



OXFORDSHIRE
APPRENTICESHIP
Awards 2025

THURSDAY 22ND MAY

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PROGRAMME

We're delighted that we're able to come together to celebrate the fantastic achievements of the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards 2025 finalists.

This special event will shine a spotlight on our county's talented apprentices and those who support them on their journey.

Awards Categories

Abbott Diabetes Care Intermediate Apprentice of the Year Award
NielsenIQ Advanced Apprentice of the Year Award
Siemens Healthineers Magnet Technology Higher/Degree Apprentice of the Year Award
M Group Highways Special Recognition Award
Popham Hairdressing Rising Star Award
IST INTECH Shining Star Award
Grundon Apprenticeship Ambassador Award
The Engineering Trust Skills Champion Award
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust Inspiring the Future Employer Award
Oxford Brookes University Training Provider Individual Award
Olamalu Apprenticeship Employer of the Year Award (<250 employees)
Assure UK Apprenticeship Employer of the Year Award (250+ employees)
The Hill Group Oxfordshire Apprentice of the Year Award

Thank you for joining us to celebrate the achievements of the county's star Apprentices at the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards 2025. Congratulations to all the finalists!

#OAAwards2025



WELCOME

WELCOME TO THE OXFORDSHIRE APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS 2025

On behalf of Enterprise Oxfordshire, I would like to welcome you all to this evening's Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards, held at the prestigious Blenheim Palace.

This wonderful event brings together the county's apprenticeship talent, business leaders and training providers, celebrating real success and ensuring there is a genuine platform to elevate the value of apprenticeships in Oxfordshire.

Tonight's event represents one of the first occasions in which our organisation has presented itself as Enterprise Oxfordshire, following a switch from our previous trading name of OxLEP on 1 April this year.

This change marks the completion of a two-year process that has seen the economic development functions – previously led by Local Enterprise Partnerships – altered so that they are to be overseen via a mechanism agreed by respective upper-tier local authorities, in our instance, Oxfordshire County Council, who have now become our 100% shareholder.

Building on our significant legacy as OxLEP, Enterprise Oxfordshire will oversee the delivery of a comprehensive set of business, skills, investment and trade support services, as well as supporting a variety of strategies backing Oxfordshire's economic potential to be delivered in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

This commitment, alongside other activities like this evening's awards, demonstrates our genuine drive to ensure the county's labour market, access to talent and ability to continue to connect education and business, remains steadfast.

Everyone attending tonight's awards are already 'bought in' to the significant and positive impact apprenticeships can have, whether that is through understanding what they can mean to a young person's future career prospects, businesses looking to grow their operations, or – more widely – those dedicated training providers delivering vital qualifications, right across a whole host of critical sectors.

It remains key that we all collectively continue to champion apprenticeships, ensuring that they remain in the forefront of people's thoughts, particularly given the current economic climate.

I would like to wish all of this evening's finalists the very best of luck.

Be proud of your achievements and let us all continue to collectively 'bang the drum' for apprenticeships in Oxfordshire and beyond, whatever role we are in.



Nigel Tipple,
Chief Executive
Enterprise
Oxfordshire

ABOUT THE OXFORDSHIRE APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS

The Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards were introduced in 2017 to celebrate the achievements of our county's apprentices and recognise the contribution they make to Oxfordshire's businesses, economy and skills landscape. We have been overwhelmed by the quantity and quality of entries each year.

The awards also recognise the commitment of Oxfordshire's employers to providing high quality careers activities and apprenticeship opportunities and the training provider colleagues who support apprentices throughout their apprenticeship. They also celebrate the contributions of organisations and individuals who champion apprenticeships and other vocational routes,

playing a crucial role in inspiring young people and career changers to consider and start an apprenticeship.

The awards are business-led and self-funded, with businesses and organisations sponsoring the categories and other aspects of the celebration evening. Category sponsors judge the entries and present the awards on the night.

If your organisation is interested in becoming a sponsor of the awards, please contact Melanie Ringer at: melanie.ringer@enterpriseoxfordshire.com

THE OXFORDSHIRE APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS COMMITTEE

The Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards committee organise and run the awards and we would like to thank them for their hard work and commitment to what is a year-round process. The committee comprises of Sarah Jaycock from High Spec Composites, Simon Newton and Tanya Webb from Darke & Taylor and Melanie Ringer from Enterprise Oxfordshire. The committee members bring a wealth of experience and creative ideas to the process, as well as representing the views of both small and large employers.



From left to right: Simon, Sarah, Melanie and Tanya

HEADLINE SPONSOR

THE HILL GROUP



As a rapidly growing business, Hill recognises the crucial importance of attracting talented individuals and nurturing their development to ensure our industry's workforce continues to evolve. We believe that one of the most effective ways to train and develop future professionals is through hands-on apprenticeships, where individuals can acquire technical knowledge and gain practical experience while earning a respectable salary. For this reason, we decided to support the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards as the headline sponsor – to raise awareness of apprenticeship programmes and to commend the hard work and dedication of apprentices in the local region.

Being the headline sponsor means a great deal to us. It allows us to actively contribute to celebrating the achievements of apprentices and to highlight the significant impact they have on the industry. Some of our apprentices are part of the Oxfordshire Careers Hub Apprenticeship Ambassador Scheme and we know how powerful it is for apprentices to share their experiences to inspire the next generation and help them make informed career choices. We are proud to recognise and support this through our sponsorship of the awards.

The Hill Group is very passionate about the apprenticeship route. As a business, more than 25% of our staff have either completed, or are currently enrolled in, the Hill Management Trainee Programme, achieving degree-level qualifications through an 'earn as you learn' role. We have been awarded Platinum status from The 5% Club for the second year running in recognition of our commitment to apprenticeships.

We also encourage our supply chain to recruit or support apprentices through a shared apprenticeship scheme, recognising how vital on-site experience is for apprentices to achieve their qualifications and build successful careers in our industry.

Hill is excited to be working in the Oxford region and is keen to recruit local people to progress through our company. If you are interested in our Management Trainee Programme or apprenticeship opportunities with our supply chain, please get in touch at trainees@hill.co.uk or visit www.hill.co.uk/apprenticeships.

OUR HOSTS

Our hosts this year are Sarah Jaycock and Simon Newton, who have both been members of the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards committee and sponsors since the awards began in 2017.

SARAH JAYCOCK

Sarah is proud to have been appointed a Trustee of The Engineering Trust with the goal of promoting engineering apprenticeships and training across Oxfordshire and the wider area.

Sarah is Co-Founder and Executive Director at High Spec Composites, a leading manufacturer of aluminium tooling and high-specification carbon

fibre components, supplying to a range of industries worldwide, specialising in Formula One and bespoke projects.

One of Sarah's interests and a focus of hers within her business, is investment in people. She takes great pride in engaging with local education providers, employing apprentices and offering training positions each year to suitable

candidates; and offering continuous development to existing employees by means of a celebrated in-house skills matrix directly related to pay and progression.



SIMON NEWTON



Simon is Joint Managing Director of Darke & Taylor Ltd, an established local mechanical and electrical business providing design, installation and maintenance services.

Simon is committed to the sustainable growth of the company, maintaining Darke & Taylor's reputation for quality, employee development and training and for ensuring that Darke & Taylor remains at the leading edge of the mechanical and electrical sector.

Darke & Taylor's apprenticeship scheme and their apprentices have won numerous awards and the

scheme itself has been in existence for over 50 years. The scheme is a critical part of the business, which is why Simon has a passion for the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards as he recognises the positive impact that the awards can have on local businesses. Simon has hosted the awards since 2019, including both live broadcasts and a pre-recorded broadcast during the pandemic!

OUR VENUE

BLENHEIM PALACE



Blenheim Palace attracts visitors from around the world and is a filming location, a venue for weddings and events, as well as a producer and supplier of natural mineral water. Blenheim Estate is rich in forestry and farming practices, a landowner and construction business with a portfolio of residential and commercial properties.

Blenheim is also a place where apprenticeships are valued, with a 10-year plan in place to employ 100 apprentices in all areas across the estate and our development partner Pye Homes, ensuring they are part of day-to-day life. They are on track to reach this goal with a combined total of 95 current and complete with many more planned for the coming years.

Our apprentice goal is a key part of our People Strategy to Grow, Give and Belong:

GROW This is about you: when you work at Blenheim you can achieve your full potential. Your talent is nurtured and your wellbeing championed.	GIVE This is about community: when you work at Blenheim, you are part of something much bigger. You give back to the wider community and work collaboratively to meet shared goals.	BELONG This is about the experience: when you work at Blenheim you are part of something special. You matter and you belong.
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We have been a supporter of the awards since they began in 2017, which has included judging and awarding the Special Recognition Award, Higher/Degree Apprentice of the Year and the Rising Star Award, as well as hosting the celebration evening in 2018.

We have also had success in the awards over the years, with a total of 30 apprentices being nominated. As an employer, Blenheim was highly commended in the Apprenticeship Employer of the Year Award (250+ employees) in 2022 – a year that also saw Guest Services Supervisor Nicole Nielsen-Pike crowned Overall Apprentice of the Year.

We are thrilled to host the prestigious Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards – a celebration of exceptional talent across the county – here at Blenheim again in 2025. This aligns with our ambitious 10-year goal to complete 100 apprenticeships by 2027, showcasing our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. Our apprentices, spanning all ages, backgrounds and career paths – from heritage preservation to catering – are a testament to our dedication to developing skills, nurturing talent and securing the future of our World Heritage Site.

Blenheim and Pye Homes have also achieved another one of the other ten ambitious 10-year goals we set in 2017 – to become a Top 100 UK Employer – three years ahead of our target and are ranked 78th in Best Companies' list of the UK's Best Large Companies to Work For 2024.

Find out more about apprenticeships at Blenheim and Pye at blenheimpalace.com/careers/apprenticeships

oxleplexskills.co.uk/oaawards #OAAwards2025

ENTERPRISE OXFORDSHIRE SKILLS

At Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills, our commitment is to ensure that every person who lives and works in Oxfordshire is equipped with the skills they need to maximise their full potential.

Through our Careers Hub work in partnership with The Careers & Enterprise Company – engaging with 60 secondary schools and colleges in Oxfordshire – we educate and inspire the next generation and make them aware of all their options, including apprenticeships, to help them make an informed decision about their best next step.

One of our flagship programmes – the Social Contract, a £1.7 million programme of activity funded by the government's Contain Outbreak Management Fund via Oxfordshire County Council – involves harnessing unspent apprenticeship levy funds to cultivate new job opportunities, retaining that money within the county, rather than it being returned to the Treasury.

Our 'No Limits' programme supports individuals to move away from economic inactivity and onto a pathway towards employment, education and training.

Those unsure of their journey can benefit from our OxGROW virtual mentoring platform, providing one-to-one virtual mentoring with top Oxfordshire-based business professionals.

Furthermore, we are proud to have launched Skills Bootcamps – free, flexible courses designed for people aged 19 and above, which can also be utilised to upskill current

employees at a highly-subsided rate to the business.

The Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards are a fantastic way to celebrate the contribution of apprenticeships to our county's skills landscape, enabling individuals, businesses and the local economy to gain the skills needed to develop and thrive. This year marks a milestone as not only have we received the highest number of entries ever, but we will be presenting our 100th overall award this evening.

Our category sponsors have worked hard in sorting, interviewing and selecting the respective three finalists for each category and its winners, with the task of deciding the overall 'Apprentice of the Year' falling to our headline sponsor, The Hill Group, promising a challenging decision indeed!

We send our sincere gratitude to our 23 awards sponsors and supporters, whose support has made this prestigious event possible tonight.

We also congratulate all our esteemed nominees on your well-deserved recognition.

Here's to a wonderful evening ahead!



Helen Brind
Head of Business and Skills



skills.enterpriseoxfordshire.com

OUR SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

A huge thank you to all our generous sponsors and supporters, particularly our headline sponsor, The Hill Group, who have made the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards 2025 possible. Your support is very much appreciated.



South East





OXFORDSHIRE APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS 2024

INTERMEDIATE APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR



SPONSORED BY ABBOTT DIABETES CARE

At Abbott Diabetes Care, based in Witney, we develop and manufacture various technologies for diabetes management, including the next-generation sensor technology used in the revolutionary FreeStyle Libre flash glucose monitoring system.

generation of engineers and technicians and our apprentices play a crucial role in driving our business forward.

Our winner will be someone who has demonstrated the ability to apply their learning in the workplace, shows enthusiasm and is committed to making the most of their skills.

For over 20 years, we have employed apprentices, many of whom have remained with us, perfectly aligning with our ethos. We are committed to supporting the next

abbott.co.uk

FINALISTS

Abigail Harker is an Apprentice Recruitment Administration Assistant at the University of Oxford, training with GLP Training. Abbie has led the implementation of new processes, such as creating a PhD Decision Tree for pre-employment checks, which have greatly improved team efficiency and consistency. Her hard work, attention to detail, proactive approach, professional manner and ability to handle increasing responsibilities have made her an integral part of both the Recruitment Team and wider HR Team. Her growth in confidence and willingness to support colleagues further highlight her outstanding commitment and impact.

Thomas Nilen is an Apprentice Bricklayer at Hummels Brickwork, training with Activate Learning. Tom demonstrates remarkable self-motivation and enthusiasm for his craft, producing work above expectations and showing a keen interest in furthering his abilities. He has taken on complex tasks, such as rectifying damp tray issues and consistently delivers high quality results, which showcase his rapid professional growth and outstanding performance. Tom's proactive approach, willingness to learn and ability to build strong working relationships with colleagues, customers and managers make him an invaluable asset to his team.

Jack Robins started as a Transactional Accounts Assistant at Jonas Europe, training with Abingdon & Witney College. He has recently been promoted to Assistant Accountant, reflecting his outstanding growth and commitment. He has successfully tackled complex reconciliations for overseas acquisitions, demonstrating resilience and attention to detail. Jack's proactive approach, analytical mindset, professionalism and innovative problem-solving skills have greatly improved efficiency for the business. His willingness to support colleagues, complete Mental Health First Aid training and actively participate in careers events further highlight his dedication and impact.

ADVANCED APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR



SPONSORED BY NIELSEN IQ

NielsenIQ is a 30,000-strong global team that helps retail trading partners understand the complex consumer landscape through data, analytics and technology.

We launched our first apprenticeship programme in 2014, a level 5 apprenticeship in business innovation and growth. In 2015, we introduced level 3 apprenticeships, followed by degree apprenticeships in 2017.

The Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards are a great way of showcasing the amazing talent in our county and recognising the hard

work apprentices do. We are sponsoring the Advanced Apprentice of the Year Award as we want to do our part in recognising the individuals who go above and beyond and excel within in the educational setting.

Our winner will have exceptional feedback from their peers and teachers, be dedicated to their development and show genuine passion and commitment towards apprenticeships and their own journey.

nielseniq.com

FINALISTS

Gabriella Balfour-Allen is an Engineering Apprentice at Abbott Diabetes Care, training with Oxfordshire Advanced Skills. She demonstrates exceptional skills in engineering and facilities management, leading innovative projects like a radio frequency identification equipment installation, which resulted in reduced time, testing and costs. Gabby's proactive approach and ability to influence team decisions have earned her recognition from senior management. She is an enthusiastic team player who is committed to continuous personal and professional growth and has excelled academically.

Imani D'Amore is an Apprentice Youth Support Worker at Oxfordshire County Council, training with UCAN. She has successfully started a girls' group in Barton for at-risk young women, creating a safe space for them to build confidence and support each other. Imani has also played a crucial role in advocating for young people and supporting a missing young person to return safely. She is always open to taking on new responsibilities, challenges and opportunities to further her knowledge. Her proactive approach, determination and ability to build transformative relationships with young people demonstrate her outstanding commitment and impact.

Nicholas Fountain is an Apprentice Plumber at GasWise Plumbing & Heating Services (UK) Ltd, training with Oxford Energy Academy. Nick started his apprenticeship later in life and has shown remarkable dedication and commitment in balancing his work and training with family responsibilities and a second job. He has excelled in his role, becoming an OFTEC registered engineer and demonstrating a proactive approach to learning and problem solving. Nick's contributions have significantly benefited his employer and his determination, passion for his career and ability to overcome challenges make him an inspiration.

HIGHER/DEGREE APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR



SPONSORED BY SIEMENS HEALTHINEERS MAGNET TECHNOLOGY

Siemens Healthineers Magnet Technology is the world's leading designer and manufacturer of superconducting magnets for MRI. Innovation is at the heart of our business as we pioneer breakthroughs in healthcare for everyone, everywhere, sustainably.

For many years we have recruited and celebrated apprentices within our business, many of whom are now in established roles at our facility. We are expanding our offering in addition to the traditional manufacturing apprenticeships to ensure this program is run throughout our business.

The Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards are a perfect way to celebrate the great work local organisations do to ensure apprenticeships are at the forefront of early careers programs and development programs in general. Seeing the amazing work and effort our own apprentices put in, we're really excited to sponsor this category this year.

siemens-healthineers.com/en-uk/magnetic-resonance-imaging/siemens-magnet-technology

FINALISTS

Megan Johnston is a Finance Assistant at Blenheim Palace, training with Reed Business School. Megan plays a crucial role in the management accounts team, handling month-end reporting, VAT returns and assisting with audits. Her significant achievements include leading a finance system upgrade and being entrusted with the responsibility of reviewing and updating fixed assets. Megan is dedicated, hard-working and always goes the extra mile to help others. She is proud to be Blenheim's longest standing apprentice, which demonstrates her commitment to developing and learning both in her job role and professional qualifications.

Faith King is a Furniture Apprenticeships Teacher at Rycotewood Furniture Centre, training with Activate Learning. She plays a pivotal role in overseeing level 2 and 3 furniture apprenticeships, developing innovative learning materials and making the process more accessible for apprentices. Faith's commitment to promoting inclusivity is demonstrated by her involvement in Women in Woodworking and Gender Project conferences and through the mentoring and support she provides to female and non-binary students. Faith is a fantastic role model who has an unwavering commitment to personal and professional development and fosters a collaborative atmosphere.

Jessie Weavers-Medina is a Centre Administrator at the University of Oxford Kellogg College, training with Abingdon & Witney College. She has demonstrated outstanding leadership by organising the first five-year Strategic Plan, managing significant funding schemes and coordinating high profile events, including at the House of Lords. Jessie's innovative approach to data analysis and her role in the award-winning internship programme highlight her dedication and impact. Jessie shows resilience, academic excellence and a commitment to community engagement. She is passionate about increasing diversity and representing marginalised communities.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD



SPONSORED BY M GROUP HIGHWAYS

M Group Highways (previously known as Milestone Infrastructure), is committed to supporting apprentices to develop their careers in highways maintenance and improvement works, streetlighting, civil engineering and construction services.

M Group recognises the importance of apprenticeships and has been actively involved in supporting and developing several apprenticeships at different levels within Oxfordshire over the last 6 years. Our apprentices are core to our talent development and help us maintain the county's road network.

2025 is our third year as a category sponsor, once again supporting the Special Recognition Award. This award highlights outstanding individuals who have overcome difficult challenges and delivered exceptional outcomes. We are thrilled to have the chance to sponsor this award again and to recognise individuals who are making the most of their apprenticeship journey.

mgroupltd.com

FINALISTS

Yasmin Betteridge is a Youth Work Apprentice at TRAIN – Inspiring Young People, training with B Skill. Yasmin is a fantastic role model to the young people she supports. She overcame academic challenges to successfully complete her level 3 Youth Work Apprenticeship and is now enrolled in a degree apprenticeship. Yasmin led TRAIN's expansion into Wallingford and established a new youth provision at just 17. Her inspirational journey from receiving support from TRAIN herself to leading an entire town's youth provision, while continuing her education to degree level, is a testament to her perseverance and ambition.

Scarlet Boyd, Senior Stylist and Colourist at Popham Hairdressing, training with Introtrain & Forum Limited, has shown exceptional dedication and resilience throughout her apprenticeship journey. She has faced personal challenges, meaning she needed to take time away from work and learning, but persevered to achieve her lifetime dream of becoming a hairdresser and then to continue her career development through undertaking a second apprenticeship. Her ability to overcome challenges, achieve professional success and support her peers demonstrates her outstanding commitment and dedication.

Imani D'Amore is an Apprentice Youth Support Worker at Oxfordshire County Council, training with UCAN. As a care leaver, Imani is passionate about sharing her story to inspire others and change stereotypes. Having come into her apprenticeship with no qualifications, Imani has completed both maths and English functional skills and learnt a lot about youth work, which she uses, alongside her personal experiences, to inform and support her work with young people. Her apprenticeship has created an opportunity for Imani to strengthen her knowledge and do what she loves, which is to support people.

RIISING STAR AWARD



SPONSORED BY POPHAM HAIRDRESSING

Popham Hairdressing, an award-winning salon group based in Oxford, is the only UK hairdressing company to be awarded the Champion Investors in People award, demonstrating our commitment to good management and people development.

Apprenticeships are a fundamental part of our business and make a difference to every day with our team. Without the support of our apprentices, our team could not deliver what they do.

Since winning the Apprenticeship Employer Award (<250 employees) in 2018, our

apprenticeship programme has gone from strength to strength and we are delighted to now have 77% homegrown staff, which makes a huge difference to the ongoing expansion and growth of Popham.

Our winner will have made a huge impact in their own career, as well as for the company they work for, in the first year of their apprenticeship.

popham.com

FINALISTS

Adam Hitchman is a Business Administration Apprentice (HR) at Signifo Limited t/as Webexpenses, training with Abingdon & Witney College. Through his proactive approach, work ethic, exceptional adaptability and dedication, Adam has made a significant contribution to the business in a short period. He has taken ownership of their work experience project, demonstrating leadership and initiative. Adam's empathy and support for colleagues, including mentoring peers, demonstrate his maturity and commitment. He is inquisitive and has a desire to do a good job and to support his colleagues, which he always does with a smile.

Alice Howes is an Apprentice HR Assistant at the University of Oxford, training with Abingdon & Witney College. A people person, she has quickly built strong relationships with senior staff and efficiently managed complex processes, such as academic recruitment. Alice has proactively improved and digitalised HR processes, demonstrating her initiative and commitment to excellence. Her ability to handle dual responsibilities under two different managers showcases her versatility and strong work ethic. Alice's rapid professional growth, attention to detail and impactful contributions make her an asset to her team.

Roman Kane is a Maintenance Technician Electrical at the University of Oxford Ashmolean Museum, training with Abingdon & Witney College. Mentored by a qualified electrician, Roman has already taken on complex tasks, such as documenting the museum's intricate emergency lighting system and conducting compliance checks - which have resulted in considerable savings - and designing a test rig for the intelligent mesh lighting system to improve training efficiency. Roman's proactive approach, enthusiasm and innovative ideas have made a positive impact on the museum's operations and his ability to adapt and excel in a unique environment demonstrates his potential.

SHINING STAR AWARD



SPONSORED BY IST INTECH

IST INTECH is a pioneering designer and manufacturer of class-leading ultra-violet (UV) curing solutions for ink jet printing, as well as other emerging technologies - our energy saving UV LED systems are the gold standard!

We have been a long-time supporter not only of the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards but of apprenticeships in general. We have always looked at apprenticeships as a means of recruitment and have rolled out

various programmes within our business over the years. Over half our senior leadership team are former apprentices or vocationally trained.

The Shining Star Award and its criteria fits the ethos IST INTECH promotes around apprenticeships and we are proud to sponsor this award for the 7th year in a row.

istintech.com

FINALISTS

Scarlet Boyd, Senior Stylist and Colourist at Popham Hairdressing, has shown exceptional dedication and resilience throughout her apprenticeship journey, successfully completing her level 2 apprenticeship and advancing to level 3. Scarlet has quickly progressed into a senior stylist role at Popham Hairdressing, maintaining high standards and building a very loyal clientele. She is a reliable and consistent team member and benefits not only her team, but also the company, by delivering excellent results at all times. She also mentors new apprentices, providing invaluable support and readily sharing her skills and knowledge.

Tiffany Hickman is a People Apprentice (Learning & Development) at Blenheim Palace. Starting her career as an apprentice in the Finance Team, she overcame challenges and transitioned to the People Team, where she found her true passion and is now about to start a level 5 apprenticeship. Tiffany has significantly contributed to Blenheim by streamlining the work experience process, organising successful apprentice away days and supporting the onboarding process for new apprentices. She consistently goes above and beyond, building relationships across teams and developing training programmes, demonstrating her determination, growth and impact.

Rossi Salvatore, Product Manager – Retail, started as a Marketing Apprentice at Karcher UK Ltd in 2019, achieving 3 promotions to advance rapidly to Product Manager by 2024, demonstrating his ambition and determination. He is now considered a leader in the organisation and has led multiple product category strategies, managed critical projects and earned the respect of his peers and leadership teams. Rossi's desire to learn, challenge himself and think big, alongside his dedication, underlies his rapid development. His ability to drive collaboration, manage details and deliver results make his contribution invaluable to the business.

APPRENTICESHIP AMBASSADOR AWARD

GRUNDON

SPONSORED BY GRUNDON

Grundon is the UK's largest family-owned supplier of integrated waste management and environmental services.

We have long utilised apprenticeships within our vehicle workshops, our sales teams, administration roles and engineers. We have apprentices coming into the business as new colleagues and we have created apprenticeship roles to help further develop and upskill our current workforce and future leaders.

Supporting the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards demonstrates our wider commitment

to the development of new skills and experiences that can be offered through apprenticeships, not just within our business, but in the wider local areas in which we operate.

We have chosen to sponsor the Apprenticeship Ambassador Award as we are an advocate of apprenticeships and see ambassadorial roles as key to driving more people to consider an apprenticeship.

grundon.com

FINALISTS

Katy Claridge is an Architectural Apprentice at Associated Architects. As the founder of HiBarn Apprentices, she has created an influential online platform that educates and connects aspiring apprentices and employers, bridging the gap between them. Katy also leads an apprentice working group, advocating for apprentices' concerns and ensuring their voices are heard. She actively participates in local school careers events, promoting architecture and degree apprenticeships. Her multifaceted approach, combining personal mentorship, professional leadership and public advocacy, has significantly impacted the apprenticeship community.

Tiffany Hickman, People Apprentice (Learning & Development) at Blenheim Palace, regularly visits local schools as an Apprenticeship Ambassador, sharing her personal career journey and answering students' questions to highlight the benefits of apprenticeships. She participates in external campaigns, speaking at events and contributing to case studies to showcase the value of apprenticeships to students, parents/carers and employers. Additionally, Tiffany organises apprentice away days for Blenheim's apprentices, fostering a supportive community and encouraging networking. Her passion and proactive approach make her an inspiring role model.

Emilia Reyes Pabon is an Apprentice Technician Scientist at the University of Oxford BioEscalator. Since starting her first apprenticeship in 2018, she has participated in numerous career events and school presentations, raising awareness about apprenticeship opportunities and offering valuable first-hand perspectives on science apprenticeships. Emilia tailors her presentations to inspire different types of audiences and her activities have encouraged students to seriously consider apprenticeships as a viable and exciting pathway. Knowing that she has helped shape career decisions and inspired the next generation is something Emilia is truly proud of.

SKILLS CHAMPION AWARD



SPONSORED BY THE ENGINEERING TRUST

The Engineering Trust was set up as a charity with the goal of promoting careers in engineering and manufacturing. Our aim is to champion engineering in schools, promote engineering as a career pathway and celebrate young people in engineering. Through our subsidiary company Engineering Trust Training Ltd we deliver work based apprenticeships in Oxfordshire and surrounding counties.

Much of the charity's work is in schools and colleges, working with career advisors, teachers and students providing information,

advice and guidance about the routes into engineering.

The Skills Champion Award complements our mission and is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the hard work of individuals who support those seeking their next step in their education and/or career. Through our sponsorship, we aim to recognise the exceptional work being done to develop a skilled workforce in Oxfordshire.

theengineeringtrust.org

FINALISTS

Jo Bennett, Assistant Manager at Fairfield Residential Home, has an unwavering commitment to supporting and mentoring apprentices, going above and beyond to ensure they feel valued and empowered. Jo proactively addresses challenges, encourages continuous learning and seeks innovative training opportunities. She fosters strong relationships with employers, keeping open lines of communication to ensure apprentices are supported in their workplaces and have opportunities to develop and succeed. Jo is inspirational in her dedication and her genuine care for others fosters a positive atmosphere that encourages collaboration and growth.

Helen Cannon, Co-Founder / Director at Intake Talent, actively engages with local schools to educate students on the value of apprenticeships and provides one-to-one support to young people to guide them through the application process. She also works closely with businesses to create tailored apprenticeship opportunities. By breaking down misconceptions about apprenticeships, Helen ensures that students have access to the full range of vocational training options, helping them choose the best path for their future careers. Helen's passion and innovative approach have significantly impacted the career journeys of many young people in Oxfordshire.

Caroline Walton, Director – ELS Awarding Organisation at Explosive Learning Solutions (ELS) Ltd, is a relentless advocate for apprenticeships, having lived and breathed them for 28 years. She works hard with local business, networking groups, schools and colleges to spread the word about the benefits of apprenticeships. She attends schools events, works with careers advisors and school representatives, providing business insights and information on opportunities. Caz's unwavering passion and dedication to upskilling individuals, fostering talent and championing apprenticeships has made a lasting impact in Oxfordshire.

INSPIRING THE FUTURE EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR



SPONSORED BY OXFORD HEALTH NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

Oxford Health provides physical, mental health and social care for people of all ages. Our services are delivered at community bases, hospitals, clinics and people's homes. We focus on delivering care as close to home as possible.

We started our apprenticeship journey as a provider in 2017 and now have a whole suite of programmes on offer. We play a big part in ensuring there are enough qualified healthcare staff locally.

We support the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards as we are passionate about the talent and skills we have here in Oxfordshire and are very excited to sponsor the Inspiring the Future Employer Award. As a local employer ourselves, we know the importance of engaging with local schools and colleges to inspire, educate and promote lifelong learning opportunities.

oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

FINALISTS

ACE Training innovates by collaborating closely with Oxfordshire schools to deliver tailored, impactful career enrichment activities. They participated in 35+ careers events in 2024, providing insights into the construction industry and employability skills. Their team, including directors and tutors, brings diverse experience to these activities, ensuring they are accessible and impactful for all learners. Additionally, ACE Training's Enterprise Adviser, Gemma, works with students to develop soft skills, preparing them for further education and employment. This inclusive and supportive approach helps students build confidence and succeed in their careers.

Intake Talent engaged with over 3,000 students across Oxfordshire over the past year, delivering 25+ careers talks and providing personalised guidance. Their innovative approach includes tailored work experience placements and apprenticeship opportunities, ensuring students gain real-world experience and the skills employers seek. They also support and inform parents and carers. Intake Talent's dedication to inclusivity and adaptability in their activities has led to successful apprenticeship placements and valuable work experience for students. Their proactive, feedback-driven approach ensures meaningful engagement and continuous improvement.

Morgan Sindall Construction engages with local schools and colleges through site visits, guest lectures, career events and work placements. Their innovative initiatives include interactive trade demonstrations and art competitions, making activities accessible and insightful for all learners. Morgan Sindall also engages with the wider community through a range of initiatives to inspire and empower individuals of all ages. Through these initiatives, Morgan Sindall nurtures talent and cultivates a deeper connection between their projects and the communities they serve. This comprehensive approach nurtures talent and strengthens community ties.

TRAINING PROVIDER INDIVIDUAL AWARD



SPONSORED BY OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

Oxford Brookes University is at the centre of supporting employers in the Oxford region, through bespoke education and training. Our provision currently includes 8 different degree apprenticeships and we are in a phase of expansion, reaching out to an ever-growing number of large enterprises, as well as SMEs, who value our expertise in a range of sectors and disciplines.

We sponsor the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards to raise awareness of the positive contribution apprentices can make to their

organisations and to show how training providers such as Oxford Brookes can support apprentices and their employers in making a difference to the local and national economy.

We are sponsoring the Training Provider Individual Award to recognise the significant impact individual practitioners have on the success of an apprentice in their workplace and educational setting.

brookes.ac.uk

FINALISTS

James Barrett, Electrical Tutor at JTL Training, has adapted his site experience to the classroom, providing personalised learning, support and mentoring for his apprentices. He has a passion for teaching and consistently goes the extra mile by tailoring his methods to support all learning styles and abilities. His commitment to inclusivity and ability to adapt to individual needs means he always gets the best from his learners and has ensured that his apprentices pass exams, develop skills and become confident electricians, whilst enjoying their learning.

Jess Greenfield, Apprentice Mentor at South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, goes above and beyond to provide tailored bespoke support academically, pastorally and practically. Jess works closely with apprentices and practice educators, ensuring tailored feedback and support plans. Her efforts have been recognised by Ofsted for the high levels of support she offers. Jess also creates innovative resources to help apprentices prepare for assessments and promote apprenticeships within the ambulance sector. Jess is described as caring, compassionate, supportive, kind, reassuring and professional.

Rebecca Manger, Assessor at Introtrain & Forum Ltd, tailors individual training plans for each apprentice, ensuring they reach their full potential. She provides extensive support, helping apprentices overcome challenges and achieve their dreams. To help keep apprentices motivated, Becky encourages them to take charge of their own learning, sets achievable milestones and celebrates their achievements. Her nurturing, encouraging and engaged approach, combined with her ability to make learning fun and achievable, has had a profound impact on apprentices of all ages and abilities.

APPRENTICESHIP EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR (<250 EMPLOYEES)



SPONSORED BY OLAMALU

At Olamalu, we help organisations to work better through the clever use of technology. We build websites, intranets, apps and solve unique business challenges.

From the moment we started the business, opening up opportunities for young people to join the technology industry has been at the heart of the way we operate. 50% of our team came through the apprenticeship route and our business wouldn't be where it is today without them. It's a joy to see our apprentices grow their skills and knowledge and take on bigger roles as they progress.

We're delighted to sponsor this category, having won it in 2024. Our winner will demonstrate a clear commitment to apprenticeships as a way to bring value to both the apprentices and the organisation, investment in learning and development throughout the apprenticeship and support for progression post-apprenticeship.

olamalu.com

FINALISTS

Explosive Learning Solutions (ELS) Ltd demonstrates an exceptional commitment to apprenticeships, providing apprentices with additional training opportunities, such as PRINCE2 project management courses and a 10-week marketing and leadership programme. The supportive environment for apprentices at ELS includes regular one-to-one meetings and beginner sessions to introduce software and processes. ELS also promotes in-house career progression, with apprentices advancing to managerial roles. Their inclusive recruitment practices and active community engagement, further demonstrate their commitment to high-quality apprenticeship experiences.

Fairfield Residential Home provides comprehensive support and mentoring, ensuring apprentices develop their skills and apply their learning effectively. Fairfield's 'Train the Trainer' programme provides apprentices with continuous, high-quality training and development opportunities from experienced colleagues, creating a supportive and well-structured learning environment. Fairfield actively promotes in-house career progression, ensuring that apprentices develop the necessary skills and gain the confidence and motivation to move forward in their careers. Fairfield's dedication to staff wellbeing and professional development creates a positive and supportive environment.

Popham Hairdressing provides hands-on training and daily coaching, ensuring apprentices develop both technical and interpersonal skills. Their supportive environment encourages career progression, with many apprentices advancing to senior roles. Popham's dedication to staff wellbeing and professional development is evident through additional training opportunities and a strong retention rate. Popham is the only UK hairdressing company to have been awarded Champion Investors in People. Their innovative approach and collaboration with training providers make them a standout employer, demonstrating how apprenticeships can help grow a skilled team.

APPRENTICESHIP EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR (250+ EMPLOYEES)



SPONSORED BY ASSURE UK

Assure UK provides specialised pension scheme audit, accounting and assurance services for some of the largest schemes in the UK. Our focus is on making a difference for all our clients.

We currently have 7 team members who are undertaking an apprenticeship in either accountancy or business administration, varying from level 3 to 7. One of our team members is an Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Ambassador and an ACCA Ambassador,

which has allowed us to spread the word about how important apprenticeships are and what they mean to us.

Having been highly commended in 2019, we jumped at the opportunity to sponsor the awards for the 4th year in a row. Our winner will be an employer that goes the extra mile for their employees, who does something different and not just what is expected.

assureuk.co.uk

FINALISTS

Grundon Waste Management offers diverse apprenticeships across various levels for both new and existing staff. Their dedicated Learning & Development Team supports apprentices throughout, ensuring they have clear learning pathways, regular reviews and support from managers. Apprentices receive additional training and shadowing opportunities, with senior directors and managers actively involved in their development. Grundon also ensures flexibility to protect study time. This commitment to apprenticeships has resulted in high success rates and career progression for their apprentices, with 100% offered a job or promotion.

Oxfordshire County Council offers a wide range of apprenticeships across a variety of levels and roles, fostering diverse talent and promoting inclusive career pathways. The Early Careers Team provides extensive support for apprentices and their managers, including with recruitment, training and pastoral care, ensuring apprentices are well integrated and supported. OCC's commitment to apprenticeships is evident through their proactive monitoring, additional learning opportunities and strong mentorship and networking programmes. Apprentices regularly secure permanent positions, showcasing OCC's dedication to career development and success.

The University of Oxford provides a varied range of apprenticeship opportunities, both to bring in new talent and develop existing staff. Apprentices receive extensive support through mentoring, networking, buddy schemes and additional training opportunities. Their innovative talent pool initiative simplifies the application process, broadens access and creates a supportive cohort for apprentices. With a strong focus on career progression, many apprentices secure permanent roles and/or advance to higher qualifications. The University's inclusive and supportive environment, makes them a standout apprenticeship employer.

AWARDS SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

ACTIVATE APPRENTICESHIPS

Founded in 2013, Activate Apprenticeships is one of the largest apprenticeship providers across Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Surrey, with expanding operations throughout the UK.

We specialise in delivering tailored apprenticeship programmes, training and consulting services to some of the nation's top employers. By collaborating with these businesses, we create apprenticeship opportunities that not only enhance individual careers but also drive business success. Our goal is to ensure a strong return on training investment, helping businesses thrive while supporting the next generation of skilled workers.

Activate Apprenticeships is proud to support the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards. As a local organisation, we believe it is vital to



celebrate the apprentices and employers who contribute so much to the success of our local economy. Recognising these achievements aligns with our commitment to developing skills and providing opportunities within the Oxfordshire community.

activateapprenticeships.co.uk

DARKE & TAYLOR



Since its beginning in 1958, Darke & Taylor Ltd has grown into a reputable and trusted name in the construction industry. Our team of highly skilled and experienced engineers are dedicated to delivering efficient and reliable solutions for all mechanical and electrical needs.

One of our core values is investing in the future. That's why we have established a robust apprenticeship scheme that allows us to train and develop the next generation of mechanical and electrical engineers. We believe in giving back to the community and offering opportunities to young individuals to learn and grow in the building services industry.

This year, Darke & Taylor is proud to launch its own training centre, Elevate, dedicated to supporting apprentices throughout their journey. As we celebrate a decade of sponsoring the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards, we remain committed to nurturing the next generation of talent and excellence in our industry.

darkeandtaylor.co.uk

AWARDS SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

HIGH SPEC COMPOSITES



High Spec Composites has been a passionate supporter of the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards, both as a committee member and sponsor since the awards launched in 2017. Having grown our small business through apprenticeships, we understand the great benefits apprentices can bring to a

company and are keen to share our positive experiences with a wider network, whilst celebrating star apprentices throughout Oxfordshire.

We have an extremely high success rate with completion of our level 2 and 3 qualifications and all our apprentices have been offered full-time positions within High Spec Composites at the end of their learning.

We have found employing apprentices is not only cost-effective solution for expanding a small business, but also the perfect opportunity to train individuals to bespoke business needs.

hscomposites.co.uk

JONAS EUROPE

Jonas Europe acquires and grows innovative software companies, forming lifetime partnerships. We acquire businesses and hold them for life. Our first acquisition was Gladstone Software (based in Wallingford), shortly followed by Xn Leisure (based in Abingdon). Our Head Office is also located in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, along with our central Finance, IT and People & Culture teams.

We are building out lots of apprenticeship opportunities, not just to bring in entry level colleagues but also to upskill existing employees. We currently support apprentices in finance, AI, network engineering and IT and telecoms across our group and hope to grow this even more.



jonassoftware.co.uk
jonassoftware.co.uk/why-jonas/talent-development

OXFORD NORTH

Oxford North is a new innovation district for the city opening later this year, designed to enable the next century of life-changing discoveries in science and technology, delivering one million sq ft of labs and workspaces, 480 new homes, amenities, public parks and significant investment in travelling around sustainably.

We are busy on-site and proud that, so far, the project has created more than 1,500 new jobs and 40 new apprenticeships.

This is Oxford North's 4th year being an award's sponsor supporting Enterprise Oxfordshire's brilliant initiative recognising companies and apprentices across the county.



We're sponsoring because we have a passionate belief in the value that apprenticeships can create in increasing social mobility and supporting businesses to grow.

oxfordnorth.com

OXFORDSHIRE ADVANCED SKILLS (OAS)



OAS offers high quality training for apprentice engineers and technicians for manufacturing and technology businesses in the Thames Valley.

As a training provider, we've worked with many apprentices in the Oxfordshire area

and are proud of each and every one and the positive impact they have on the businesses and industries they have joined.

We also employ apprentices ourselves and we are delighted to have seen so many learners progress to become fully-fledged members of the team. Apprentices have played a huge part in the growth of our organisation, helping us to develop the next generation of talent for our own business and for the manufacturing sector.

We are supporting the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards because we're passionate about supporting local talent – it's a great opportunity to showcase some of the amazing skills we have in Oxfordshire!

oas.ukaea.uk

AWARDS SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL



Oxfordshire County Council is one of the largest employers in Oxfordshire, with over 10,000 employees (including our maintained school staff) working in a wide variety of services.

Since 2007, we have steadily built up the number of apprentices we employ and the range of schemes we offer. We currently

have 330 apprentices training across our wider workforce in a diverse range of roles and deliver around 50 different apprenticeship standards.

Our Early Careers Team provides a centralised support service for all aspects of apprenticeship training across our organisation. Our apprentices go on to achieve great things, improving our services and helping our organisation go from strength to strength.

We are proud to support the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards, as we are keen to support and champion the delivery of apprenticeships and workforce growth in organisations across Oxfordshire.

oxfordshire.gov.uk/apprenticeships

SOUTH EAST APPRENTICESHIP AMBASSADOR NETWORK

The Apprenticeship Ambassador Network is the movement championing apprenticeships to raise awareness and increase engagement to meet the needs of employers, communities, and individuals across the country. We inspire and influence people to choose apprenticeships, as a route to create business and individual success.

The South East Apprenticeship Ambassador Network (SEAN) is a group of 100+ employers and apprentices whose main aim is to encourage new businesses and individuals to commit to apprenticeships in the South East of England. We undertake our role on a voluntary basis.

We support and influence a wide range of key stakeholders, including young people,



schools, colleges, employers and their supply chains, trade associations and employment bodies. Employer ambassadors also provide mentoring and support for employers looking to recruit apprentices for the first time.

sean.org.uk

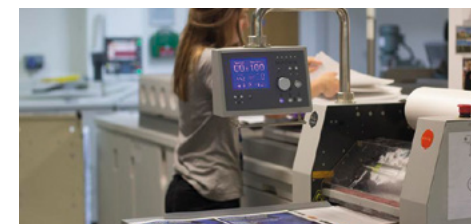
DESIGN & PRINT

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD PRINT STUDIO

Thank you to the University of Oxford Print Studio for their generous support once again with designing the trophies and printing the brochures for the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards, which they have done every year since the awards started in 2017.

As well as supporting the awards, the team is a great supporter of apprenticeships, with former apprentices Jordan and Imogen both having taken part in Oxfordshire Careers Hub's Apprenticeship Ambassador scheme and Jordan winning Apprenticeship Ambassador of the Year in 2019.

Equipped with the latest full-colour digital printers, the University Print Studio has a proven track record of delivering quality



printing that supports and enhances your brand reputation.

Roller banners, large format posters, leaflets and brochures, business cards, postcards and thesis printing are just part of the wide range of services they offer.

estates.admin.ox.ac.uk/print-studio

BECOME AN AWARDS SPONSOR

Being a sponsor is a fantastic way to raise the profile of your organisation within the Oxfordshire apprenticeship community, as well as giving you the opportunity to be part of this special occasion.

Are you interested in supporting the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards 2026? Please get in touch with the Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills team to find out more.



skills@enterpriseoxfordshire.com
oxlepskills.co.uk/oaawards

EVENT, DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY



THAT EVENT COMPANY

THAT Event Company is a supplier of high quality audio, lighting and audio visual equipment to every type and scale of physical and virtual event. They combine affordable access to high quality equipment with a mission to provide an unrivalled level of support to clients. The business depends on removing stress and leaving their clients secure in the knowledge that their event will be a total success.

that-event.com

DESIGNER EMMA DAVIS



Illustrator and Designer Emma Davis has been creating the branding and visuals for the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards since its launch in 2017. With over nine years of experience in eye-catching design, Emma offers bespoke illustration and design services for a wide range of projects.

designnems.com

BENJAMIN MOLE PHOTOGRAPHY



Freelance photographer Ben has taken photos at many of our events over the years, including at the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards celebration evenings since 2022. You can see some of Ben's work on his Instagram @benjaminmole.

benjaminmole.com



#OAAwards2025