. ERSA is not able to cover any costs for travel and accommodation for finalists attending the awards ceremony.
- Winners will receive a commemorative award and certificate presented at the awards ceremony. Judges will also have the discretion to award 'highly commended' certificates for particularly deserving finalists. The list of winners will also be published on the ERSA website and will be publicised via ERSA through a variety of media.
- Information submitted to ERSA as part of the application process may be used in promotional work at other times, unless otherwise requested. **Please therefore ensure a media consent form has been signed when naming an external individual or organisation.**

**The following points bring together feedback from the judges in 2016, 2017 and 2018 based on their views of what makes a good award entry, plus traps to avoid.**

- Provide a strong summary that highlights your key selling points. This alone should explain to the judges why you should be in the running for the award. The full entry is where you 'seal the deal'.
- Ensure that your award entry clearly addresses each of the criteria in the award. The criteria can be structured using sub headers which clearly signpost to the judges how you are addressing each criteria.
- Provide appropriate evidence that can be easily comparable and understood even by someone without technical sector experience. This is likely to include clear information on the profile of jobseekers supported; plus clear information on outcomes, such as the number starting work and those sustaining in work in a given period.
- Make sure you are entering your award for the right category by carefully reading each award criteria - sometimes judges have felt that entries would have been better received in a different category. Examples include entries which relate to solid delivery being entered to the innovation category when there is little evidence of innovation.
- When making a submission, try not to enter it into multiple categories as this tends to dilute the effect it has on the judges.
- Some submissions strayed away from employability and whilst they were good stories, they were not particularly suited to the ERSA Employability Awards.
- There were several submissions which were clearly exceptional but due to the fact the delivery was in its infancy, outcomes were difficult to gauge. The judges suggested in this instance that a re-entry next year might be the best approach, as there will be a greater set of data available to share.
- Ensure the evidence submitted is relevant to the award category and not excessive.

**Small or Medium Employer of the Year**

- The judges particularly liked organisations that demonstrated commitment to employability at a number of levels, including support for jobseekers outside the labour market to boost employability skills; plus hiring practices which supported a wide range of jobseekers to take up a variety of roles.
- Judges wanted to see that responsible hiring practices were embedded across the business, however small.
- Judges also liked it when there was evidence that people could progress on to a higher role with more responsibility within that company.
- Judges also appreciated the diversity of a workforce and investment in the team.

**Large Employer of the Year**

- Entries should show that work with jobseekers was entirely embedded across different elements of the business rather than linked to a small element of a corporate responsibility strategy or to a specific part of the business.
- Judges wanted to see evidence that employers were working with the sector for more than purely business reasons (i.e the commitment went beyond seeing employment support as a cost effective hiring route).
- Judges liked to see a strong element of sustainability with people moving into long term jobs with progression.
- Judges wanted to see evidence of non-traditional hiring methods which recognised the range of jobseeker needs. This might include guaranteed interviews for particular groups of jobseekers, such as those who might struggle with written forms.
- In addition, judges were attracted to efforts by businesses to overcome systemic barriers to employment for some groups, such as ex-offenders.

## **Innovation**

- The key point of this category is to show that what you offer is truly innovative within the sector rather than simply new to your organisation.
- Entries also need to be able to show that the process is effective and scalable.
- In addition, entries should demonstrate that the innovation is effective. As such, very new ideas which have only just been implemented may not have sufficient evidence to warrant an award entry. Several award entries were not prioritised, not because they were not innovative, but because the positive impact of that innovation was as yet unproved.

## **Disability and Health Employment**

- Of primary importance to the judges was that the entries demonstrated that organisations delivered exceptionally high performance for jobseekers with disabilities. As such, providing information on the profile of the jobseekers supported, easily understood performance metrics and, ideally, comparative information is very helpful.
- Judges wanted to see a clear, bespoke model for working with disabled people that ideally could be scalable.
- Judges liked organisations that reflected their support for disabled people in their own hiring practices.
- Judges liked the idea of the continuous involvement of families.

## **Partner of the Year**

- All entries needed to show solid levels of performance, including clearly understandable metrics and comparable information if possible.
- Judges also wanted to see a little something extra from the winners, a unique selling point that made them stand out from the other entries.
- Innovation was also important in this category in showing the creativity and problem solving ability of the partner organisation.
- Judges appreciated seeing a partner's delivery vision reflect the needs of the local economy.

## **Adviser of the Year**

- The most important element was felt to be strong evidence that this was an exceptional adviser who was delivering strong performance. Being clear about who was being supported and why this support was exceptional was essential.
- Judges often liked stories where the adviser had overcome their own personal difficulties which had informed their support for jobseekers. However, this was not essential.
- They also liked entries where there was evidence that the adviser had created or developed their own programme of support, innovating whilst on the job to improve performance.
- Evidence of endorsement from colleagues and/or jobseekers/employers was also important in this category.
- The judges appreciated those who enabled their organisation to grow through their own commitment to going the extra mile.

## **Team of the Year**

- Judges were looking for an emphasis on a team working together to achieve delivery.
- Focus was often simply on results and not how the team worked together to achieve them.

## **Youth Employment**

- Entrants needed to demonstrate clear high performance with this client group.

- Judges liked it when the entry showed how the organisation was doing something special with this particular client group, creating a bespoke method of delivery.
- It was felt to be important that entries showed the distance travelled of the young people they worked with. Did they have particularly complex needs and were there opportunities for them to progress beyond low pay roles?
- Judges liked entries which demonstrated a transformative effect on the hardest to reach client groups and had a sustained impact on those they helped.

### **Significant Achievement**

This is a particularly difficult category to judge and there is often a very personal element to the judging of this category in that that certain stories resonate with different people. However entries that stood out:

- The judges were particularly moved by those who had overcome a variety of difficulties and barriers to employment and had shown their commitment to moving into work.
- Judges also liked a story where there was evidence that the individual had progressed from their initial role after moving into employment.
- Judges also felt it wasn't imperative that the nominee's new role was within the sector.



**The ten award categories designed to showcase the breadth of work taking place within the sector are;**

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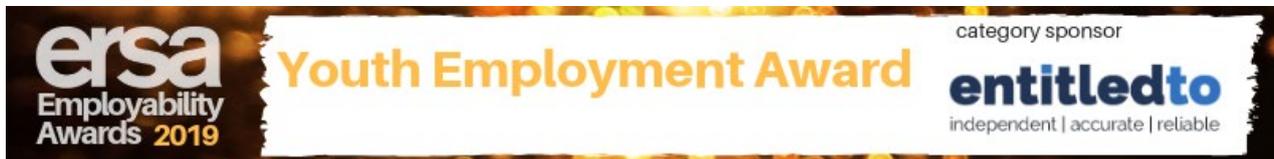


**Short Descriptor:** Recognising an employment services provider who has demonstrated exceptional commitment in supporting jobseekers with disabilities and health conditions to achieve sustained employment.

**Long Descriptor:** This award seeks to recognise an exemplar provider who has demonstrated exceptional dedication in helping disabled people and those with health conditions overcome barriers to enter and maintain work. Providers who may be suitable for nomination will:

- Have recognised expertise in helping unemployed people to manage specific limiting disabilities and health conditions in a vocational context.
- Have shown innovation in adapting provision to meet the needs of disabled jobseekers and those with health conditions.
- Have demonstrably raised the profile of jobseekers with disabilities and health conditions with employers, challenging and overcoming traditional objections and prejudices.
- Have achieved market leading performance levels for jobseekers with disabilities and health conditions.

The award winner will have an exceptional track record in helping jobseekers with disabilities and health conditions into sustained employment.



**Short Descriptor:** Recognising an employment services provider who has demonstrated exceptional commitment in delivering employment services for young adults.

**Long Descriptor:** This award seeks to recognise an exemplar provider who has demonstrated exceptional dedication to helping young people (aged 16 – 24) overcome barriers to enter and maintain work.

Providers who may be suitable for nomination will:

- Have demonstrable expertise in helping young people to overcome age-specific work barriers, such as young parenthood, educational disengagement, gang culture, family breakdown, or similar issues.
- Have developed innovative delivery methods which build rapport with, and practically involve and engage, young people, building motivation, confidence and self-esteem.
- Have achieved market leading performance levels for young people, including job outcomes and progression into other forms of training and learning.

The award winner will have an exceptional track record in supporting young people into sustained employment and an effective understanding of how to get the best from them.



**Short descriptor:** Recognising a provider who has pioneered innovative approaches and solutions within the employment support market.

**Long Descriptor:** The award seeks to recognise a provider which has pioneered effective new approaches and/or solutions within the employment related services market.

Entrants should be able to:

- Describe clearly what their approach or tool is, and why it has been developed.
- Demonstrate the originality of the innovation to show that it might not otherwise be considered as standard sector practice.
- Show how the innovation has had a specific and measurable beneficial impact to the sector. This impact might manifest itself through benefits to jobseekers, employers or other parties.
- Ideally demonstrate that their innovation is transferable within different types of employment services provision and in different localities.
- Represents a cost-effective investment of funding.



**Short Descriptor:** Recognising excellence as a delivery partner in the field of employment support.

**Long Descriptor:** The award seeks to recognise an exemplar organisation delivering employment support directly to jobseekers on behalf of, or with, another provider (or providers) as part of a subcontracted or partnership agreement. In particular, judges will be looking for evidence of how this organisation's impact is having a demonstrable impact on the prospects of jobseekers entering and/or sustaining employment, whether through the provision of 'end to end', specialist or other services.

Entrants should address the following criteria:

- Be clear about the geography of delivery and profile of jobseeker with which you are working, and how you have tailored your services to meet the needs of this cohort.
- Provide quantitative evidence that performance is good (and preferably improving).
- Provide qualitative evidence of the positive impact of services delivered. This may take the form of customer or partner feedback.
- Explain how you support service provision outside your direct delivery, through best practice sharing with partners.

It is desirable that the entrant's application is endorsed by their prime contractor or partner to verify their claim of being an exemplar partner.



**Short Descriptor:** Recognising an employment adviser who has demonstrated exceptional commitment in a frontline role.

**Long Descriptor:** This award seeks to recognise an individual employee in a frontline role who has demonstrated exceptional commitment, either through directly helping jobseekers to overcome barriers to enter and maintain work or supporting employers to employ and support in employment jobseekers who have been long term unemployed. Employment support providers are asked to nominate employees who:

- Have gone above and beyond the reasonable expectations of their employer (and of the wider industry), in their commitment to customer service.
- Have a sustained track record over a significant period of time of demonstrable high performances
- Have supported colleagues to embrace a customer-centred ethos, leading by example and helping co-workers to apply best practice in the support they provide jobseekers.
- Attract testimonials from current and previous customers (whether jobseekers or employers) who can vouch for the specific impact that their efforts have made to their personal lives or operations.

The award winner will be a truly inspiring industry exemplar of how effectively and compassionately to support the long term unemployed into successful and sustainable employment.



**Short descriptor:** Recognising a team of frontline staff which has demonstrated outstanding commitment in meeting and exceeding the delivery aims of an employment provider.

**Long Descriptor:** This award seeks to recognise a team (comprised of between three and 50 people) which has gone above and beyond what is required of them to ensure their organisation delivers the best possible services for jobseekers and/or those wanting to progress in work.

Teams which may be suitable for nomination are likely to:

- Have a proven track record of delivery over a significant period of time.
- Through consistent delivery, created and maintained strong working relationships with employers.
- Have influenced or inspired the approach of other teams within their organisation and/or other organisations within the sector.
- Attract testimonials from current and previous customers (whether jobseekers or employers) who can vouch for the specific impact that the team's efforts have made to their personal lives or operations.

The award winners will have an outstanding track record of supporting jobseekers/former jobseekers and a steadfast commitment to employment support.



**Short Descriptor:** Recognising a large employer who has demonstrated exceptional commitment in creating opportunities for disadvantaged and long term unemployed jobseekers.

**Long Descriptor:** This award seeks to recognise a large employer (employing more than 250 staff in the UK in total) who has demonstrated exceptional dedication to helping jobseekers overcome barriers to enter and maintain work.

Employment support providers are asked to nominate employers who have:

- Forged strong and enduring partnerships with employment support providers.
- Made a proactive and demonstrable commitment to recruiting significant numbers of jobseekers participating in programmes run by employment support providers.
- Made a practical contribution to the delivery of employability provision, such as providing work experience opportunities, mock interviews, or workplace visits.
- Shown commitment to the previously unemployed jobseekers who they have recruited, helping them to sustain their employment, develop new skills and achieve career advancement. This might include a commitment to in-work progression opportunities for employees.

The award winner will have a positive social community impact and will have demonstrated a real dedication to supporting the long term unemployed into successful and sustainable employment.



**Short Descriptor:** Recognising a small or medium employer who has demonstrated exceptional commitment in creating opportunities for disadvantaged and long term unemployed jobseekers.

**Long Descriptor:** This award seeks to recognise a small or medium employer (employing less than 250 staff in the UK in total) who has demonstrated exceptional dedication to helping jobseekers overcome barriers to enter and maintain work. Employment support providers are asked to nominate employers who have:

- Forged strong and enduring partnerships with employment support providers.
- Made a proactive and demonstrable commitment to recruiting jobseekers participating in programmes run by employment support providers.
- Made a practical contribution to the delivery of employability provision, such as providing work experience opportunities, mock interviews, or workplace visits.
- Shown commitment to the previously unemployed jobseekers who they have recruited, helping them to sustain their employment, develop new skills, and achieve career advancement. This might include a commitment to in-work progression opportunities for employees.

The award winner will have demonstrated a real dedication to supporting the long-term unemployed into successful and sustainable employment.



**Short Descriptor:** Recognising a specific jobseeker who has demonstrated exceptional commitment to overcoming barriers to enter and maintain work.

**Long Descriptor:** This award seeks to recognise a successful former jobseeker who has demonstrated exceptional commitment to overcome significant personal and/or social barriers to enter and maintain employment. Employment related services providers are asked to nominate jobseekers who:

- Have surpassed expectations in overcoming barriers to work.
- Have demonstrated personal dedication above and beyond expectations to improve their employability.
- Have successfully moved into sustained employment and grown in their job to acquire new skills and responsibilities.
- Have acted as a positive role model in inspiring other jobseekers to follow their example.
- Attract testimonials from advisers and their employer, who can vouch for the journey that has been undertaken and the success achieved.

The award winner will be a truly inspiring individual who will have overcome adversity and demonstrated immeasurable dedication to overcome barriers to work and achieve sustained employment.



**Short Descriptor:** Recognising an exceptional individual who has dedicated a significant part of their career to the employment related services sector and has made a notable impact on the wider sector.

**Long Descriptor:** This award winner will be selected by an expert panel, recognising an individual who has demonstrated exceptional commitment to the employment related services sector and has made a significant contribution to the industry. Candidates are likely to:

- Have shown a long-term commitment to the employment related services sector.
- Have achieved recognition across the sector as a thought leader and innovator.
- Have made a national impact in improving industry practice, raising the profile of the sector and enhancing the prospects of unemployed people.
- Have acted as a positive role model in inspiring other practitioners.

The award winner will be a truly inspiring individual who will be nationally recognised as a champion and ambassador for the sector.

**See overleaf for details of the 2018 award winners.**

If you have any queries about the awards criteria or the process, please do get in contact with Jack Thurston, Networking and Membership Officer via [Jack.Thurston@ersa.org.uk](mailto:Jack.Thurston@ersa.org.uk) / 0 203 757 9415

Best wishes and good luck to all entrants.

**The Employment Related Services Association**

# ERSA Employability Awards 2018 winners

The winners of the 2018 ERSA Employability Awards, sponsored by Clarion Futures, were announced on 14 June at a special evening ceremony in London attended by the Minister for Employment, Alok Sharma MP, and hosted by ITV's Lucrezia Millarini.

The ERSA Employability Awards celebrate best practice across the employment support sector and seek to demonstrate the day-to-day hard work and dedication of those working to improve the lives of jobseekers, communities and the wider workforce.

ERSA received nearly 150 entries across ten categories demonstrating the breadth of work in the sector. The award entries were judged by Ashwin Kumar, Chief Economist at Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Tabitha Jay, Director of the Work and Health Unit, Gill Holmes, Senior DWP official and last year's winner of the Adviser of the Year award, Adrian Bailey of Prisoners Abroad.

## **ERSA's Chief Executive, Kirsty McHugh, says:**

'This year's award winners are extraordinary. Despite low unemployment, we know that some individuals and communities still struggle to find work. We're therefore delighted to celebrate the achievements of individuals and organisations across the sector, from the frontline advisers boosting confidence and skills to help people into work, the jobseekers overcoming huge challenges to enter employment and the employers ready to give people that much needed chance. Well done everybody.'

## **Minister for Employment, Alok Sharma MP, says:**

'I congratulate all the winners of this year's ERSA Employability Awards for their hard work and dedication towards helping people of all abilities and backgrounds into work. It's absolutely right that we celebrate these successes and the partnerships they represent which, against the backdrop of record employment levels we're seeing across the country, is even more fantastic news.'

## **ERSA is delighted to announce the following winners:**

**Youth Employment Awards sponsored by entitledto:** Recognising an employment support provider who has demonstrated exceptional commitment in delivering employment services for young adults.

### **Winner: Sova (nominated by Birmingham Youth Offending Service)**

Sova's mission is to support people to develop the skills and confidence to take control of their lives and develop their full potential. Sova Youth Promise Plus (Birmingham and Solihull) helps 16 to 24-year old NEETs at risk of offending by supporting them to address issues and helping them find sustainable education training and employment opportunities. Sova has embedded employment engagement workers in the youth offending teams and in police stations across Birmingham to ensure effective relationships with criminal justice staff and quick referrals to support for those who need it most.

**Disability and Health Employment Award sponsored by ICONI:** Recognising an employment support provider who has demonstrated exceptional commitment in supporting jobseekers with disabilities and health conditions to achieve sustained employment.

### **Winner: Genius Within CIC**

Genius Within CIC is passionate about developing talent and achieving success with hidden disability, including ADHD, autism, dyslexia, Tourette's Syndrome, mental health and conditions such as MS. The organisation seeks to transform services for clients through innovative design, research, and campaigning alongside direct client work which sees 50% of all individuals supported finding sustainable employment based on their unique strengths. Through robust evaluation and benchmarking, 90% of Genius Within

successful jobseekers are still with the same employer after one year, with 24% promoted within this timescale. The organisation supports over 700 unemployed individuals and 2,000 employed (but at risk) clients per annum.

**Partner of the Year Award sponsored by Shaw Trust:** Recognising excellence as a delivery partner in the field of employment support.

**Winner: Blackpool Council – Positive Steps into Work Service (Nominated by G4S)**

Blackpool Council joined the G4S European Social Fund Supply Chain in January 2017 and has delivered outstanding performance. The council achieved this by delivering a fully integrated service model, which identifies customers who would benefit from the service to enable them to continue on their individual journey and access wide range of support interventions to build and enhance skills, increase confidence and motivation and improve overall well-being.

**Innovation Award sponsored by Forward Trust:** Recognising a provider who has pioneered innovative approaches and solutions within the employment support market.

**Winner: Reform Radio**

Reform Radio is an online radio station and social enterprise that supports young adults into employment. Launched in 2013, Reform has grown a team of local, national and international DJs, writers, producers and artists who deliver live as well as on demand digital content around the clock. This provides engaging material with which to structure creative workshops and digital programmes for young people to develop transferrable skills. Reform works with The Prince's Trust, Big Lottery's Talent Match, the BBC, European Social Funded projects and Salford City College. Reform also works with young people at risk of being unemployed.

**Large Employer of the Year Award sponsored by Reed in Partnership:** Recognising a large employer who has demonstrated exceptional commitment in creating opportunities for disadvantaged and long term unemployed jobseekers.

**Winner: Virgin Trains**

Virgin Trains takes a multifaceted and multiagency approach to driving employability amongst disadvantaged groups. Led by its team at the Talent Academy, it has pioneered schemes to get ex-offenders into employment by working with organisations such as NOVUS and New Leaf, as well as with prison resettlement staff. It works with The Prince's Trust to offer work experience and training, as well as job opportunities for young talent. Approximately 10% of frontline staff turnover is filled through these initiatives, with entry-level apprenticeships accounting for a further 50%. And while 'Doing the Right Thing' might be a brand value, for the company it makes good business sense. Data shows that productivity and engagement is higher amongst these employees.

**Small or Medium Employer of the Year Award sponsored by Novus:** Recognising a small or medium employer who has demonstrated exceptional commitment in creating opportunities for disadvantaged and long term unemployed jobseekers.

**Winner: Roses Homecare (nominated by Kennedy Scott)**

Roses Homecare is a small private healthcare provider. Over 40% of its employees were previously long-term unemployed and approximately 10% have disabilities or health issues, including Asperger's, autism, physical health issues and sickle cell disease. Rose's has worked with Kennedy Scott for four years and has employed a number of clients, all of them sustaining in employment for over six months. Rose's support clients through work trials and placements, informal interviews and customising training and the role for

the employee. Roses strongly believes in developing employees, with its administrator, Sam – who has autism and ADHD – recently being promoted to take on Personal Assistant activities.

**Team of the Year Award sponsored by IEP and Jobskilla:** Recognising a team of frontline staff which has demonstrated outstanding commitment in meeting and exceeding the delivery aims of an employment provider.

**Winner: Torus – Employment Team**

The Torus Employment team of eight has grown to 14 due to the success and demand for support generated through their skill and dedication. Delivering voluntary schemes, the team has helped 500 tenants into work in 2016-2017, built a strong reputation with communities, delivery partners and employers and developed a social media presence reaching 15,000 people. The team has also created bespoke training programmes for 60 tenants in transport industries. This has all been achieved by the dedication of the team, the willingness to work together and a focus of always putting the individual at the heart of everything they do.

**Adviser of the Year Award sponsored by Alderwood:** Recognising an employment adviser who has demonstrated exceptional commitment in a frontline role.

**Winner: Tanya Weston (nominated by Genius Within)**

Tanya Weston is a frontline caseworker on Genius Within's offender project in the South West, where she goes above and beyond what most would deem possible with clients that are normally behind bars when she starts working with them. Through her unique skills she is able to achieve a 50% job outcome rate, which is 125% above what she is targeted to achieve. In addition to her day-to-day casework, she is also a major source of support for colleagues and is completing her PhD looking at neurodiversity in custody. Tanya is also a carer to a disabled daughter and has Asperger's herself – something she treats with humour and uses to motivate others who say that they can't do something.

**Significant Achievement Award sponsored by Working Links:** Recognising a jobseeker who has demonstrated exceptional commitment to overcoming barriers to enter and maintain work.

**Winner: Tom Sewell (nominated by Down's Syndrome Association)**

Tom's strong desire to gain a paid, permanent job motivated him to register with the Down Syndrome Association's WorkFit supported employment programme in 2015. Following his meeting with WorkFit he showed strong dedication to gaining a position, securing a six-week work trial at the National Laboratory Service in Devon in 2016. His colleagues at the laboratory had no previous experience of working with someone with Down's Syndrome, with many admitting to significant apprehension. Tom was able to make a good impression and was offered a paid, permanent position as a laboratory assistant, with a range of duties including stacking and emptying samples.

**Lifetime Achievement Award sponsored by Pluss:** Recognising an exceptional individual who has dedicated a significant part of their career to the employment related services sector and has made a notable impact on the wider sector

**Winner: Bob Marsh, Chief Executive, Clarion UK**

Profoundly Deaf since birth, Bob started his career as a cabinet maker, but early onset arthritis put a stop to his dexterity and curtailed his practical skills. He soon found himself unemployed for the first time in his life. Through personal experience, he realised how hard it was for a Deaf person to find work. Determined to make changes and ensure that his fellow-Deaf peers had equal access to all mainstream employability services, Bob commenced a career as an employment advisor for Deaf people. Bob's name has become

synonymous within the employability sector, having helped over 400 Deaf and Hard of Hearing people into sustainable employment.

**Further information:**

[ersa.org.uk/ersaawards19](https://ersa.org.uk/ersaawards19) [@ERSA\\_news](https://twitter.com/ERSA_news) [#ERSAAwards19](https://twitter.com/ERSAAwards19) [events@ersa.org.uk](https://ersa.org.uk/events)

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