

# PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE OF ISSUE: TUESDAY, 06 NOVEMBER 2007

## YEOVIL COLLEGE MANAGER BECOMES `STAR`

The Learning Link team at Yeovil College are celebrating the success of their Manager who has been voted a regional winner in the `Outstanding Innovation` category in the Quality Improvement Agency `STAR` Awards 2007. Barbara Hawkins was nominated for the award by Angela Coward, Head of Learner Journey Services at Yeovil College. Barbara now goes forward to the National Finals that are being held in Billingsgate, London later this month.

Angela said: ***“We are delighted that Barbara has won a `STAR` Award. Her hard work and dedication in developing the Open Link project, which enables students with mental ill-health to access education, has not only brought considerable benefits for the students but also enabled the college to work closely with partners in the local community. We wish her every success in the final stages of the award.”***

Not only is Barbara a STAR winner, Angela won the draw into which all nominators were entered – free accommodation and travel for the awards in London plus £250!

In 2005 Barbara was asked to manage a small provision of courses for students with mental health problems. She identified a significant need to provide opportunities for students to access education in a non-threatening and supportive way. Working closely with the Somerset Partnership NHS and Social Care Trust she developed the Open Link provision. The project offered a variety of progressive courses aimed at building individual skills and self esteem in order for students to access education with a supportive, flexible and stepped approach.

The Open Link offers a suite of flexible learning courses ranging from discrete courses in community settings to `plus` groups within college. The response of students and stake-holders has been extremely positive and in October 2006 Open Link was awarded the AoC/Edexcel Beacon Award for Lifelong Learning, a first for the college.

For further details about the Open Link project or information about the courses on offer, please contact Yeovil College on 01935 423921.

.... Ends

---

---

## Notes to Editors

All press enquiries to Janice Smith, Marketing Officer,  
Telephone: (01935) 845406 email: [Janice.Smith@yeovil.ac.uk](mailto:Janice.Smith@yeovil.ac.uk)

Photograph shows William Lewis, Programme Manager Improvement & Strategy, QIA presenting Barbara Hawkins with her certificate.

**STAR Awards** are designed to recognise and reward the work of the unsung heroes who have made an outstanding contribution to the quality of learning that millions of people in England receive every day. QIA STAR Awards short-listed nominees come from a variety of workplaces including further education colleges, sixth form colleges, adult and community learning centres, voluntary and community organisations, and work-based learning and offender learning providers. They exemplify the breadth and diversity of the sector and are individuals who have worked above and beyond the call of duty, truly exceeding expectations.