



PETERBOROUGH & APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS 2020

In association with
Telegraph



WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT

Apprentices, Employers and Providers Recognised for Remarkable Achievements



On Thursday, 24th September the Annual Peterborough Apprenticeship Awards took place at The Holiday Inn, Peterborough. Guests were welcomed with a drinks reception sponsored by The Holiday Inn, 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 Peterborough, 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;

Mr Christopher Walkinshaw,
Deputy Lieutenant - Cambridgeshire

Mark Brear, Director - EML Electrical

Andrew Pakes MP,
Labour and Co-operative Member of Parliament for Peterborough
Helen Dighton, Human Resources Manager - Paragraf

Nicola March, Employment and Skills Manager - CPCA

Nick Frank, LSIP Project Manager - Cambridgeshire Chamber

Gary Blurton, Commercial Director at Iconic Media Group welcomed guests and said "It is a real pleasure to see so many people here tonight as we come together to celebrate the apprentices, employers, mentors and training providers who are helping to shape the future of our region.

At a time when businesses face skills shortages and many young people are deciding what path to take after school or college, apprenticeships provide something incredibly valuable: a direct route into rewarding careers, practical experience and the chance to earn while learning.

There is growing political agreement about the importance of apprenticeships, but the reality is that opportunities are only created because businesses and organisations are willing to invest in people. Tonight is a celebration of those employers who are doing exactly that, and of the apprentices who have seized those opportunities and made the most of them.

Of course, not everyone will leave with a trophy this evening. The standard of entries was exceptionally high, and simply being shortlisted is a significant achievement that you should all be proud of".

Gary also thanked the judges and sponsors for their support in making this event a success.

During the event we organised a raffle raising funds for our Charity Partner MIND Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire Mind (CPSL Mind) a local mental health charity that supports people in their recovery from mental health challenges,

promotes wellbeing, and campaigns against stigma and discrimination. The charity delivers a number of services, including employment support through The WorkWell Programme, Connect to Work, and The Youth Trailblazer Guarantee Scheme.

We are pleased to share that the raffle donation raised over £1,600!

The event was hosted by Kev Lawrence, Radio DJ on PCR FM well known in Peterborough.

Keep up to date with the event visit the website: www.peterboroughapprenticeshipawards.co.uk





Intermediate Apprentice of the Year

WINNER

Isabella Hayward - Serenity Loves

Presented by Host, Kev Lawrence

Isabella (Bella) joined Serenity Loves as a Junior Beauty Therapist before pursuing her childhood dream of hairdressing through the Level 2 Hair Professional Apprenticeship. Overcoming significant concentration and processing challenges associated with ADHD, Bella worked proactively with salon educators and assessors to adapt learning strategies. This enabled her to catch up on coursework, exceed her expected achievement metrics, and thrive in her practical role. Bella actively expands her skills by volunteering for external events, studying trends, and seeking out complex technical challenges. She consistently receives five-star client reviews for her quality work, customer service, and warm personality. Furthermore, Bella mentors fellow apprentices who struggle with assessment portfolios, sharing strategies that helped her succeed. Her resilience, work ethic, and dedication to personal growth make her an exemplary apprentice and a role model within her team.



Advanced Apprentice of the Year

WINNER

Rebecca Richard - Peterborough Day Nursery

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

Highly Commended Awarded to Elliott Riddell - Moore East Midlands

Rebecca completed her Level 3 Early Years Educator apprenticeship with Riverside Training at Peterborough Day Nursery. After discovering a previous qualification was not fully recognized in early years practice, she returned to nursery work determined to gain the correct credentials and advance her career. Balancing work and study, Rebecca demonstrated exceptional organization and time management, frequently completing assignments ahead of deadline. She applied her child development knowledge directly to the workplace, successfully enhancing the nursery's "In the Moment Planning" approach to extend children's individual interests. Additionally, Rebecca supports her room leader, guides less experienced practitioners, and conducts independent research to support children requiring extra assistance. Her drive, resilience, and commitment to high-quality care have established her as an emerging leader and advocate for early years education.



Higher Apprentice of the Year

WINNER

Kelly Howes - Compare the Market

Presented by Bradley Wilson, Media Sales Consultant, Local Eyes, Iconic Media Group

Kelly transitioned into software engineering through an apprenticeship at Compare the Market to build a technology career from a non-traditional background. Working across multiple development teams, she has delivered critical production features, enhanced testing reliability, and earned the highest performance rating of "Exceeding / Role Model." Kelly adapted swiftly upon joining the AI engineering team, independently creating a collaboration framework for AI coding agents to balance delivery efficiency with foundational skill building for apprentices. She also implemented automated compliance checks in development pipelines, presenting her work company-wide. Beyond technical delivery, Kelly actively champions inclusion by delivering company-wide talks on neurodiversity, contributing to Women in Tech initiatives, and creating national digital learning content for the Duke of Edinburgh Award.



Degree Apprentice of the Year

WINNER

Isabel Clay, Anglian Water

Presented by Chloe Bland, MIND

Isabel is pursuing a degree apprenticeship at Anglian Water, completing rotations across procurement, operations, commercial assurance, and contract management. She balances rigorous academic studies with full-time professional responsibilities, achieving strong university results while applying theoretical commercial management principles to operational challenges. Beyond her primary responsibilities, Isabel serves as a Wellbeing Champion for Commercial Services and Assurance, advocating for mental health awareness, menopause support, and open workplace communication. She also acts as a Results, Opportunities and Vision (ROV) facilitator, leading cross-functional reflection and collaboration sessions to drive continuous organizational improvement. Isabel's commitment to continuous learning, site-level construction exposure, and active leadership exemplifies Anglian Water's core values, positioning her as a future leader in commercial contract management.



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Engineering / Manufacturing Apprentice of the Year

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WINNER

Robbie Rogers, Stirling Maynard

Presented by Darren Chapman, Operations Director

Presented by: Al Stratford,
Director of Manufacturing Operations

Robbie joined Stirling Maynard Consulting Engineers in August 2024, pursuing a Level 4 Civil Engineering Apprenticeship alongside studies at ARU Peterborough. Working across structural and civil engineering departments, Robbie produces AutoCAD drawings, Revit models, Tekla Tedds structural calculations, and independent site inspections across dozens of projects. His key achievements include managing structural design packages for a multi-span pedestrian bridge in Norfolk and detailing reinforced concrete for a storage lagoon. Robbie regularly conducts monitoring surveys, presents company toolbox talks on safety, and mentors work experience students. Having earned an "Excellent" performance rating, he is preparing to progress directly to a Level 6 Degree Apprenticeship, aiming to become a Chartered Civil Engineer while promoting vocational pathways.



Technology and Digital Apprentice of the Year Award

WINNER

Ben Wright, Evolving Networks Limited

Presented by Host Kev Lawrence

Ben Wright began his career as a Level 2 apprentice and progressed through continuous development to become General Manager of Evolving Networks, currently undertaking a Level 7 Senior Leader Apprenticeship. Ben directly applies academic concepts to business strategy, leading the company's transition from legacy processes to an integrated operational platform across sales, project management, and finance. He restructured leadership and governance models to foster cross-functional collaboration, transparency, and decentralized decision-making. Dedicated to talent development, Ben implemented coaching frameworks that enabled apprentices and project managers to advance into key leadership roles. His reflective approach, commitment to organizational growth, and advocacy for lifelong learning demonstrate the transformative potential of executive degree apprenticeships.



Professional Services Apprentice of the Year Award

WINNER

Lottie Jackson, Moore East Midlands

Presented by Morgan Stevenson,
Chief Growth Officer, Iconic Media Group

Highly Commended awarded to Madiyah Malik,
Buckles Solicitor LLP

Charlotte (Lottie) joined Moore East Midlands as an Audit and Accounts Apprentice (Level 7) in October 2023. After taking maternity leave, she returned to work within nine months, demonstrating remarkable resilience and dedication by balancing family life with high-level professional responsibilities. Lottie leads audit assignments—including complex, fully remote engagements—and manages office workflow allocations traditionally handled by senior managers. She leads monthly planning meetings with partners and senior staff to balance priorities and meet client deadlines. During a recent client meeting, Lottie identified a significant tax-saving opportunity that added substantial value. Additionally, she actively trains junior colleagues, exemplifying leadership, technical competence, and commercial awareness.



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Health and Public Service Apprentice of the Year Award

WINNER

**Samuel Sequerah-Salmon,
Little Miracles Charity**

Presented by Dr Jaspal Singh DL

Samuel (Sam) transformed his career trajectory after joining Little Miracles Charity while initially NEET (not in education, employment, or training). Through determination and a strong work ethic, he completed a Level 3 qualification and progressed to a degree program in youth work. Sam applies his personal experiences to build deep, authentic trust with young people facing similar challenges, demonstrating that personal circumstances do not define future success. As a core member of the Little Miracles team, he provides compassionate support to children and families while actively seeking opportunities for professional development. Sam's journey reflects resilience, humility, and dedication, establishing him as an inspiring role model, effective youth worker, and exceptional ambassador for public service apprenticeships.



Construction Apprentice of the Year Award



Sponsored by
Clegg Construction

WINNER

Leoni McDougall, Allison Homes

Presented by Darren Chapman, Operations Director

Highly Commended Awarded to Isabel Clay
- Anglian Water

Leoni joined Allison Homes in September 2025 as a Level 2 Bricklaying Apprentice, demonstrating exceptional natural talent and a strong work ethic. Determined to learn on live construction sites, she actively seeks constructive feedback to refine her skills, using rain days productively for coursework to complete her two-year apprenticeship in just twelve months. Leoni won the regional heat of the Guild of Bricklayers Competition, reached its national finals, and placed third at SkillBuild. On site, she is entrusted with delicate remedial brickwork typically assigned to experienced tradespeople. Her rapid progress, professional standards, and positive attitude have transformed site perceptions regarding apprentice contributions. Leoni aspires to lead her own specialized bricklaying gang, serving as an inspiring ambassador for women in construction.



Apprentice Ambassador



Sponsored by
Inspire Education Group

WINNER

Kelly Howes, Compare the Market

Presented by: Paul Ward, Group Apprenticeship
Recruitment Manager

Kelly actively promotes apprenticeship pathways both within Compare the Market and across the wider tech community. Internally, she has presented talks on neurodiversity, shared her career journey through Women in Tech initiatives, and demonstrated apprentice business impact at company showcases. Externally, Kelly leverages social media to offer guidance, answer queries, and assist aspiring engineers with application preparation, directly helping individuals secure roles. She mentors junior apprentices to build workplace confidence, leads team retrospectives, and provides constructive feedback to optimize apprenticeship rotation structures. Furthermore, Kelly collaborated with the Duke of Edinburgh Award to create national digital learning content in coding and design, inspiring young talent and broadening access to tech careers.



Mentor of the Year



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Cambridgeshire
& Peterborough Combined Authority

WINNER

**Michalina Jonczyk,
Blackberry House Day Nursery**

Presented by: Nicola March, Employment & Skills Manager

Highly Commended Awarded to
Michelle Smith - Greencore

As Head of People Services and Quality Assurance, Michalina has established an outstanding apprenticeship and development framework across the Childcare Group. She personally mentors over ten active apprentices, offering one-to-one guidance, tailored progression plans, and cross-site learning opportunities across different nursery settings. Michalina has created clear career pathways leading from Level 2 qualifications to Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT), ensuring long-term retention and workforce excellence. Through structured reviews, ongoing coaching, and dedicated support for struggling learners, she builds confidence and practical competence. Michalina also collaborates with local colleges to inspire students to enter early years careers, embedding a continuous learning culture across the organization.

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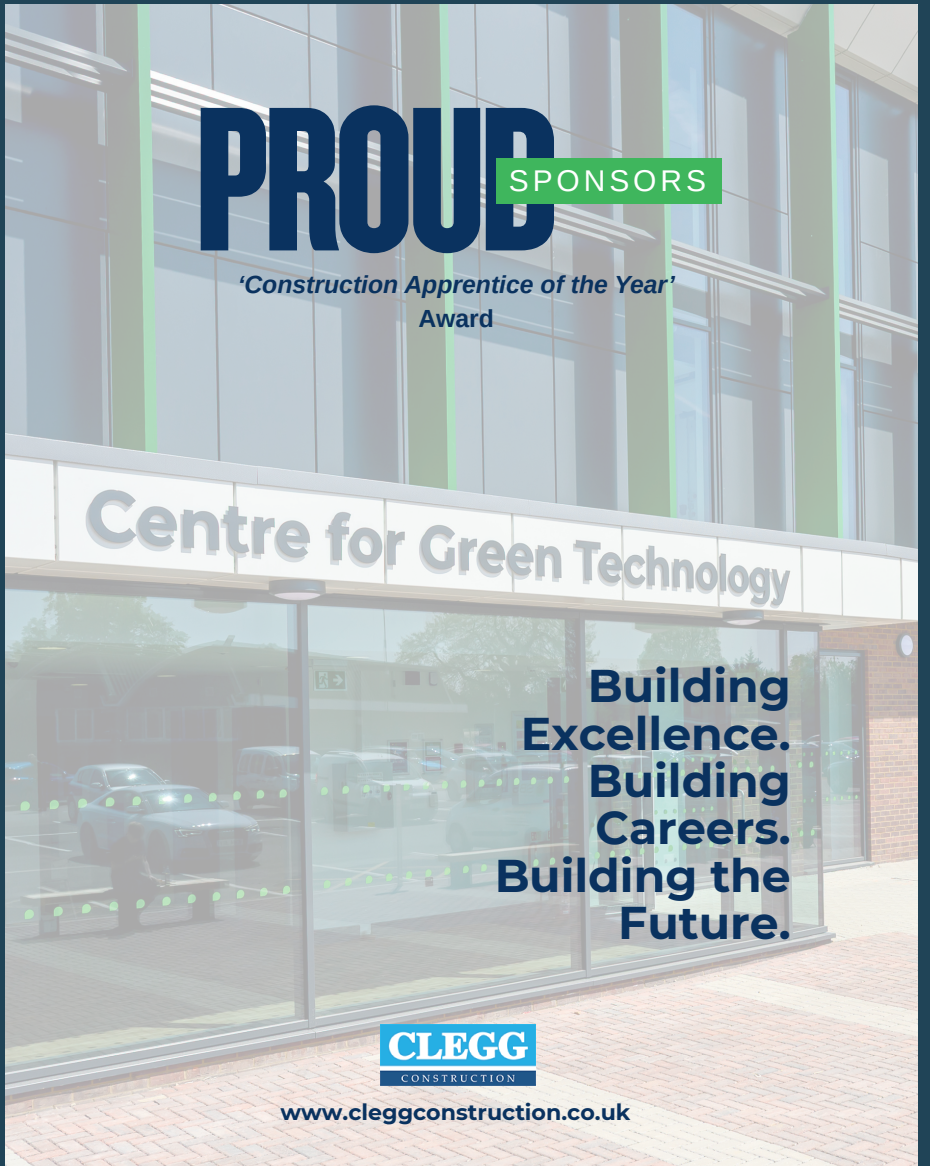
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SME Employer of the Year

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WINNER

Serenity Loves

Presented by: Mark Brear, Director

Highly Commended Awarded to Marlor Tooling

Serenity Loves is an independent salon employing 17 team members, embedded with a deep commitment to apprenticeship training. Facing severe national declines in hairdressing apprenticeships, the salon maintains six active apprentices and has trained over 30 apprentices over the past 14 years. Operating an employed team model, Serenity Loves combines formal standard qualifications with structured internal education, award-winning stylist mentoring, and holistic personal development. The salon actively supports transferring apprentices facing learning gaps, guiding them toward senior roles and salon management. Serenity Loves engages with schools, conducts teen workshops, and promotes industry careers, earning regional and national acclaim, including Small Business Britain's Business of the Decade 2026.



Large Employer of the Year

Sponsored by Allison Homes



WINNER

McCain Foods

Presented by: Michele Raucci, Build Director

McCain Foods addresses regional technical engineering shortages by embedding apprenticeships into its Whittlesey manufacturing operations in partnership with Peterborough College. Supporting Level 3 Mechatronics Maintenance Technician and Installation/ Maintenance Electrician pathways, McCain combines on-site learning with an extra weekly practical training day at Peterborough College. Dedicated manager Nigel Storrow provides direct mentorship, ensuring high retention and internal progression—such as upskilling a ten-year forklift driver into a maintenance engineer. McCain actively engages in local school outreach, promotes manufacturing careers, and participates in regional economic roundtables. Demonstrating programme excellence, McCain apprentice Ben achieved distinction and won Apprentice of the Term, securing a long-term future within the business.



Training Provider / Programme of the Year

WINNER

Inspire Education Group

Presented by: Host, Kev Lawrence

Inspire Education Group (IEG) delivers high-impact apprenticeship provision across Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, and the surrounding region. Aligning its curriculum with Local Skills Improvement Plans, IEG collaborates closely with over 1,000 employer partners to design tailored training solutions in key sectors such as construction, engineering, automotive, plumbing, and leadership. IEG provides exceptional wraparound support through dedicated mentoring, personalized guidance, and digital skills badging to prepare learners for successful careers. Beyond core delivery, IEG demonstrates regional leadership by launching initiatives like The BRDG to tackle youth economic inactivity, strengthen progression pathways, and support social mobility.



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OF THE YEAR**

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