

# Ravel - The Pride of Gateshead

Four years ago, Ravel Djongoue arrived in the UK with no job and a very limited grasp of the English language. He left his native Cameroon because of the political situation which endangered his life.

Amazingly, after such a short time, Ravel is now fully employed and has received a prestigious award from Gateshead Council as one of their learners of the year.

The award was presented to Ravel by BBC personality Paddy McDee at a plush ceremony at the Gateshead Marriot Hotel and was in recognition of "outstanding progression and achievement by surpassing targets and expectations".

Ravel's new job with Gateshead Warm Zone is part funded by the European Social Fund and as an assessor he is helping to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency across all homes in the borough.

His role involves him visiting homes in Gateshead to conduct a 2 minute home energy survey. "It's a great job where I really feel I am helping the people of Gateshead" he said.

"My college course and talking to people in my job has helped to develop my skills and also my use of the English language. I am very pleased to have received this award".

Gateshead Warm Zone director Karen Hindhaugh was also delighted with Ravel's award. "We are all very proud of Ravel's achieve-

ment. He is a shining example of how determination and application can help someone develop new skills even under very difficult circumstances."



*Ravel with his award.*

Warm Zone assessors are currently working in the Lobley Hill and Bensham Ward of Gateshead. The five year project will tackle fuel poverty, and people on certain benefits, Gateshead Housing Company tenants and everyone aged 60 or over will automatically qualify for free insulation if required. Free benefits and energy efficiency advice will also be available to all homes to potentially increase incomes and cut fuel bills.

The £23m project - which will operate on a ward-by-ward basis visiting every home across Gateshead, is a not-for-profit partnership between Gateshead Council, The Gateshead Housing Company, National Grid and Scottish Power.