

**National Institute of Adult Continuing Education**  
[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

**Press Release**  
**6<sup>th</sup> May 2009**  
**PR47g/09**

**EX-WELDER FROM CHELTENHAM WINS LEARNING AWARD**

Malcolm Apperley, aged 57, from Cheltenham, improved his basic skills and consequently managed to sort out his finances, reduce his drinking and is hopeful about getting paid work. His dedication and commitment to learning is being recognised with a Regional Senior Learner of the Year Award as part of Adult Learners' Week 9 – 15 May 2009.

Previously a welder, Malcolm (Max) was forced to stop work in 2007 due to a shoulder injury. He began drinking heavily, got into debt and was evicted from his flat.

After being evicted, Max moved into supported housing with Stonham Housing. "I was still drinking and my personal affairs were a complete mess. However, with help from my Project Worker, everything was sorted out. We also agreed it was important that I found something constructive to do with my time," he said.

Max enrolled on a City and Guilds Level 1 IT course at a local college after which he then went on to study City and Guilds Level 2 Enhanced Diploma. He has also gained OCR Level 1 and Level 2 certificates for Literacy and Numeracy through Learn Direct.

He said, "When I lost my job, I really thought that was it for me as I didn't know about anything else. But now I've realised that it's never too late to learn. All my courses have been absolutely brilliant and learning new skills will hopefully help me to get back into paid work so that I can move on."

He continued, "Learning has been one of the most important factors to reclaiming my life and giving me encouragement for the future. It's given me a structure, taught me lots of new things, built up my confidence and self-esteem and helped me reduce my drinking to almost nothing."

Further Education Minister Sion Simon said, “The Adult Learners’ Week Awards are a great opportunity to recognise and celebrate the achievements of learners around the country. As the awards show, learning in all its many forms leads to a host of benefits not only for the individual learner, but also for their families and the wider community.”

He continued, “I hope the award winners will inspire others to rediscover learning. Whether your goal is to be able to help your children with their homework, realise a career aspiration or simply learn for pleasure, brushing up on existing skills or learning new ones can transform your life.”

Rachel Thomson, Senior Campaigns Officer at NIACE, said, “The outstanding adult learning we celebrate during Adult Learners’ Week shows the range and breadth of adults’ enthusiasms, skills and determination to succeed, often against the odds. Our winners are remarkable – for their energy, commitment and talent – and each and every one should be extremely proud of what they’ve achieved.”

Ends

**To contact Malcolm Apperley** please phone Sharron Robbie on Melissa Neill or 01285 623 120.

**For further information on Adult Learners’ Week please contact:**

Ed Melia, NIACE Press Officer, on 0116 204 4248 or 07795 358 870.

Marie Koupparis, NIACE Assistant Press Officer on 0116 204 4279 or 07824 481 499 or email: [marie.koupparis@niace.org.uk](mailto:marie.koupparis@niace.org.uk)

#### **Notes to Editors**

1. Malcolm Apperley will be presented with a Regional Senior Learner Award at the South West Adult Learners' Week Regional Award Ceremony at Westlands Leisure Complex on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009. Journalists and photographers are invited to attend the event. More information is available from Ed Melia, NIACE Press Officer, on 0116 204 4248 or 07795 358 870 or [ed.melia@niace.org.uk](mailto:ed.melia@niace.org.uk)
2. Adult Learners’ Week, 9<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> May 2009, is the largest annual celebration of adult learning in the UK. It is supported by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the European Social Fund, Careers Advice, the National Learning and Skills Council, Ofcom - the Office of Communications, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, the Learning and Skills Council, Booktrust, Ufi/learndirect, Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, National Open College Network, BECTA, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and City and Guilds. More details at: [www.alw.org.uk](http://www.alw.org.uk)

3. Adult Learners' Week 2009 will include the following national events:
  - Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May: **Cultural Diversity Weekend.**
  - Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May: **Freedom to Teach, Freedom to Learn** Joint NIACE, NRDC, UCU Conference at the Institute of Education, London.
  - Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May: **National Policy Conference *Beyond the Recession: Adult Learning in Changing Times*** at the Mermaid Theatre, Blackfriars, London, sponsored by the QCA; and
  - **Adult Learners' Week Parliamentary Reception**, at the House of Commons, sponsored by City and Guilds.
  - Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May: **Quick Reads Learners' Favourite Award**, at the British Library.
  - Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May: **Learning at Work Day.**
  - Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May: **Adult Learners' Week National Award Ceremony** - QEII Conference Centre, London, sponsored by BECTA; and
  - **Silver Surfers Day.**
4. A national helpline – **Careers Advice** - is available year-round for confidential advice and information about careers and courses. The call handlers will have access to the NIACE website and can give information about local activities during Adult Learners' Week. Calls are free on 0800 100 900.
5. Events for Adult Learners' Week 2009 are listed in the interactive online calendar at [www.alw.org.uk/calendar](http://www.alw.org.uk/calendar) where you can search by keyword, your preferred date and by the region you live in. Or call **Careers Advice** free on 0800 100 900 to find Adult Learners' Week events local to you.
6. The themes for Adult Learners' Week 2009 are:
  1. Prosperity, employment and work
  2. Sustainable development
  3. Technological Change
  4. Demography and social structure
  5. Poverty reduction
  6. The roles of the public, private and voluntary sectors
  7. Well-being and happiness
  8. Crime and social exclusion
7. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is the leading non-government organisation for lifelong learning in England, and exists to encourage more and different adults to engage in better-quality learning of all kinds. It campaigns for, and celebrates the achievements of, all adult learners.