

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



JANUARY 2026
NEWSLETTER



National Business College Apprentices Support Food Bank with Harvest Collection

National Business College apprentices have made a meaningful contribution to community welfare after delivering their annual Harvest collection to Charlie Taylor and the team at The Welcome Centre: Food Bank and More at the beginning of November.

The initiative, supported by apprentices, their families, and staff, resulted in a generous donation of essential items for local people facing hardship. NBC representatives expressed their gratitude for the overwhelming response, noting that the kindness shown will directly support individuals and families in urgent need.

The Welcome Centre, which provides crisis support across Kirklees, continues to play a crucial role in the community. Over the last 12 months, the charity has supplied an impressive 317,000 meals to people experiencing food insecurity in Huddersfield and surrounding areas. As part of their Corporate Social Responsibility studies, apprentices at the college have been learning about the centre's vital services and the growing demand for support.

Speaking about the project, NBC staff said they were proud to contribute to the charity's efforts and help raise awareness of the essential work being carried out. "We're proud to play a small part in supporting the invaluable service The Welcome Centre provides," Keely Carleton said.



Beth lands role as Coronation Street villain after being cast as 'baddies' in York College plays

Beth Nixon - the actress currently starring as Coronation Street's latest villain - says her love for playing "baddies" was first nurtured at York College. The York-born 25-year-old has landed her first-ever TV role as Megan Walsh in the iconic soap and has been handed a controversial storyline as a sports coach having a relationship with a schoolboy.

Beth studied Level 3 Performing & Production Arts at the College from 2016 to 2018 and is no stranger to playing evil characters, having portrayed a Cockney vampire in *A Vampire Story* and the Devil in *Everyman*. She also credits College for helping her overcome shyness at 16 and supporting her next steps in education.

She "screamed and then cried" upon learning she'd won the part, receiving the call while working as a skin clinic manager. It ended four years of waiting for her big break - a period that left her close to abandoning acting altogether. Instead, she will now feature in *Corrie's* Christmas Day episode, watched annually by millions.

After auditioning twice previously for villainous roles, Beth was invited back earlier this year and secured the part following a chemistry test and on-set scene. Her initial six-month contract has since been renewed, much to the delight of her *Corrie*-superfan mum, who had to keep the news secret.





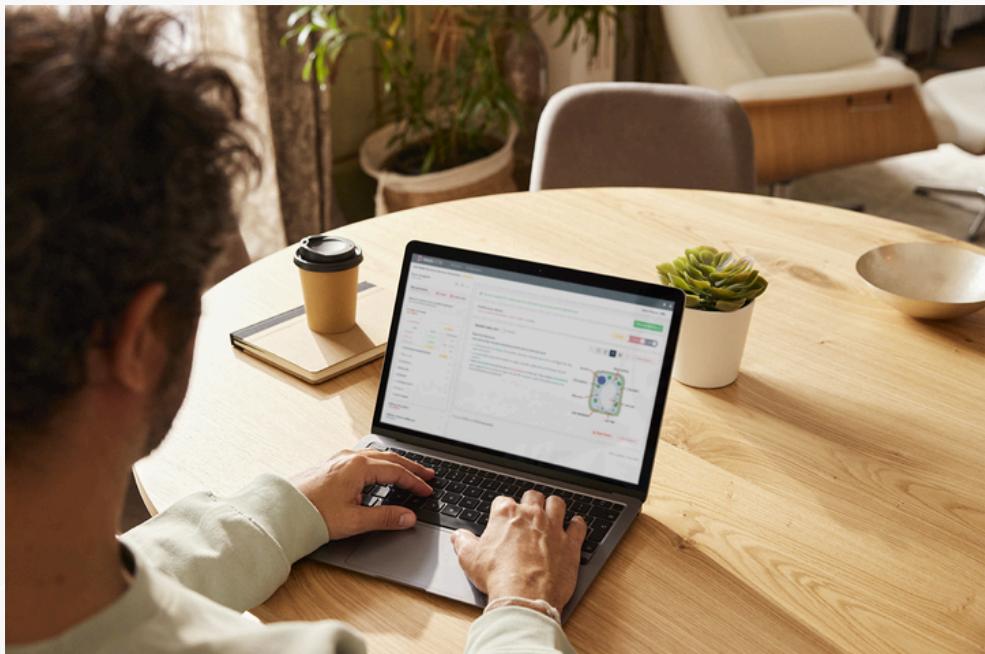
Pass Tech are exhibiting at the Bett Exhibition in London

Pass Tech have recently joined YLP as members!

They are the leading provider of online Functional Skills qualifications having supported more than one million learners with our resources (across initial and diagnostic assessments, teaching resources, revision materials, online courses, and exams). Over the past 12 months they have close to doubled the number of training providers we support and cemented our position in the apprenticeship sector.

They are turning their attention to GCSE maths & English from the end of this month, with the launch of their online courses and monitoring platform to help providers seamlessly evidence and track their learners' GCSE learning.

This week two of the team are exhibiting at the Bett exhibition in London so it'd be great to say hello to any YLP members who might have travelled down.





Training Qualification UK Introduces Game-changing Online Mock Assessment Platform

Training Qualifications UK's (TQUK) free online mock assessment platform is now available. Built in conjunction with Pass, a leading provider of online education and assessment solutions, the online platform enables Functional Skills learners to apply their learning to past papers and receive rich, instant feedback - boosting their confidence for the final exam.

The platform includes the following:

- AI-marking - to reduce admin time and provide learners with instant exam feedback.
- Initial diagnostic assessment - to help learners understand their current knowledge and enrol them onto the course that's right for them.
- Targeted practice - to provide learners with extra practice in specific subject areas.
- Data insights - to track progress and divide learner data by group, cohort, or learners to see what's going well and if there's any areas for improvement.

TQUK's Managing Director, Andrew Walker, said: "In collaboration with Pass, we've once again taken innovation to the next level, introducing a game-changing platform that allows learners to take Functional Skills mock assessments and get instant, AI-powered feedback. It's smart, it's streamlined, and it's setting a new standard for Functional Skills preparation."





A New Era for NOCN Group End Point Assessment

NOCN are transitioning to the epaPRO platform, delivered with Skilltech Solutions, on Monday 2 February 2026. This move will improve the delivery of their End Point Assessment (EPA) services and provide a smoother experience for training providers, apprentices and employers.

EpaPRO offers:

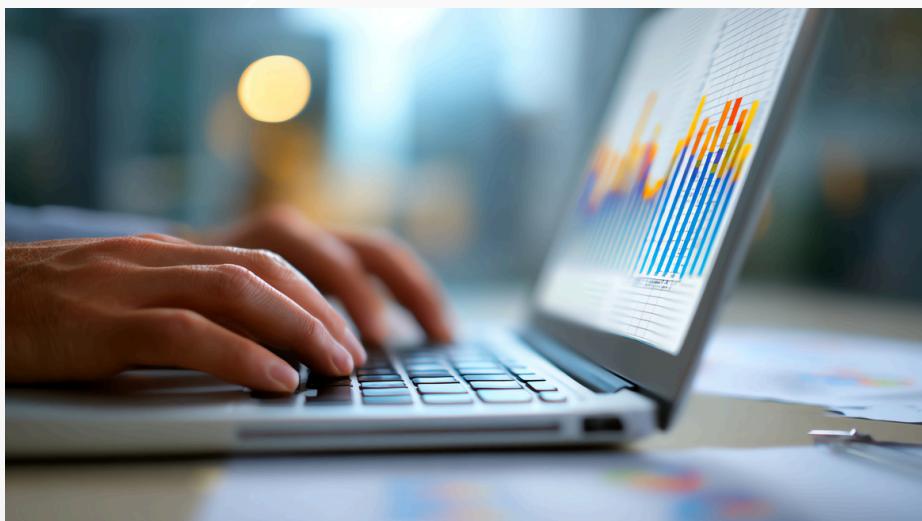
- One secure login with full visibility
- Guided gateway submissions and milestone tracking
- Automated reminders and updates
- Mock assessments and support resources
- Reporting to support learner progress

From 2 February 2026, all new apprentices entering gateway will be managed in epaPRO. Learners already in Rubric before this date will continue in Rubric with no disruption.

To support the transition, they are hosting January training webinars with Skilltech Solutions for EPA coordinators, quality and operational teams, and apprenticeship leaders. Recordings will be available for those who register but cannot attend.

For questions, contact endpointassessment@nocn.org.uk or call 0300 999 1177.

Read the full article [here](#).





Staff quiz raises £200 for IDAS

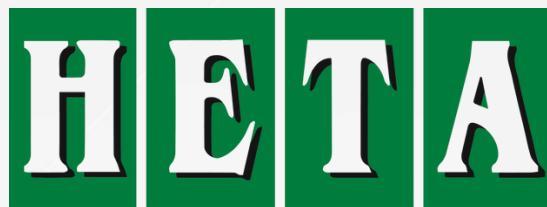
Thanks to the generosity and enthusiasm of staff across the College an impressive £200 was raised for our chosen charity, Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS).

Alongside the quiz, staff also supported a range of additional fundraising activities and shared the charity's Amazon wish list. We already know that essential items, including a microwave and toasters, have been purchased, helping to make a real and practical difference.

IDAS is a specialist charity with many years' experiences of supporting and accommodating victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse.

Marie Eden, Survivor Engagement Coordinator at IDAS, said: "Barnsley College are like the Champions of Champions! Thank you for all you do, we're really lucky to have you on board." Events like this highlight the strength of our College community and the positive impact we can achieve when we come together to support a good cause.





Engineering The Future

Hull partnership to create "digital twins" used in industrial training programmes

A new high-tech collaboration between the Humberside Engineering Training Association (HETA) and the University of Hull will create digital twins of full-scale engineering training rigs to support local industry. The Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) will give businesses virtual access to these rigs, allowing them to test ideas and experiment with process changes without disrupting their own facilities.

The digital twins are designed to help companies simulate real-world scenarios, try out new technology and make improvements with zero risk to live operations. The project is backed by funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) through Innovate UK, aiming to support engineering firms across the Yorkshire and Humber region and beyond.

Professor Dhaval Thakker of the University of Hull said the initiative will not only upgrade training infrastructure but also support advanced Industry 4.0 learning and give firms the flexibility to refine processes and enhance efficiency. HETA's CEO Iain Elliott highlighted how digital twins could help manufacturers trial changes—like adjusting conveyor speeds or exploring predictive maintenance—before applying them in their own plants.

Innovate UK adviser Jan Antons described the partnership as an example of how academic-industry collaboration drives innovation, boosts digital skills, and benefits businesses and the wider community.



Learner of the Month – December: Archie Dibb, J&C Joel

Archie Dibb has been named our Learner of the Month for December. Archie works as a Material Cutter at J&C Joel Ltd and is completing the Materials Cutter Apprenticeship.

He joined the company after spotting the role online and wanting a new challenge. "It was completely different to other jobs and I like learning new things," he explains.

Starting the apprenticeship was a big shift after time away from education, but Archie says: "Once I got into it, everything started to piece together and I understood how important my role is in the manufacturing process."

Supervisor Gareth Webster praised Archie's progress, saying he has "come on leaps and bounds." Archie also credits tutor Chrisi Robertson for adapting her approach to support his visual learning style. Chrisi described him as "dedicated, motivated and a very deserving Learner of the Month."

Archie now hopes to continue developing his skills and eventually progress into a supervisor role, supported by J&C Joel's commitment to career development.

[Read more today...](#)





The Newt in Somerset Unveils 'Elevate' – A Bespoke Hospitality Academy in partnership with HIT Training

The Newt in Somerset has expanded its partnership with HIT Training to launch 'Elevate' – a bespoke hospitality academy designed to nurture talent and support long-term careers in the sector. The two organisations first collaborated on a successful Chef Academy, which supported 10 apprentices into permanent kitchen roles. Elevate now extends this model to front-of-house development.

Set on a working country estate with restaurants, retail spaces and a hotel, The Newt employs more than 500 people across hospitality, wellness, horticulture and education. The partnership reflects shared values around investing in people and raising service standards. Training blends hands-on learning, workshops and real-world experience, with a strong focus on communication and emotional intelligence alongside technical skills.

Claire Dalton, Head of HR Operations at The Newt in Somerset, said:

"Our people are at the heart of everything we do. When our team flourishes, so does the guest experience."

The new academy supports 12 apprentices from front-of-house teams, combining mentoring with immersive masterclasses in areas such as butchery, bakery and horticulture, strengthening their understanding of the estate's field-to-fork ethos.

Paul Manner, National Hospitality and Culinary Lead at HIT Training, added:

"This partnership shows how investing in people can transform both businesses and the wider industry."

Together, The Newt and HIT Training aim to develop confident hospitality professionals and future leaders, helping ensure the sector remains a vibrant and aspirational career choice.

[Read more today.](#)





The Newt in Somerset Unveils 'Elevate' – A Bespoke Hospitality Academy in partnership with HIT Training

Gateway Qualifications will be attending the Apprenticeship and Training Conference (ATC) – a key event for the apprenticeships and skills sector. If you're there, visit us at our stand in the main exhibition hall at the ACC and sign up for our workshop, 'Building a Workforce Fit for the Future,' delivered with FutureDotNow.

Aimed at senior leaders, the session will explore the urgency of digital upskilling and the financial benefits of closing the workforce digital skills gap. It will share new research on essential AI skills and feature insights from employers and providers on how to understand, measure and improve digital capability across teams.

If you can't attend, follow us on LinkedIn or Twitter for updates from the conference.

ATC 2026 is organised by EducationScape. Tickets are available via the conference website. The event explores how education providers, employers and policymakers can strengthen workforce development and shape the future of skills.

[Discover more here.](#)





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