

# Media Release

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## EBC tops for tourism

Forging successful links between schools and businesses across Tyne and Wear has earned Education Business Connections Ltd (EBC) a special reward. At the annual North East Tourism Awards ceremony last night (Oct 10) EBC was presented with the prize for Tourism Ambassador of the Year.

The Sunderland-based charity's flagship programme Exploring Tourism, which culminated in a trip for around 50 schoolchildren to Amsterdam, is the reason for the award. The project was funded by the Learning and Skills Council and managed by Tyne and Wear Education Business Links Organisation. Youngsters from schools across the region worked with people from the North East's tourism sector on a series of activities over several months before heading to Holland. Once there, they showcased the highlights of the North East to an appreciative audience of Amsterdam's tourism agents.

Three awards were presented for the ambassador category: gold, silver and bronze, and EBC was awarded the gold standard.

EBC chief executive Barbara McClennan said: "I was delighted to collect this award on behalf of the whole EBC team. A lot of hard work and effort went into Exploring Tourism and it is great to know that the programme is receiving wider recognition.

"It was an honour to be nominated and credit should go to all of the school pupils and business people who made the programme such a success.

"All our programmes aim to be innovative and to introduce elements of enterprise into the curriculum. We are already building on the success of Exploring Tourism with our latest tourism-based programme Showcasing Tourism, which we hope will be just as successful for all those involved."

The schools which took part included: Monkseaton High School; Margaret Sutton School and Brinkburn School, South Shields; Jarrow School; Houghton Kepier School, Kenton School and Heaton Manor School, Newcastle; Castle View School, Castlegreen School, Hylton Red House School and Sandhill View School, Sunderland; St Thomas More School and St Edmund Campion School, Gateshead, and Hebburn School.

Exploring Tourism saw North East teenagers discovering more about the potential of the tourism sector by taking part in class workshops and large scale one-off events. As well as the presentations which were a major part of the project, some students learned desktop publishing and research skills as part of the Creative Tourism element of the programme.

It is not the first time that the programme has been part of the North East Tourism Awards. Last year, before EBC had begun to deliver the programme to schools, it was shortlisted in the Best Innovation category.

EBC, based at the Business & Innovation Centre on Sunderland Enterprise Park, was formed eight years ago to support closer working between schools and businesses in Sunderland. Its success means that now the team delivers innovative educational programmes to children across Tyne and Wear. Programmes are funded from a variety of sources, including from the European Social Fund, but EBC's ongoing development is supported by Futurebuilders (for more details go to [www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk](http://www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk)).

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