

National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 national winners unveiled

- Over 1100 applications received from across England
- 28 employer, apprentice and individual national winners and highly commended announced
- Winners from 24 English towns and cities

The best of England's apprentice employers, apprentices, rising stars and individuals who champion apprenticeships have been announced during the 17th annual National Apprenticeship Awards.

Apprentices, at all levels and from sectors including construction, engineering and business, alongside employers from the health, leisure and ICT sectors were announced as winners during the online broadcast, today 25 November 2020. Ten winners and 18 highly commended finalists were recognised from across all nine English regions.

BBC's Dan Walker, host of the 17th annual National Apprenticeship Awards

The National Apprenticeship Awards shine the spotlight on business and individual success in apprenticeships, particularly poignant, given the many challenges employers and apprentices have faced this year during the pandemic. The national ceremony showcased examples of where apprentices have gone above and beyond in their apprenticeship to make a real difference.

Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson said:

Huge congratulations to all of the winners. It's fantastic to see so many excellent examples of employers of all sizes continuing to embrace the benefits apprenticeships have to offer, and all the apprentices who have gone above and beyond.

The National Apprenticeships Awards are a brilliant opportunity to showcase the power of apprenticeships to transform lives and businesses, while helping people of all ages and backgrounds to get ahead.

Apprenticeships will continue to play a vital role helping us to build back better from coronavirus. I wish all the winners all the best for the future.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak said:

With such strong competition in businesses right across the country, the winners of this year's National Apprenticeship Awards

should hold their heads up high.

There's a reason why so many apprentices stay in a job or do further training afterwards – it's because apprenticeships work. That's why we're doing everything we can to make sure people can continue learning while expanding their job prospects – much like today's winners – and why this week we announced cash incentives to hire apprentices, meaning businesses can benefit from their talents.

Each and every apprentice is vital to the national effort to recover from the pandemic and build back better.

Apprenticeships are a cornerstone of the [Chancellor's Plan for Jobs](#) to help the UK's recovery from the pandemic. Through the Plan for Jobs a total of £1.6 billion will be invested in scaling up employment support schemes, training and apprenticeships to help people looking for a job.

This includes:

- The [Incentive Payment for Hiring a New Apprentice](#), where businesses will be given £2,000 for each new apprentice they hire under the age of 25, and £1,500 for each apprentice aged 25 and over.
- A £111 million investment to triple the scale of traineeships in 2020-21 ensuring more young people have access to high quality training.

The National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 winners and two highly commended in each category are:

Employer categories:

| Award | Category | Employer |
|------------------|---|---|
| Winner | The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, Award for SME Employer of the Year | Troup Bywaters + Anders |
| Highly Commended | The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, Award for SME Employer of the Year | Snow-Camp Charity & Crimson Limited |
| Winner | The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year | WEC Group Ltd |
| Highly Commended | The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year | MTR Elizabeth Line & Home Group Ltd |
| Winner | The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year | BAE Systems plc |
| Highly Commended | The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year | Royal Air Force |
| Winner | The Accenture Award for Recruitment Excellence | County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service & United Utilities |

| Award | Category | Employer |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Highly Commended | The Accenture Award for Recruitment Excellence | Mitchells & Butlers & MTR Elizabeth Line |

Individual categories winners and highly commended:

| Award | Category | Name | Employer |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| Winner | The AstraZeneca Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year | Maisey Hammond | Stroud District Council |
| Highly Commended | The AstraZeneca Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year | Aron Marshall | COOP |
| Highly Commended | The AstraZeneca Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year | Joshua Foord | Sunbelt Rentals |
| Winner | The BT Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year | Chris Jones | J.C. Bamford Excavators Limited |
| Highly Commended | The BT Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year | Scott Murton | Ministry of Defence – Submarine Delivery Agency |
| Highly Commended | The BT Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year | Emma Sisman | Niftylift |
| Winner | The Royal Navy Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year | Laurie Weatherall | GlaxoSmithKline |
| Highly Commended | The Royal Navy Award for Higher or Degree Apprentices of the Year | Harriet Willsher | IBM UK Ltd |
| Highly Commended | The Royal Navy Award for Higher or Degree Apprentices of the Year | Manoj Vadher | Royal Mail |
| Winner | The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year | Howard Jackson | IBM UK Ltd |
| Highly Commended | The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year | Nihal Dhillon | J C Bamford Excavators Limited |
| Highly Commended | The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year | Jordan Brosnan | Coca-Cola European Partners |
| Winner | The Royal Air Force Award for Apprentice Champion of the Year | Jenny Taylor | IBM UK Ltd |
| Highly Commended | The Royal Air Force Award for Apprentice Champion of the Year | Paula McMahon | Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd |
| Highly Commended | The Royal Air Force Award for Apprentice Champion of the Year | Alison Galvin | Invotra |

The National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 also recognised apprentices and their employers as they continued through the challenge of COVID-19, showcasing the most inspiring stories from across the country.

Employer submitted stories were accepted as entries for this years' **Special Recognition Award**, in association with The Armed Forces (Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force) – with the winner announced as Great Ormond Street Hospital apprentice healthcare support worker Amber James, who worked on the frontline in the Nightingale Hospital in Excel London as a clinical support worker. Amber worked on the frontline during the height of the pandemic; committing to and learning during a new and challenging nursing experience. Amber is now due to start her degree apprenticeship in registered nursing.

Peter Mucklow, Director, Apprenticeships, Education and Skills Funding Agency said:

We are delighted to reveal the National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 winners today, recognising the employers, apprentices and champions of apprenticeships, as well as the rising stars of our future workforce. Amber is a wonderful example of how apprentices have contributed during the pandemic and she thoroughly deserves her special recognition award.

The number and quality of entries this year was outstanding, demonstrating the importance of apprenticeships for employers and individuals alike. I thank all entrants for taking time to share their apprenticeship journey, whilst congratulating those who have won, or were highly commended.

The support from our ambassadors and sponsors has been magnificent. In such difficult times their commitment means we could still celebrate the very best apprentices and apprenticeships in 2020.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service was crowned The Accenture Award winner for Recruitment Excellence.

Katherine Metcalfe, Head of People and Organisational Development from County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service said:

We are absolutely delighted to have been recognised through the National Apprenticeship Awards for our commitment to apprenticeships across our organisation. We are proud we can offer excellent training and development opportunities for our current workforce and those joining our Service through accredited programmes.

We firmly believe in growing and nurturing our own talent and apprenticeships offer us an alternative route for our staff to

learn on the job and gain meaningful qualifications. Being the first Fire and Rescue Service in the country to offer Firefighter apprenticeships and to see our programme be successful make us feel extremely proud. As we embark onto our 4th cohort our commitment to our apprenticeship programme couldn't be higher.

Find out more about the apprentices recognised for going above and beyond by visiting: <https://apprenticesonthefrontline.co.uk/>.

Watch Amber's story on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/aDMZHbUCbtA>

More information on National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 winners can be found by visiting: <https://appawards.co.uk/>

Follow [@Apprenticeships](#) on Twitter and the National Apprenticeship Service page on LinkedIn to keep up to date with all the latest awards information.

[Addressing a Syrian-led political transition and the humanitarian crisis in Syria](#)

Many thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to Deputy Special Envoy Matar and Deputy Emergency Coordinator Rajasingham for their briefings and for their continued tireless efforts to resolve the conflict and help Syrians in need.

Unfortunately, both the process for achieving peace and the situation across the country, as we've heard today, remain in a precarious state. We welcome the news of the formal plans for the fourth and fifth rounds of Constitutional Committee talks. However, it is now well over a year since the Council expressed its determination that this should be the beginning of a political process to end the conflict. And we remain concerned at the lack of substantive progress made by the committee.

While talks to resolve an almost 10 year conflict will be difficult and potentially lengthy, there is no excuse for the regime's obstructivism that has artificially prevented the talks from discussing matters of substance.

Madam President, resolution 2254 was explicit on the order of steps towards a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition to end the conflict, designed to allow the Syrian people to decide the future of their country. Only once agreement has been reached on a new constitution can free and fair elections, as part of the political process envisaged in resolution 2254,

take place. Elections that do not meet these requirements, that are not held pursuant to the new constitution, that are not administered under supervision of the UN to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability, with all Syrians, including the diaspora eligible to participate, would only serve to delegitimise and subvert the political process agreed by this Council and the wider international community. Surely a Syrian government confident in its prospects in a free and fair election would not want elections to happen on these terms.

The United Kingdom also calls for substantial progress to be made on the other facets of 2254. Confidence-building measures are sorely needed in order to contribute to the viability of the political process. And progress on the release of those arbitrarily detained should be moving swiftly, but instead it remains stuck.

We once again highlight the continuing shocking human rights violations in Syria, including the treatment of prisoners by all parties outlined in the Commission of Inquiry's September report. Particularly harrowing are accounts of detainees being beaten with sticks and cables and bound around tires by the regime.

Madam Chair, the humanitarian situation across the country remains dire and is worsening, as we've heard today. 3.1 million people require additional support to get through a harsh winter and inclement weather is already having an impact. Only a few weeks ago, 10 IDP sites in northwest Syria suffered flooding, which destroyed 345 tents, impacting 1,733 individuals. As we heard today, when this happens, everything washes away: people's possessions, people's lives.

9.3 million people are food insecure, with a further 2.2 million at risk. As Ramesh says, this is 1.4 million more people than a year ago. And more than at any point during the crisis. Reports of three hour queues for bread are deeply concerning. Consumption of bread exceeds production by around one million metric tons. And there are some 25,000 cases confirmed of COVID-19 across the country. This number has doubled since this Council last met on this item in October. Given that 92 percent of cases are not traceable to a known case, the actual number of cases is undoubtedly much higher.

To address all of these acute needs, it is essential that the UN and other humanitarian actors are given unimpeded access. The granting of access permissions in a timely manner is essential. And we reiterate the importance of a holistic humanitarian response.

Cross-border access, which was unnecessarily cut by other members of this Council earlier this year, remains of prime importance to Syrians faced with another harsh winter. And we need to see the issue of refugee returns in the context of these continuing dire conditions: a food crisis, a COVID crisis, an access crisis for humanitarians and the complete disregard of the regime for the rights of detainees. So while the need to build the conditions for a safe, dignified and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons remains, it is clear that these conditions are not even close to being achieved.

All this illustrates what a sham the recent Russian-hosted refugee conference in Damascus was: motivated by a desire to promote normalisation of the Syrian regime over the interests of Syrian refugees and Syrian people.

The issue of refugee returns is of the highest priority, but it must be discussed in a neutral location under the auspices of the UN. As resolution 2254 makes clear, the process needs to take into account the interests of those countries hosting refugees, and they also need to take into account the views and interests of refugees and internally displaced persons themselves.

Indeed, if the regime and Russia were genuinely serious about facilitating returns, they would make genuine efforts to address the conditions in Syria of their making, that make such returns unrealistic at present. And in parallel, if they were serious about resolving the crisis that causes these conditions, they would have engaged in the discussions in Geneva over the last year in a more constructive and meaningful way.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[Foreign Secretary statement following a meeting with the Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister](#)

News story

Following a discussion about the conflict in Ethiopia with the Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has made the below statement.



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

I met today with the Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke

Mekonnen to discuss the deeply concerning situation in the Tigray region. I made clear that there should be an immediate end to violence by both sides, civilians who remain in the region must be protected, and I expressed particular concern about the impact on civilians of the planned siege of Tigray's capital, Mekelle.

The government needs to guarantee unhindered humanitarian access and the restoration of basic services in Tigray. All parties to this conflict need to want to find a political solution and accept regional offers of mediation, to avoid a looming humanitarian crisis and the spread of fighting and suffering to other countries in the region.

The UK has been a longstanding supporter of Ethiopia, which has established itself as a beacon of reform in Africa. This conflict is putting all of those reform efforts at risk.

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[Spending Review to deliver jobs and infrastructure for Wales](#)

- Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces £1.3bn of new funding for Wales for 2021/22. This is more than double the £600m new funding provided for 2020/21 at the 2019 Spending Round.
- Rishi Sunak sets out how UK Government will provide billions of pounds to fight coronavirus, deliver the peoples' priorities and drive the UK's recovery.
- Wales will also benefit from more than £100bn of capital investment across the UK in 2021/22 – creating jobs and growing the economy.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak today unveiled a Spending Review for the whole of the UK as he laid out plans to help Wales to fight the coronavirus and build back better.

Rishi Sunak announced that Wales will receive £1.3bn of new funding from the UK Government in 2021/22 through the Barnett formula for devolved areas such as health and social care, education and housing. This is more than double the £600m provided for 2020/21 at the 2019 Spending Round.

It is separate from the £5bn additional funding guaranteed to the Welsh Government in 2020/21, above the funding allocated at the Spring Budget earlier this year, in the face of the coronavirus and its impact on the economy.

Wales will also receive a significant boost from more than £100bn of capital investment across the UK in 2021/22, improving connectivity and productivity for the whole of the UK.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

Today's Spending Review underlines our commitment to the people of Wales as we look to the future.

It provides billions of pounds to fight coronavirus, deliver the peoples' priorities and drive the UK's recovery.

The Treasury is, has been, and will always be the Treasury for the whole of the United Kingdom. And this is a Spending Review for the whole United Kingdom.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

The Chancellor's package of measures delivers for Wales as we plan our recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

As well as the extra £1.3bn block grant increase for the Welsh Government, Wales as a whole will benefit from the UK Government's new £2.9bn Restart programme to help unemployed people find work, as well as a doubling of work coaches and the continued support schemes for jobs through the pandemic which have so far supported more than 500,000 livelihoods in Wales.

This is in addition to planned improvements to mobile and broadband connectivity and investment in green industries like carbon capture and offshore wind which have huge potential benefits for Wales. This continues to be an exceptionally challenging time for everyone in the UK but the Chancellor has today set out a fantastic economic package for Wales.

Projects announced today include the Gigabit and Shared Rural Network programmes for better mobile coverage.

The Gigabit programme subsidises the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband in the most difficult to reach 20% of the country, while the Shared Rural Network programme is a partnership with industry that will deliver high-quality 4G mobile coverage across 95% of the UK by 2025.

Investment in new green industries will support green growth clusters, offshore wind capacity, port infrastructure, Carbon Capture and Storage and low carbon hydrogen.

Separately, institutions and companies in Wales will also be able to access a £14.6bn UK-wide research and development fund.

The Chancellor also today announced that through the Shared Outcomes Fund Wales will host one of five pilots around drug enforcement and treatment which will tackle drug use through better join up of local law enforcement agencies, prisons and health and social care services.

And Cardiff will host a separate pilot which aims to bring service providers together to work with offenders and their families in a community focussed way to address issues around intergenerational offending.

Wales will benefit from a share of the 6,000 additional police officers that will be recruited in 2020-21 as part of the commitment to recruit 20,000 additional officers by 2023, which this SR commits £400 million to deliver.

The allocation of additional officers to Welsh police forces will be confirmed in the police funding settlement for 2021-22.

The Chancellor also unveiled plans to create and support hundreds of thousands of jobs across the UK through a new three-year £2.9 billion Restart programme to help one million unemployed people find work, alongside £1.4 billion of new funding to increase Job Centre Plus capacity.

And the Government confirmed funding for the next stage of the Plan for Jobs – including £1.6bn for the landmark Kickstart scheme in 2021/22, which will see the creation of up to 250,000 government-subsidised jobs for young people.

The apprenticeship hiring incentive that launched in August will also be extended to 31 March 2021, offering employers up to £2,000 for every new apprentice they hire. There will also be a £375m package to support skills which includes £138m of new funding to deliver the Prime Minister's Lifetime Skills Guarantee and £127m to continue the Plan for Jobs skills measures.

Investment from EU Structural Funds is increasing in each of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 21-22 compared to this financial year.

The Spending Review provides additional UK funding to help local areas prepare over 2021-22 for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Further details will be published in the New Year.

The UK Government has also delivered on its manifesto commitment to maintain funding by providing £240m to support farmers, land managers and the rural economy, and £2m to support fisheries in Wales.

The Government committed to boost local economies through at least one freeport in each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with locations to be decided in consultation with the devolved administrations.

And on the cultural front the Government announced £29.1m for Festival UK with projects expected across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

At this Spending Review Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will benefit

from UK-wide coronavirus support in health, including £15bn for Test and Trace with Barnett funding provided for England-only elements of the programme.

[UK response to settlements in Har Homa](#)

Press release

The UK is deeply concerned by the Government of Israel's decision to advance the construction of 540 new buildings in the existing settlement of Har Homa, in southern Jerusalem.



A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development spokesperson said:

The UK is deeply concerned by the Government of Israel's decision to advance the construction of 540 new buildings in the existing settlement of Har Homa, in southern Jerusalem. This follows the announcement on 15 November to advance 1,257 settlement units in Givat HaMatos.

The UK's position on Israeli settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law and damaging to efforts to rebuild trust and dialogue between the parties.

We urge Israel to reverse this decision immediately.

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