

WEST YORKSHIRE  
APPRENTICESHIP  
AWARDS 2026

Headline Sponsor



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WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT

# Apprentices, Employers and Providers Recognised for Remarkable Achievements



On Thursday, 14th May we held the Annual West Yorkshire Apprenticeship Awards, held at Cedar Court Hotel, Bradford. Guests were welcomed with a drinks reception kindly sponsored by Cedar Court 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.

The awards serve as a platform to showcase the outstanding contributions of apprentices, employers, and training providers across West Yorkshire, recognising the vital role they play in developing future talent and supporting the region's economy. Celebrating the individuals who have embraced the opportunities apprenticeship programmes provide and flourished within their chosen careers. Through dedication, ambition and hard work, they are building strong foundations for the future while making a meaningful impact within their industries. As the innovators, leaders and skilled workforce of tomorrow, they continue to inspire those around them and showcase the true value of apprenticeships.

Apprentices prove that it is possible to rise to the top, driving change and innovation in their workplaces while making significant contributions to the local economy. This celebration marks the achievements of a generation that is breaking barriers, investing in themselves, and playing a vital role in regional growth. We thank everyone who supports these rising stars, and to those embracing apprenticeships, for their contributions benefit us all.

A special thank you to our esteemed 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. We extend our sincere thanks to our judging panel; they are;

**Emma Pearmaine**, Managing Director - Ridley and Hall Legal Limited

**Andy Clarke**, Head of Strategic Partnerships - Ahead Partnership

**Hannah Brown**, Degree Apprentice Environmental Practice - Mott Macdonald Ltd

**Elizabeth Mills**, Senior University Teacher. SFHEA - School of Allied Health Professions, Pharmacy, Nursing and Midwifery

**Brandon Jones**, Head of External Relations - First Bus



**Laura Collins**, Iconic Media's Editor in Chief (West and North Yorkshire) welcomed our guests and said "It is my pleasure to welcome each and every one here to the return of the West Yorkshire Apprenticeship Awards.

This annual event, hosted by the Yorkshire Evening post in partnership with the Wakefield Express and Halifax Courier, recognises the vital role apprenticeships play in bridging the gap between education and the world of work. Tonight we celebrate something powerful. Potential turned into progress. Apprenticeships don't just build careers - they build confidence, communities and the future. Every challenge faced, every skill mastered, and every qualification earned represents hard work and commitment, but apprentices never succeed alone. Behind every successful apprentice is an employer willing to invest in potential and a training provider dedicated to guiding, teaching and inspiring the next generation. Together, you are creating pathways that transform lives, strengthen businesses and shape the future of our economy.

Apprenticeships show us that you are never too old to learn a new skill - I myself have had personal experience passing my own apprenticeship last year in senior leadership and the skills it has taught me are invaluable. Everyone here in this room is a shining example of how you contribute to this and you should be rightly proud of your accomplishments. So tonight, let's celebrate every lesson learned, every opportunity given and every success earned. Congratulations to you all.

Guests were also welcomed by our headline partner YPO, Simon Hill, YPO's Managing Director said: YPO are delighted to be the headline sponsor for this year's West Yorkshire Apprenticeship Awards, celebrating outstanding talent and ambition shown by apprentices across the region. At YPO, we consider our apprenticeship framework essential to our organisation's success. We aim to empower people by creating paid

opportunities and providing hands-on industry experience while they achieve relevant qualifications. By supporting this prestigious event, we demonstrate our ongoing commitment to education, strengthening career pathways and helping organisations across our region build a skilled and confident workforce.

For more than a decade, YPO has proudly welcomed 120 apprentices aged 16 and above across a wide range of roles, offering first-hand, relevant experience, structured learning and clear routes into long-term employment. Last year alone, we welcomed 11 new apprentices into the organisation, engaging young people in roles such as Supply Chain Analysts, Warehouse Operatives, HR Support, Finance Assistants, Business Administrators, Multi-channel Marketers, Customer Services Practitioners and Internal Communications apprenticeships.

Our commitment extends to the wider business community and we are delighted to present the Degree Apprentice and also the Large Employer and Award, which honours organisations that go above and beyond to support the next generation through their apprenticeship programmes. Looking ahead we remain dedicated to our apprenticeship programme, offering opportunities across a wide range of careers to develop talent in-house. Through this sponsorship we hope to inspire apprentices, employers, industry leaders and partners to continue championing skills, development and innovation across our region. Unlike many of the apprentices in the room you can see from my appearance I'm nearer to the end of my career than the beginning. No plans to go anywhere just yet - when I do retire: YPO's apprenticeship scheme will be the thing I'm the most proud of.

Finally we extend our warmest congratulations to all nominees/ We look forward to celebrating our accomplishments and the incredible impact you make. I wish you all a very enjoyable evening.

During the event we organised a raffle

to raise funds for our Charity Partner Yorkshire Ambulance Charity Service - who are dedicated to supporting the work of Yorkshire Ambulance Service, the communities it serves and our NHS Ambulance staff and volunteers. We enhance the work of the NHS, enabling more people to respond in a medical emergency and support the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers. We are pleased to share that the raffle donation equaled £2,490. This amazing total represents 2 defibrillators that could be installed in Yorkshire communities to help save more lives. Thanks to all our guests for your generosity.

The event was hosted by Rich Williams, an award-winning radio presenter and live event host, currently part of the Breakfast Show team on the Absolute Radio network. A former Arqiva Commercial Radio Presenter of the Year, he has hosted major international sporting events including FIFA World Cups, UEFA Women's EUROs and Champions League Finals. Rich also produces podcasts and is an award-winning children's author.

Keep up to date with the event visit the website <https://www.wyapprenticeshipawards.co.uk/>





### Intermediate Apprentice of the Year

Sponsored by Yorkshire Water

#### WINNER

**Faith Loynes, Bagnalls**



Presented by Dani Flavell,  
Organisational Effectiveness Advisor

Faith Loynes, a 19-year-old apprentice at Bagnalls, has quickly distinguished herself as an exceptional talent in the painting and decorating industry. Since joining Bagnalls in July 2024, Faith has blended creativity and technical expertise, progressing from a Level 2 apprenticeship with aspirations for Level 3. Her achievements are remarkable: winner of Student of the Year at Leeds College of Building, Bagnalls' Junior Apprentice of the Year, and multiple accolades in national competitions, including the Painting and Decorating Association and SkillBuild. Faith's commitment to continuous improvement and her willingness to embrace advanced training have made her a sought-after team member. She is praised by supervisors for her reliability, professionalism, and leadership potential. As a female apprentice thriving in a male-dominated field, Faith inspires others and challenges stereotypes, serving as a role model both within Bagnalls and the wider industry. Her future in the trade looks exceptionally bright.



### Advanced Apprentice

#### WINNER

**Ariba Matloob, BDCU Credit Union**

Highly Commended awarded to Missy Mortimer,  
CO Manufacturing

Ariba's journey as a BDCU apprentice is a testament to resilience and ambition. Joining at 19 after leaving university due to anxiety and financial pressures, she embraced an apprenticeship for practical experience, confidence, and a debt-free start to her career. Balancing full-time work with caring for her disabled sister and ill parents, Ariba overcame personal and professional barriers with determination. She excelled in her role, achieving distinctions in all apprenticeship modules and a record 98% accuracy in Member Services. Ariba's empathy supports vulnerable members, while her leadership shines in community initiatives and events such as the Bradford College Apprenticeship Games. Her contributions to digital projects and service improvements have strengthened BDCU's impact and reputation. Ariba now represents the organisation at public events, showcasing the transformative power of apprenticeships. Her journey demonstrates that with courage and support, apprentices can drive positive change for themselves and their communities.



### Higher Apprentice

#### WINNER

**Imogen Lidster, URM UK Limited**

Presented by Laura Collins,  
Editor-in-Chief, West and North Yorkshire

Imogen's apprenticeship journey at URM began in October 2024, when she joined as a Business Administrator and quickly identified opportunities to make a lasting impact. Driven by initiative, she pursued a Level 4 Marketing Executive Apprenticeship alongside her role, bringing structure and energy to a previously uncoordinated area. Within months, Imogen built URM's marketing function from the ground up—launching social media channels, shaping internal communications, and delivering creative campaigns that have strengthened both engagement and brand visibility. Her projects, from community initiatives to major company events, have improved culture and reinforced organisational values. Committed to learning, she undertook additional courses to elevate her skills, delivering work that rivals seasoned professionals. As she approaches her End Point Assessment, Imogen is leading a full website redesign, underscoring her ambition and strategic vision. Her journey exemplifies how passion and determination can drive transformation and create lasting value through apprenticeship.



### Degree Apprentice

#### WINNER

**Callum Hibbert, Yorkshire Water**

Highly Commended awarded to Tom Butler,  
CML Civil Engineering

Presented by Simon Hill, YPO Managing Director

Callum's apprenticeship journey at Yorkshire Water has been marked by impressive growth, initiative, and impact. Joining as a Level 6 Data Scientist Apprentice in September 2024, Callum quickly immersed himself in tackling real-world challenges, from supporting Ofwat during drought conditions to driving proactive interventions for environmental protection. His passion for maths and computing, discovered in high school, led him to pursue an apprenticeship over university, valuing hands-on experience and early career development. Callum's achievements include being awarded Yorkshire Water's Recruited in Apprentice of the Year 2025, delivering pivotal presentations on the role of data in business decisions, and being elected as the first Apprentice Representative on the Early in Careers Council. He's become a valued team member, actively contributing technical expertise and mentoring fellow apprentices. Callum now looks forward to developing his leadership skills and hopes to lead a team of data scientists, continuing to champion innovation and collaboration at Yorkshire Water.



YorkshireWater



### Engineering / Manufacturing Apprentice of the Year

Sponsored by Kirklees College



#### WINNER

**Farhan Miah, Arup**

Presented by Head of Apprenticeships and Business Development, Paul Edwards

Highly Commended awarded to Owen Parsons, GS-Hyrdo

Farhan's apprenticeship journey is a testament to the power of hands-on learning and community engagement. Driven by early passions for design and building, Farhan chose a civil engineering apprenticeship to blend academic study with real-world project experience. At work, he supports rail infrastructure projects, develops technical and workplace skills, and has quickly become a valued team member. Beyond his technical role, Farhan is deeply committed to outreach—organising work experience programmes for students, acting as a STEM Ambassador, and connecting university students with industry opportunities. He also serves on the Bradford Youth Panel, ensuring young people's voices shape the city's cultural future. Farhan's leadership, mentoring, and dedication have earned him recognition, including the ICE QUEST Technician Scholarship. His journey highlights how apprenticeships can foster both professional growth and positive community impact, as he continues to inspire the next generation of engineers and make a difference in Bradford and beyond.



### Construction Apprentice

#### WINNER

**Ryan Spinks, Equans**

Presented by Adam Graham, Group General Manager at Cedar Court Hotel

Ryan's apprenticeship journey exemplifies dedication, professionalism, and rapid growth. As a Quantity Surveyor, he supports multiple contracts and clients, consistently demonstrating exceptional organisation and technical skills. Balancing a demanding workload with university studies, Ryan has achieved first-class results and is on track for a top degree. His leadership has flourished, particularly through independently managing the Anchor contract, navigating personnel changes, and delivering profitable results. Ryan's influence extends beyond his technical role: he mentors others, represents trainees at senior leadership level, and has driven business improvements through his involvement in champion groups. His willingness to challenge established processes led to significant operational changes, and his presentations to senior leaders have earned him company-wide recognition. Passionate about inspiring future talent, Ryan actively promotes apprenticeships and supports young people across West Yorkshire. Recently promoted ahead of schedule, Ryan's apprenticeship has set a new standard for excellence and innovation within the business.



### Health and Public Service Apprentice

#### WINNER

**Om Patel, Labcorp Drug Development**

Presented by Yorkshire Ambulance Service Charity

Om's Level 4 Bioscience and Pharmaceutical Science Apprenticeship at Labcorp has been marked by rapid professional and personal growth. Embracing hands-on learning, Om quickly progressed to Key Trainer, mentoring colleagues, streamlining laboratory workflows, and implementing innovations such as a new bacteria batch creation system. His proactive approach extended to shadowing the Quality Assurance team and excelling in his degree studies while balancing significant lab responsibilities. Om's commitment to high standards, regulatory compliance, and continuous improvement has enhanced both team performance and operational outcomes. As an apprenticeship ambassador, he inspires peers by producing educational content, participating in outreach, and advocating for the recognition of apprenticeships. Om's integrity, leadership, and solutions-focused attitude have made him integral to the Genetic Toxicology department. His journey reflects the powerful impact of apprenticeships in developing skilled, motivated professionals who drive advances in science and contribute meaningfully to organizational success.



## Employers

## Work with us

Kirklees College works with over 1,000 employers on a local and national scale to offer the next generation amazing opportunities through apprenticeships and work/industry placement. If you own or work for a business in West Yorkshire that is looking for fresh talent and wants to help shape futures, get in touch to see how our team can help you.

T: 0800 781 3020

E: [employers@kirkleescollege.ac.uk](mailto:employers@kirkleescollege.ac.uk)

W: [www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk/employers](http://www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk/employers)



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### Professional Services Apprentice

Sponsored by Bradford District Credit Union

#### WINNER

**Ellie Whittingham, Jet2**



Highly Commended awarded to Natalie Stephenson-Quayle, Ridley and Hall Solicitors  
Ellie's apprenticeship journey began after A-levels, when she chose hands-on experience over university, initially joining British Airways before moving to Jet2 as their first-ever sustainability apprentice. Eager to apply her studies directly to real business challenges, Ellie excelled in her role, supporting Jet2's ambitious 2024-2035 Sustainability Strategy and managing projects in environmental compliance, colleague engagement, and social value. Her impact includes raising £2 million through charity partnerships, increasing sustainable hotels, launching successful sustainability campaigns, and saving Macmillan over £700,000 by identifying a critical error. Recognised as LDN Apprentice of the Month and highly commended at the National Apprenticeship Awards, Ellie completed her L4 apprenticeship ahead of schedule, progressing to a higher degree apprenticeship. She now mentors others, advocates for apprenticeships, and has developed leadership, stakeholder management, and public speaking skills. Ellie's passion has driven real change, making her a role model within Jet2 and the wider community.



### Technology and Digital Apprentice

#### WINNER

**Sophie Steel, Jet2.com**

Sophie's apprenticeship journey at Jet2 has been marked by outstanding professional growth, innovation, and impact. Choosing an apprenticeship over university, she sought hands-on experience and structured learning, quickly excelling as a Business Systems Analyst Apprentice. Sophie helped modernise business processes, developed digital solutions that improved efficiency and compliance, and played a key role in sustainability initiatives by reducing paper usage. Her leadership emerged through projects like implementing a business-wide ticketing system and championing Women in Tech, where she presented to senior leaders and inspired colleagues. Despite facing significant health challenges, Sophie's resilience and commitment never wavered, earning her recognition and trust across the business. Beyond her core role, she has represented Jet2 at major recruitment events, supported new apprentices, and contributed to a positive work culture. Sophie's achievements and dedication highlight the value of apprenticeships, and she is well-positioned for a successful career as a future business leader.



### Mentor of the Year

Sponsored by FDM Group.

#### WINNER

**Andy Holt, Bagnalls**



Presented by Kate Hawthorn, Director of Consultant Talent  
Highly Commended awarded to Helen Rutherford, Exceed Training Company Ltd

Andy's impact as a mentor at Bagnalls is both wide-reaching and deeply personal. Since taking on the Apprentice Lead role in 2022, Andy has guided the largest apprentice cohort in the company, overseeing training, development, and welfare for 16 apprentices. His hands-on approach—ranging from daily site check-ins to quarterly reviews—ensures each apprentice receives tailored support. By proactively identifying skill gaps and collaborating with colleges, Andy helps apprentices progress, secure qualifications, and gain confidence. He champions diversity, with the Leeds branch boasting the highest proportion of female apprentices in the company. Under his mentorship, apprentices have achieved outstanding completion rates and won numerous regional and national awards. Andy's holistic view of mentoring, enhanced by safeguarding and mental health training, ensures apprentices are supported in all aspects of their journey. His dedication is not just to training skilled decorators, but to nurturing future leaders and building an inclusive, thriving workforce.

## Empower Your Employees with Bradford District Credit Union!

BDCU is a not-for-profit financial cooperative that provides access to ethical and affordable loans and savings accounts to members in Bradford, Kirklees and Craven.

With over 30 years of service, we support more than 11,500 members who collectively save more than £6.5 million with us! We also arrange and take part in important community projects and initiatives to help improve people's financial literacy.

### Enhance CSR and Staff Wellbeing With Our Payroll Services!

We provide payroll savings and loans services to 4,000 staff across 34 companies, helping them build financial resilience and improving their wellbeing by offering savings and loan deduction directly from their salary.

By enabling employees to build up their savings or make loan repayments in this way, we make saving effortless and can help your workforce build a safety net against unexpected expenses. We also provide regular data insights and updates to our payroll partners.

### Contact us to start supporting your employees' financial futures today!

01274 434100  
credit.union@bdcu.co.uk  
<https://bdcu.co.uk/>

### Our Apprentices.

Did you know that at BDCU, approximately 25% of our staff are apprentices?! We invest in apprentices across our Lending and Member Services, Marketing and Finance departments, where they help us offer our payroll savings scheme, strengthen our team and empower our community.





### Apprentice Ambassador

#### WINNER

#### Cerys Glynn, Jet2.com and Jet2holidays

Katie Rankin, kindly accepted the award on behalf of Cerys who was unable to attend the event.

Cerys's journey as an apprentice ambassador began at 17, when she chose an apprenticeship over university despite facing institutional bias. This early challenge inspired her to advocate for apprenticeships as a credible and empowering pathway. Over the past three years, Cerys has influenced more than 37,000 students through workshops, speaking engagements, and curriculum development, including work with SEND schools and university partners. As Social Media Lead for the Yorkshire and Humber Apprenticeship Ambassador Network, her campaigns have driven regional engagement and earned her recognition for impact. Within Jet2, she mentors new apprentices, develops resources, and leads initiatives to foster inclusive opportunities. Cerys also contributes to industry boards and national conversations on skills and employability, ensuring apprenticeships remain relevant and accessible. Her story demonstrates the power of lived experience, resilience, and authentic advocacy in shifting perceptions and creating life-changing opportunities for young people.



### SME Employer

#### WINNER

#### BDCU Credit Union

Presented by Greg Wright, The Yorkshire Post's Deputy Editor

BDCU, a not-for-profit credit union in West Yorkshire, exemplifies the impact an SME can make as an employer of apprentices. With apprentices comprising 40% of its workforce, BDCU has embedded apprenticeships at the heart of its mission to build financial confidence and community resilience. Through a strong partnership with Bradford College, BDCU provides structured learning, mentoring, and real responsibility, enabling apprentices to gain vital qualifications and hands-on experience across member services, finance, lending, and community development. The approach not only widens career access and nurtures local talent but also ensures the workforce reflects the diverse communities it serves. Apprentices play a key role in BDCU's growth, supporting frontline services, improving member outcomes, and contributing to award-winning projects. Success stories like Janka and Ariba highlight how BDCU's supportive environment builds confidence, skills, and ambition, making the organisation a model SME apprentice employer.



### Large Employer of the Year

Sponsored by YPO

#### WINNER

#### Jet2.com and Jet2holidays

Presented by Simon Hill, YPO's Managing Director

Since launching Jet2Apprenticeships in 2019, Jet2 has rapidly grown into a leading large employer of apprentices, embedding apprenticeships at the heart of its workforce strategy. With over 235 apprentices across 40 pathways from Level 2 to Level 7, Jet2 offers accessible routes into engineering, digital, finance, aviation, and more, supporting individuals of all ages and backgrounds. The programme champions inclusion and accessibility, offering barrier-free recruitment, tailored support, and a robust wellbeing framework. Investment has topped £4 million, with a 96% retention rate, 100% progression into permanent roles, and a 97% distinction achievement rate. Jet2 also shares its levy to uplift supply-chain SMEs and charity partners, amplifying sector impact. Recognised with regional and national awards, Jet2's values-led approach widens participation, drives innovation, and delivers measurable business benefits, while transforming lives and communities. Its vision is clear: to create a diverse, future-ready workforce through outstanding apprenticeship opportunities.



### Training Provider / Programme

#### WINNER

#### Leeds College of Building

Presented by Laura Collins, Editor-in-Chief, West and North Yorkshire

Leeds College of Building (LCB) has cemented its reputation as a leading training provider in construction and the built environment since its founding in the 1960s. Specialising exclusively in construction, LCB delivers over 200 courses and apprenticeships to more than 5,000 students from entry level to degree level, supported by state-of-the-art facilities and deep industry partnerships. The college collaborates with over 800 employers, including industry giants like BAM Nuttall and Morgan Sindall, ensuring its curriculum remains highly relevant. In recent years, LCB has achieved national recognition, winning numerous awards such as Construction Apprenticeship College of the Year and excelling at events like the Building the Future Awards and SkillBuild. Innovative partnerships, notably with BAM, have driven rapid growth in higher-level apprenticeships, with degree apprentice numbers rising by 195% in just three years. LCB's ongoing commitment to excellence continues to shape the future of construction training in the UK.



# 80% of businesses report barriers to recruiting apprentices\*

## Don't be blocked from the benefits

With the FDM Apprenticeship Programme, you get:

- Two apprenticeship routes including degree-level study, fully funded by FDM.
- Talent attraction, including interviews, assessments, and vetting covered by us.
- An on-site/university schedule suitable for your business.
- Three years of continuous FDM support, with custom coaching for your apprentices.



## Scan the QR code to get your apprentices



\*St Martin's Group



# Congratulations

## to all the winners from everyone at YPO!



*These awards highlight the people and organisations driving skills, opportunity and growth - and it's inspiring to see such a strong community gathered in one room.*

Your hard work, determination and passion are what bring this event to life. We are proud to celebrate your achievements and the impact you're making in workplaces, communities and futures across West Yorkshire.

For information on  
**YPO apprenticeship** options,  
please contact us at  
[hrrservicedesk@ypo.co.uk](mailto:hrrservicedesk@ypo.co.uk)  
Or visit our website  
[www.ypo.co.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.ypo.co.uk/apprenticeships)

