

BUSINESS LINK

A round-up of business news from Hopwood Hall College



Salt Separation

Salt Separation Services' new apprentices were ready and raring to go when they began training this September.

Dubbed the 'Sat Sep Academy', the five of them are completing the Level 2 Engineering Operative Apprenticeship – seen here (above) alongside their mentors, tutors and Mayor of Rochdale Janet Emsley.

We're proud to be providing the training for the group and can't wait to see the value that they add to the team at Salt Separation!

Bethell Group

There must have been something in the air when the clock started ticking on this year's Transfer Deadline Day.

After all, this was the day when Subhan Ali officially inked his deal to begin a Level 3 Construction Support Technician Apprenticeship with Bethell Group.

Subhan played a blinder studying a Level 2 qualification at the college and learned many valuable skills, so we've no doubt he'll make a brilliant addition to the team at Bethell!





H Bell & Sons

We're sharing in H Bell & Sons' celebrations after Level 3 Craft Carpentry & Joinery apprentice, Leo Cattermole, completed his qualification with a Distinction.

A real example of a rising star, Leo rolled up his sleeves and made huge contributions to the team during his training.

H Bell & Sons said: "A big well done, Leo – his hard work and talent speak for themselves!"

Danish Crown

Danish Crown has no shortage of future leaders in their midst after four of their apprentices successfully completed their Level 3 Team Leader Apprenticeship.

Lisa Davis, Tom Wilson, Tim Gilbert and Jemma Brearley all came up trumps when it came to their recent End Point Assessment.

It's been great providing their training and seeing the different ways they've contributed to the team at Danish Crown.



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This year's WorldSkills UK finalists have been announced – and we've got TWO apprentices representing #TeamHopwood!

Well done to Fire & Security apprentices Samuel Chadderton, who works for Isolate Electrical, and Joseph Meara, who's with Check Fire and Security, for making it to the finals of the competition.

This is a superb achievement and we're sure you'll all join us in rooting them on when the contest kicks off in November!

Team of the Year

Our amazing Apprenticeships Team won 'Compliance Team of the Year' at the Quality Professional Awards 2025!

This incredible achievement is a testament to their dedication to excellence, attention to detail, and unwavering commitment to ensuring our apprenticeships meet the highest standards.

The team's hard work truly makes such a difference for our learners, apprentices and our partners!



Two Fussy Blokes

Hopwood Hall College is designed for apprentices to thrive – from access to industry-standard facilities to receiving expert training from our tutors.

Lily-Mae Smith, a Painting & Decorating apprentice with AS Decorating, is just one example of someone who is flourishing.

In fact, the team at Two Fussy Blokes generously awarded her with a toolkit in recognition of everything she's achieving at the college and with her employer.





GM Skills Awards

The GM Skills Awards at Gorton Monastery were truly a night to remember for Hopwood Hall!

First, Gerrard Ashcroft picked up Apprentice of the Year, with his employer IACS cheering him on alongside his tutors.

Also, Carpentry & Joinery apprentice Maksym Kokhan, who works for the Casey Group, won the Shining Star Award.

We were cheering on our employer partners too, including R&B Switchgear Group, who were named Highly Commended in SME of the Year, and the team at IACS who won SME of the Year.

Summer Success

There was no shortage of success over the summer as several apprentices wrapped up their training with us.

Maksym Kokhan, for instance, completed his Level 3 Craft Carpentry Apprenticeship with Casey Group.

Meanwhile, Cara Group's Level 2 Groundworker apprentice, Jack Ellam, also passed with flying colours.

Speaking about his success, the team at Cara Group said: "A very well-deserved achievement – Jack has been a model apprentice throughout.

"With the fantastic support from the site team at Cara Construction and Hopwood Hall College, he completed his apprenticeship in record time – thank you guys."



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Save the Date

The countdown is officially on for our Apprenticeship Awards 2026!

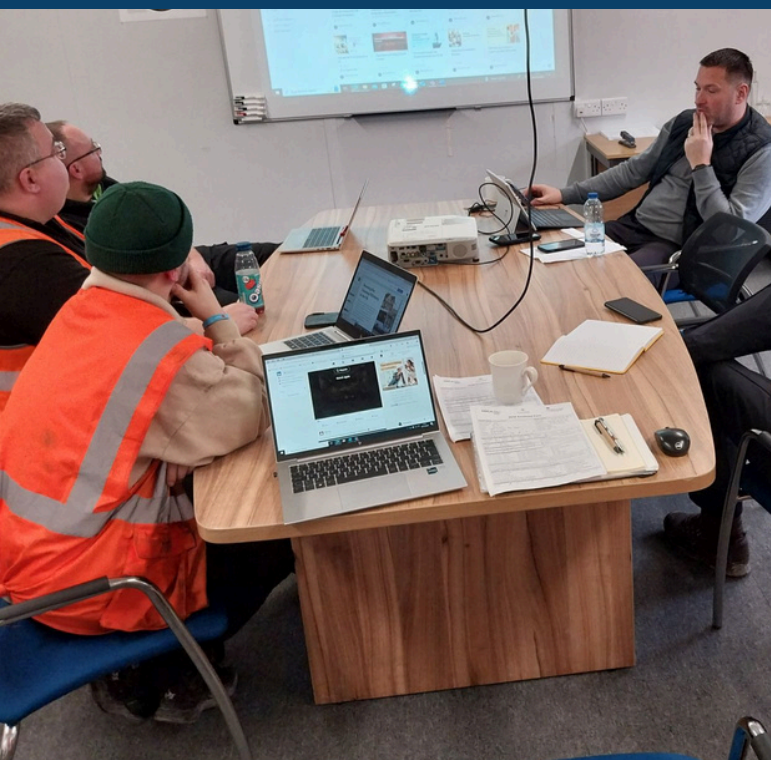
Next year the ceremony will take place at the Norton Grange Hotel and Spa on Thursday 5th February.

Be sure to save the date because it's already shaping up to be another unforgettable event as we present 11 awards to employers and apprentices throughout the evening.



If you'd like to sponsor one of our categories, be sure to get in touch with our Business Development Officer Sam Johnson at Sam.Johnson@hopwood.ac.uk.

AI in Action



Our Digital Innovation advisor, Billy Gilchrist, has now worked with more than 100 businesses in Rochdale!

From Simkiss Control Systems and Airborne Environmental Consultants to Rochdale Development Agency and First Bus (pictured), AI guru Billy has been sharing his expertise with employers across the borough and beyond through the GM FE Innovation Programme.

Kevin Mullin, Social Value Manager at First Bus, said: "Thank you, Billy, for equipping us with new insights and tools to explore how we can streamline our work, enhance efficiency, and free up time to focus on other tasks!"

To speak to Billy about the different ways that you can innovate in your business, please get in touch by emailing innovation@hopwood.ac.uk or by phoning 07950 716 658.

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Zen Internet

We've been delighted to work alongside Zen Internet on their Technical Support Programme.

It's seen our students getting valuable experience with the acclaimed broadband provider – with two learners now securing full-time roles.

IT students James and Thomas have both been offered permanent positions and will be bringing their newly-learned skills to the business moving forward.

Meet Sam Johnson

Sam is our Business Development Officer at Hopwood. She joined us in 2023 and over the past two years has forged really impactful relationships with employers across Greater Manchester.

While many of you will have already met Sam, here's some facts that you might not know about her.

Career journey: Sam got her start as an apprentice hairdresser. She says the experience is what has made her such an advocate for apprenticeship training.

Pre-Hopwood: Prior to joining the college Sam was making waves working in hospitality and recruitment.

Favourite song: Islands in the Stream

Pets: Shih Tzu cross called Loki and a Whippet cross called Toby

What's next? Sam is all set to tie the knot and will be getting married in December – congratulations Sam!



Food Bank

Over the summer we jumped at the opportunity to drive donations for Rochdale Foodbank!

Our teams spent the day volunteering and raising awareness of the items that foodbanks are most in need of while stationed at Morrisons' Kingsway store in Rochdale.

This came after we proudly joined several of our amazing employer partners in sponsoring the new van being used by the foodbank.



Healthcare Forum

It was a day of collaboration when we hosted our Healthcare Employer Forum at our Middleton Campus!

Joined by employer partners from across the borough and beyond, it was great to discuss the challenges facing the healthcare sector and how we can deliver the skills training solutions that are so crucial.

Our visitors were mesmerised by some of the technology being used by our students, including our incredibly lifelike Juno dolls, which simulate real patient conditions in our new hospital ward, and our interactive anatomage table (pictured).





Business Breakfast

We kick-started the new academic year with a special networking event held to celebrate the relocation of our Business, Travel & Tourism and Accounting courses to our Rochdale Campus.

A huge thanks to all the employers who attended this business breakfast and for committing to supporting our students ahead of them joining the workforce.

It's this collaboration between education and industry that ensures the next generation can thrive when working in Rochdale and beyond.

Machining Technician Apprenticeship

There's still time upskill a member of your team through our Level 3 Machining Technician Apprenticeship!

They'll be training at the college alongside fellow apprentices such as Zeina Khalifa, who is employed by NOV Mono.

Earlier this year Zeina was full of praise for the apprenticeship pathway and our college tutors when she sat down the qualification provider City & Guilds.

Zeina's been making huge strides with her employer and is a shining example of what can be achieved through this Machining Technician Apprenticeship!



Business Support package

Are you looking to strengthen your workforce and invest in long-term growth? Our tailored Business Support Package is designed to help you enhance your team's skills through high-quality apprenticeship training.

Whether you're developing future leaders or refining front-line customer service, our apprenticeships cover a broad range of essential business functions. This package includes:

Level 2

Customer Service Practitioner

Level 3

Customer Service Specialist

Level 3

Business Administrator

Level 3

Team Leader/Supervisor

Level 5

Operations/Departmental Manager

For more information, visit:

www.hopwood.ac.uk/apprenticeships-business-support-package/

Thank you

Another heartfelt thank you to all those employers who sponsored our Student Awards 2025.

This includes Willmott Dixon, Graham Abdullah Dinn, OnePT, Dennis Williams, Alan Howard Ltd, A&B Trade Paint Supplies, the Norton Grange Hotel & Spa, Get Further and Century.

Your support has such a positive impact for our learners and we really appreciate you giving the ceremony your backing.



Engineering Forum

There was a buzzing energy in the room as we held our Engineering & Manufacturing Employer Forum.

It was great connecting with industry leaders to explore how we can collaborate to shape the future of skills in the engineering sector.

We're excited to continue building strong partnerships that equip the next generation with the skills needed to meet the challenges of tomorrow's manufacturing world.

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Employer Spotlight: **Woodall Nicholson**



We're proud to partner with Woodall Nicholson, the specialist vehicle design manufacturer.

Since 2024, we've worked together closely to assess the company's skills needs and they now have 13 apprentices training over three sites.

Together, we created a bespoke apprenticeship programme aimed at strengthening the sector and equipping the next generation with the specialised skills required for vehicle conversions.

This was the catalyst for the Woodall Nicholson team winning the Bespoke Collaboration Award at our inaugural Apprenticeship Awards!



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NEW! Construction Plant Apprenticeship

There's not long left until we launch our new Construction Plant Operative Apprenticeship in November!

Following on from steering groups made up of our pioneering employer partners, this programme has been designed to fill a skills gap and move the industry forward.

It's a brilliant opportunity for businesses to invest in the future of their workforce and grow their talent pipeline – starting with an assessment and recruitment day.

If you're interested in hearing more or taking on a budding Construction Plant Apprentice of your own, be sure to contact **sam.johnson@hopwood.ac.uk** to find out more.



Training for Trades

We're continuing to add to our diverse suite of training for trades courses – and now offer a number of qualifications in which we're the only provider in Greater Manchester!

This includes the BS5839-1:2025 Level 3 Award in Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems, which takes just one week to complete and will allow people to take that next step in the fire and security industry.

There's now even an option to just sit the exam – a unique feature that we're pleased to be able to price at just £199.

In addition, we also offer a wide range of short solar PV and battery storage courses, as well as gas assessment courses, such as the METI Domestic Gas Meters Installation pathway.

You can check out our full range of Training for Trades courses [HERE](#).



T-Levels

T-Levels have completely changed the game in technical education and have cemented themselves as a strong talent pipeline for employers.

Featuring a 315-hour/45-day work placement, the qualifications are a brilliant opportunity for businesses to tap into the skillsets of ambitious young people.

We've gathered just a few success stories to demonstrate the impact they're having and the ways that employers from different industries have been benefitting.

You can also find out more by joining us for our upcoming T-Level Employer Event taking place at our Middleton Campus from 12:30 – 4pm on Wednesday 15th October 2025.



BES Ltd

We wanted to say another huge congratulations to Ben Hamlin who was named GM Colleges' Alumni of the Year!

Ben studied the T-Level in Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction, where he completed an industry placement with BES Ltd.

He quickly proved himself to be a valuable member of the team and began a Degree Apprenticeship in Building Services and Sustainable Engineering with them in 2024.

Speaking about Ben's award win, BES Ltd said: "Congratulations, Ben! A well-earned achievement that reflects your dedication, talent and determination."





ANWYL HOMES

Our T-Level Management students have once again been making a splash – this time while on placement with Anwyl Homes.

Over the summer the group contributed to a sun-soaked event being held by the homebuilders in Heywood

Amy Houlihan, Area Sales Manager at Anwyl Homes, said: "We're grateful to Hopwood Hall College students for their help in planning the event and their support on the day!"

Teddy Bear Nursery

We're still celebrating following Results Day 2025 as it demonstrated the continued success of T-Levels at Hopwood Hall.

Just one success story was Shania Smith, who found out she received a Distinction in her T-Level in Education and Childcare.

While completing the qualification Shania undertook an industry placement with Teddy Bear Nursery and has now accepted a full-time role with them.



DID YOU KNOW?

If you're interested in upskilling your teams, then know that many of our apprenticeship routes can be started throughout the year.

Our roll on/roll off start dates give you the perfect degree of flexibility to assess your skills gaps before recruiting an apprentice to your workforce.



Just some of the apprenticeship pathways that offer this flexibility include:

- Level 2 Customer Service Practitioner
- Level 2 Facilities Operative
- Level 3 Facilities Management Supervisor
- Level 3 Business Administrator
- Level 3 Customer Service Specialist
- Level 3 Team Leader/Supervisor
- Level 5 Operations/Departmental Manager
- Level 2 Food and Beverage Team Member
- Level 3 Hospitality Supervisor
- Level 2 Commis Chef
- Level 2 Production Chef
- Level 3 Senior Production Chef
- Level 2 Healthcare Support Worker
- Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker
- Level 2 Property Maintenance
- Level 3 Construction Site Technician
- Level 2 Fitted Interior Installer
- Level 3 Carpentry and Joinery

