



2026

PORTSMOUTH & CHICHESTER APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS 2026

Headline Sponsor



WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT

Talented apprentices, employers and training providers celebrated for their achievements



On Thursday, 22nd October the annual Portsmouth & Chichester Apprenticeship Awards took place at The Marriott Hotel, Portsmouth. Guests were welcomed with a drinks reception, sponsored by the Marriott Hotel, followed by a three-course meal and, of course, the prestigious awards ceremony.

We celebrated 14 award categories, recognising both outstanding apprentices and the employers and training providers who support them.

Guests were welcomed by Mark Waldron, Editor in Chief. Mark welcomed guests to the Portsmouth & Chichester Apprenticeship Awards, expressing delight at seeing such a strong turnout gathered to celebrate the region's outstanding young talent, dedication, and ambition.

In opening remarks, it was highlighted that apprenticeships play a vital role in the local economy by offering clear paths into rewarding careers and practical experience, while supplying local businesses with the skilled workforce needed to thrive. The evening emphasized that such success relies on strong partnerships, acknowledging not only the extraordinary apprentices but also the employers, training providers, and mentors who invest significant time and guidance into nurturing local talent.

At its heart, the celebration focused on the apprentices whose determination and enthusiasm drive the success of these schemes. Judges noted that the exceptional caliber of entries made this year's selection process particularly challenging.

All shortlisted nominees were commended for their achievements, with speakers reminding finalists that being selected was a major testament to their hard work, new skills, and impressive professional progress.

Tributes were paid to the panel of judges for their careful deliberation, as well as to the sponsors and partners whose generous support made the awards ceremony possible. Mark concluded with warm congratulations to all finalists, celebrating their achievements and wishing them continued success in their future careers.

We also heard from Captain Lee McLocklan, Captain of the Base at HM Naval Base Portsmouth on behalf of the Royal Navy our headline partner - who said "Good evening, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a real pleasure to welcome you to the Portsmouth and Chichester Apprenticeship Awards, 2026 and particularly pleasing for the Royal Navy to be here for our fourth year as Headline Sponsor.

Portsmouth and Chichester have a



proud history of developing skilled people, and tonight gives mentors and training providers who invest their time and energy in helping them succeed. us an opportunity to celebrate not only some exceptional apprentices, but also the employers,

For me, the real strength of an apprenticeship is that it provides far more than a qualification. It gives people the opportunity to develop professional skills, build confidence and practical experience, while making a meaningful contribution to their organisation from the outset. That is something we understand very well in the Royal Navy.

At any given time, we have around 6,500 sailors and Royal Marines undertaking apprenticeships, representing approximately 20 per cent of our naval population. We currently deliver more than 20 different programmes across seven sectors, developing the next generation of technicians, engineers, logisticians, leaders and specialists.

We know first-hand that apprenticeships are an investment in people, but they are also an investment in our future. They help develop the skilled, confident and capable workforce that our organisations, our communities and our nation will continue to rely upon.

So this evening is rightly about recognising achievement. To all of the finalists, congratulations on what you have accomplished, and to the employers, mentors, families and training providers who have supported you along the way, thank you.

The Royal Navy is extremely proud to support these awards, and I hope you all have an enjoyable evening, able to celebrate success but also network across the organisations represented here tonight. As we know all too well, it is not just our service personnel who enable us to undertake operations but it is a whole enterprise of

capabilities and organisations (some here in this very room) that give us the freedom to deploy our ships, submarines and Royal Marines to wherever we are needed.

Congratulations to everyone being recognised tonight, and thank you

A special thank you to our panel of judges, comprising industry experts, diligently reviewed every nomination to determine this year's finalists and eventual winners. The judging process was meticulous, reflecting the high calibre of submissions received across the region. They are;

Simon Ashwood Military Independent Assessment Authority Team Leader - Royal Navy

Fiona Stilwell Chief Executive Officer - PETA

Chris Davies, Apprentice Chair - South East Apprenticeship Ambassador Network

Matt Johnson Director - South Coast Institute of Technology

David Humphries CEO - Shaping Portsmouth

Mark Waldron Editor in Chief South - Iconic Media

Jon Daines Managing Director - Construction - Amiri Construction Ltd

During the event we organised a raffle to raise funds for our Charity Partner Aphasia Support. Aphasia is a language disorder which affects a person's ability to speak, read, write and understand language. It is often the devastating result of a stroke or head injury.

There are an estimated 350,000 people living with a diagnosis of Aphasia in the UK. The hidden disability is life-changing. Many find it challenging to navigate daily life, resulting in loneliness and isolation.

At Aphasia Support, their mission is to improve the wellbeing of people with Aphasia and their carers by providing tailored speech and language therapy and long-term support.

We strive to enhance the quality of life for people with Aphasia - helping them to regain control, confidence and independence. A total of **£1,370** was raised - thank you to everyone for their generosity.

The event was hosted by Mark Collins, Mark has over 40 years of radio experience, having started his career after a train guard suggested his voice suited broadcasting.

Keep up to date with the event visit the website:

www.pcapprenticeshipawards.co.uk



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Intermediate Apprentice of the Year

WINNER
Bella Driscoll - South Coast Alliance; merging Portsmouth Primary Care Alliance and Southern Hampshire Primary Care Alliance

Presented by Gary Blurton, Commercial Director at Local Eyes, part of the Iconic Media Group

Bella represents everything that apprenticeships can achieve when a young person is given an opportunity, encouraged to believe in themselves, and supported to realise their potential. When Bella left school, she was unsure about her next steps and lacked qualifications in Maths or English. However, she brought potential, a strong willingness to learn, and a drive to succeed. Working within a busy healthcare organisation while completing her apprenticeship required her to develop quickly, both personally and professionally. Through her dedication, Bella has transformed that initial opportunity into the foundation of a promising career. She has grown into an increasingly confident, independent, and reliable team member who consistently delivers high-quality work supporting vital healthcare services across Portsmouth and South East Hampshire. Bella's remarkable journey highlights the power of apprenticeships to unlock potential, build genuine confidence, and provide clear pathways into meaningful professional careers.



Advanced Apprentice of the Year

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 South Hampshire College Group 

WINNER
James Lawson - Mipa Paints

Presented by Beth Challoner, Director of Apprenticeships and Business Engagement

Highly Commended: Emily Gunn, Drift IT Services

Over the past year at Mipa Paints, James has grown significantly, becoming a vital asset to his business and earning the trust of senior leadership and international colleagues. While studying for his AAT qualification and achieving impressive merits, James successfully managed a major audit and supported early-stage business acquisition efforts. When his manager fell ill, James stepped up with remarkable resilience, taking responsibility for the finance function. He managed critical insurance renewals, identified cost-saving opportunities, and presented comprehensive reports directly to the CEO. Furthermore, James produced monthly management accounts packs and profit and loss statements for the parent company in Germany, earning praise for his thorough financial analysis and clear communication. His diverse, demanding role showcases his strong technical skills, initiative, and dedication to continuous professional development.



Higher Apprentice of the Year

Sponsored by
 University of Portsmouth 

WINNER
Daisy West - Sisters Inn Arms Venues Ltd

Presented by Paul Goldthorpe, Quality, Compliance and Bids Manager

Highly Commended: Connor Cooper, Runfold Plastics

Daisy embodies everything an outstanding apprentice should be, making a profound impact on the team, culture, and operational success at The Alverbank. Having joined at just 16 years old as a Front of House runner, she quickly demonstrated a natural instinct for hospitality, a strong work ethic, and an eagerness to learn. Recognising her exceptional potential, her employer supported her progression directly onto the Level 4 Hospitality Manager apprenticeship. Throughout her training, Daisy has grown in confidence and responsibility, transitioning smoothly from front-of-house operations into a key business operations role. She brings calm leadership, unwavering integrity, and a collaborative team spirit to the venue, inspiring those around her. Daisy's impressive career journey shows how combining talent, structured learning, and strong workplace support creates exceptional leaders in hospitality.



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Degree Apprentice of the Year

WINNER
Holly Griffin - Biscoes Solicitors

Presented by Mark Waldron Editor in Chief, Iconic Media Group South

Holly joined Biscoes Solicitors as an HR Coordinator and quickly pursued the Level 7 Strategic People Management apprenticeship to advance her career. Achieving outstanding academic results with multiple distinctions, she rapidly translated her learning into significant organisational impact. Holly established a Mental Health First Aider network, led employee wellbeing initiatives, and coordinated key diversity, equity, and inclusion projects. When her manager departed, she independently managed day-to-day HR operations, demonstrating maturity and advisory capability that earned her a promotion to HR Advisor. Beyond her core responsibilities, Holly established Biscoes NextGen, an early-career network supporting 25 trainees and apprentices, created a cross-departmental mentoring scheme, and restructured the firm's work experience program. Her journey highlights the extraordinary value of applying higher-level learning directly to drive organisational growth and mentor others.



Technology and Digital Apprentice of the Year

WINNER
Seyni Ndoeye - Portsmouth Aviation

Presented by Jon Daines, Managing Director, Amiri Construction Ltd

The award was accepted on Seyni's behalf by Pamela Davies, Operations Manager at PETA (pictured)

Seyni began his apprenticeship at Portsmouth Aviation with a passion for software development and IT infrastructure. Quickly integrating into the technology team, he took on complex responsibilities involving internal network upgrades, cybersecurity protocol implementations, and customised database management systems. Seyni demonstrated remarkable initiative when he identified key workflow bottlenecks, developing an automated internal ticketing system that reduced IT support response times by forty percent. Beyond his technical achievements, Seyni actively supports digital literacy initiatives across the business, mentoring new trainees and guiding staff through software transitions. His technical skill, innovative problem-solving, and dedication to continuous learning highlight how apprentices drive vital digital transformation in modern manufacturing settings.



Professional Services Apprentice of the Year

WINNER
Lauren Bell - BAE Systems

Sponsored by Royal Navy



Presented by Captain of the Base at HM Naval Base Portsmouth, Captain Lee McLocklan

Lauren joined BAE Systems as a Project Management Apprentice, quickly demonstrating exceptional organisational talent, leadership maturity, and commercial awareness. Assigned to complex naval support programs, she took ownership of critical risk management frameworks and budget tracking tools, ensuring seamless coordination across multi-disciplinary teams. During a major operational review, Lauren independently analyzed cost variances, delivering key recommendations that generated notable operational savings. Passionate about early careers development, she co-chairs the internal apprentice network, organising professional development workshops and outreach events for local schools. Lauren's proactive mindset, analytical capability, and commitment to business excellence underscore the powerful impact of apprenticeships within the defence and professional services sectors.



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Construction Apprentice of the Year

WINNER
Sam Reed - Amiri Construction Ltd

Presented by Mark Thomas MBE, Warrant Officer, Royal Navy

Sam began his career with Amiri Construction five years ago as an Apprentice Quantity Surveyor, seeking a balance between academic study and practical site experience. Through hard work and determination, he earned a 2:1 degree in Quantity Surveying and secured a promotion to Quantity Surveyor. Sam has taken on key commercial responsibilities for major construction projects, including the £14 million PLAYXPERIENCE at Butlin's and healthcare facilities in Chichester. During periods of staffing transition, Sam stepped up calmly to maintain commercial continuity and deliver successful project outcomes. His adaptability, commercial awareness, and problem-solving abilities were further demonstrated when managing complex site challenges and contractual requirements on recent industrial developments. Sam's humble, proactive approach and consistent reliability make him an invaluable team member and an outstanding role model for future apprentices.



Health and Public Service Apprentice of the Year

WINNER
Chris Davies - Department for Work and Pensions

Presented by Host, Mark Collins

Chris joined the Department for Work and Pensions after deciding that traditional university was not the right path for him, seeking a role where he could make a meaningful difference in his community. Starting as a Work Coach, he supported vulnerable jobseekers into employment before progressing to lead operational teams. Driven to enhance his public policy expertise, Chris undertook a Level 6 Degree Apprenticeship. Balancing demanding full-time responsibilities with study, he spearheaded initiatives to streamline customer journey workflows and boost service delivery efficiency. Chris actively mentors junior colleagues, leads internal peer support networks, and promotes public service apprenticeships across local schools. His determination, leadership, and public sector commitment exemplify how modern apprenticeships build skilled leaders who drive positive social impact.



Engineering & Manufacturing Apprentice of the Year

WINNER
Arthur Barton-Hide - Mott MacDonald

Presented by Matt Johnson, the Director of South Coast Institute of Technology

Arthur began his journey with Mott MacDonald as a Civil Engineering Apprentice, eager to combine practical infrastructure projects with rigorous academic study. Demonstrating technical aptitude and strong problem-solving skills, he rapidly advanced to managing key digital modeling and site design packages for regional coastal defence and transport initiatives. When project deadlines tightened, Arthur took the initiative to automate design calculation workflows, significantly reducing processing time and improving team accuracy. Alongside his technical responsibilities, he acts as a STEM Ambassador, visiting local colleges to inspire young people from underrepresented backgrounds to pursue engineering careers. Arthur's dedication to continuous learning, technical excellence, and peer mentorship makes him an outstanding representative of modern engineering apprenticeships.



Mentor of the Year

WINNER
Katie Mann - Shoots Training Limited

Presented by Lieutenant Commander Simon Ashwood, Royal Navy

Katie has dedicated her career to guiding and supporting apprentices through their professional training journeys at Shoots Training Limited. As a mentor, she provides personalised coaching, helping learners overcome workplace challenges, build self-confidence, and develop essential vocational skills. Katie works closely with employer partners to tailor training plans, ensuring apprentices gain meaningful responsibilities while meeting academic milestones. When apprentices face personal or professional obstacles, her compassionate approach and proactive guidance ensure they remain engaged and motivated to complete their qualifications. Beyond 1-on-1 support, Katie leads mentorship workshops for line managers, fostering supportive workplace cultures across partner organisations. Her passion, empathy, and steadfast commitment have empowered countless apprentices to achieve their full potential.



Apprentice Ambassador of the Year

WINNER
Alison Lee - Biscoes Solicitors

Presented by David Humphries, the CEO of Shaping Portsmouth

The Award was accepted by Biscoes Solicitors on Alions's behalf

Highly Commended: Terry Hutchins, Royal Navy

Alison has spent 34 years at Biscoes Solicitors, serving as Managing Director for the last 15 years, during which she has consistently championed lifelong learning, innovation, and career development. For Alison, apprenticeships are a vital tool for identifying potential, investing in people, and creating sustainable pathways into professional careers. Under her leadership, Biscoes supports around 25 trainees and apprentices across legal, administrative, and managerial roles. She personally interviews candidates, acts as Training Principal, celebrates individual milestones, and invests in work experience infrastructure to support local students. By creating a supportive culture where administrative staff can progress into qualified legal professionals, Alison demonstrates a profound commitment to developing talent, building community partnerships, and promoting the transformative value of apprenticeships across the wider region.





SME Employer of the Year

WINNER
South Coast Alliance CIC

Presented by Host Mark Collins

Highly Commended: Paul Basham Associates

South Coast Alliance CIC is dedicated to strengthening community healthcare and public services across Hampshire through an ambitious, inclusive apprenticeship strategy. Recognising apprenticeships as a cornerstone of talent development, the organisation provides comprehensive support structures, pairing every apprentice with experienced mentors and offering clear career pathways. By offering opportunities to individuals re-entering the workforce or lacking traditional qualifications, South Coast Alliance creates an environment where team members thrive. Their apprentices directly contribute to vital community projects, healthcare delivery, and administrative efficiencies. Through active engagement with regional training providers and continuous investment in employee wellbeing, South Coast Alliance CIC demonstrates how small-and-medium enterprises can successfully build a resilient workforce while driving positive social impact.



Large Employer of the Year

Sponsored by
 City of Portsmouth College



WINNER
West Sussex County Council

Presented by Teresa Cole, Vice Principal of Foundations and Adult Learning

West Sussex County Council demonstrates an outstanding commitment to workforce development through its comprehensive, inclusive apprenticeship program across public services. The council supports hundreds of apprentices across diverse disciplines, including social care, civil engineering, digital technology, and business administration. By embedding structured mentoring, continuous learning pathways, and clear career progression routes, the council empowers apprentices to make meaningful contributions to public service delivery. Their proactive outreach targets underrepresented groups and local school leavers, offering accessible entry points into rewarding careers. Through collaborative partnerships with local colleges and training providers, West Sussex County Council continues to set a benchmark for public sector employers, successfully developing local talent and building a resilient future workforce.



Training Provider of the Year

Sponsored by Royal Navy



WINNER
South Hampshire College Group

Presented by Captain of the Base at HM Naval Base Portsmouth, Captain Lee McLocklan

South Hampshire College Group has established itself as a premier provider of vocational and technical education, delivering high-quality apprenticeship programs tailored to regional economic needs. Through strong industry partnerships with key local employers, the group offers diverse training pathways across engineering, healthcare, digital technology, and professional services. Their state-of-the-art facilities and dedicated instructional staff ensure apprentices gain rigorous practical experience alongside theoretical learning. The college group maintains high completion rates and career progression outcomes, consistently supporting learners from diverse backgrounds into fulfilling careers. By continually adapting curricula to address regional skills shortages, South Hampshire College Group plays a vital role in developing a skilled workforce and driving regional business growth.



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