

News story: Apprenticeship stars take centre stage at National Apprenticeship Awards 2018 ceremony

Now in its fifteenth year, the awards are the largest and most prestigious celebration of apprentices and apprentice employers across the country.

The 'Excellence in Apprenticeships' themed Awards ceremony showcased individual and employer success stories, recognising apprenticeships as a fast-track to a great career and enabler of business growth.

A Special Recognition Award was presented for the first time and was won by The Armed Forces – The Royal Air Force; Royal Navy and The British Army – for their commitment to apprenticeships. All three services are have been recognised as Outstanding by OfSTED and combined, are the largest apprenticeship employer in England.

Damian Hinds, Education Secretary said:

Apprenticeships are an excellent way for anyone to gain new skills and forge a career in anything from aerospace engineering to nursing. The National Apprenticeship Awards is a fantastic event to celebrate the achievements of apprentices, employers and training providers, and I want to wish all the winners and nominees congratulations on their incredible efforts.

This year's awards also saw the launch of the new 'Rising Star' category. This category showcased the apprentices who have made impressive progress in their careers to date and have the potential to go even further in their chosen profession.

Winning the Rising Star award was intermediate Retail and Enterprise apprentice Joe Buck from the North West. Joe is employed by Mitchells and Butlers and currently works in Toby Carvery as Duty Manager. Joe has won the first ever 'Rising Star' award after being recognised for the exceptional progress he has shown in his role. Joe's work was recognised as exceptional by a panel of judges and through a public vote where over 7000 people voted for their 'Rising Star.'

Lauren Carroll, Vocational Learning Attraction Manager at Mitchells and Butlers said:

As one of the first apprentices recruited by Mitchells and Butlers, Joe truly is a shining example of what his employer was aiming to achieve through recruiting apprentices. Joe has gone above and beyond his expected role at Toby Carvery, becoming an expert in

both the kitchen and front of house, providing the business strong pipeline for management roles both sides of the pass.

Jo Buck, Rising Star award winner

Anne Milton, Apprenticeships and Skills Minister said:

A huge well done to all the winners, finalists and rising stars! I have met so many apprentices up and down the country and all of them stars in their own right. Their passion for what they do, their determination to get things done and their drive to get on is so impressive. The winners tonight will have stepped out of their comfort zone to learn new skills and many will have changed the direction of their life. Congratulations to them all and they should be very proud of all they have achieved.

Keith Smith, Director, Apprenticeships, Education and Skills Funding Agency added:

The National Apprenticeship Awards ceremony is a great opportunity to celebrate individuals and employers who go above and beyond to champion apprenticeships.

This year we introduced the 'Rising Star' category which celebrates the individuals who have made impressive progress to their careers to date. Voted for by the public, these are the rising stars of English business and I wish them well for the future.

I want to congratulate everyone that was a part of this year's awards. All of the winners stories demonstrate that apprenticeships change lives, lead to rewarding jobs, and transform businesses for the better.

This year's national apprentice winners are:

- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star: Joe Buck, Mitchells & Butlers
- The British Army Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year: Muhammad Uddin, Yorkshire Housing
- The Rolls Royce Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year: Daniel Millington, HydraForce Hydraulics Ltd
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or

Degree Apprentice of the Year: Jordan Coulton, Weightmans LLP

- Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year: Natalie White, National Nuclear Laboratory

And 2 highly commended in each category:

- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star: Jenny Jones, HM Revenue and Customs and Aleksandra Burzec, Home Group
- The British Army Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year: Amelia Wayne, Futures Housing Group and Bethany Geddes, The Automobile Association
- The Rolls Royce Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year: Muhammad Khan, BT and Lucas Benson, BAE Systems Ltd
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year: Joe Powell, HM Revenue & Customs and Michelle Blackwell, Bevan Brittan LLP
- Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year: David Thompson, NETA Training Group and Susan Gough, Lloyds Banking Group

This year's national employer winners are:

- The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence: selected from the Employer of the Year award entries: BAE Systems plc
- The BAE Systems Award for SME Employer of the Year (for organisations with 1 to 249 employees): Troup Bywaters + Anders
- The Royal Navy Award for Large Employer of the Year (for organisations with 250 to 4,999 employees): KMF Precision Sheet Metal Limited
- The Centrica Award for Macro Employer of the Year (for organisations with 5,000+ employees): BAE Systems plc

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- The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence: selected from the

Employer of the Year award entries: KMF Precision Sheet Metal Limited, Lloyds Banking Group

- The BAE Systems Award for SME Employer of the Year (for organisations with 1 to 249 employees): Invotra, GoSkydive
- The Royal Navy Award for Large Employer of the Year (for organisations with 250 to 4,999 employees): United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, WEC Group Limited
- The Centrica Award for Macro Employer of the Year (for organisations with 5,000+ employees): Engie, Lookers plc

George Clarke and Lois McClure, Hosts

George Clarke, former apprentice and creative director of George Clarke + Partners co-hosted the awards with apprentice Lois McClure. George concluded:

My BTEC learning path was similar to an apprenticeship so I fully appreciate the hard work, skills and talent represented in the National Apprenticeship Awards 2018. The career path I took really did open up doors for me and I am sure this year's winners will find themselves in fortunate positions with their careers – which can all be put down to their hard work, tenacity and excellence.

It's also great to see that the winning employers and apprentices are from such a rich variety of sectors, showcasing beautifully the broad range of skills that apprenticeships deliver. I am delighted to have been part of this celebration of excellence in apprenticeships.