

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



JULY 2026

NEWSLETTER



Heart of Yorkshire
Education Group

University Centre at the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group Ranks Third in Yorkshire for Higher Education Student Satisfaction

Based across Wakefield College, Castleford College and Selby College, the University Centre achieved an overall positivity score of 91%, exceeding national benchmarks. Student satisfaction increased across key areas including teaching, assessment and feedback, learning opportunities, and academic support, which received the highest rating at 94%.

Steve Mulligan, Head of Higher Education at the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group, said: "We are extremely proud of these results, which reflect our commitment to providing an outstanding learning experience and supporting every student to succeed."

The University Centre offers a wide range of degree-level programmes, validated by leading regional universities, across its Wakefield, Castleford and Selby campuses, helping students gain the skills and qualifications needed for their future careers.





Realise Partnerships Team Volunteers with Creative Support in Horsforth

The Realise Partnerships team recently spent the day volunteering with long-standing partner Creative Support at its Creativities Hub and Courtyard Café in Horsforth, Leeds.

Joined by colleagues Zoe, Aron and Tony, Head of Strategic Partnerships Julie Taylor took part in activities including baking, arts and crafts, and chatting with people supported by the charity. The day offered valuable insight into Creative Support's work promoting independence, inclusion and wellbeing.

Julie said: "Partnership is about more than training. Spending time with the people at the heart of Creative Support's services gave us a real appreciation of the incredible work their teams do every day."

As Creative Support's education partner, Realise delivers apprenticeships and professional qualifications to support workforce development. The volunteering day strengthened the partnership and reinforced the importance of understanding the people and communities behind the organisation's services.

Julie added: "We're proud to support Creative Support and look forward to continuing our partnership for many years to come."





Growing Confidence Through Gardening

New RHS qualifications create accessible pathways into horticulture for SEND learners, beginners and wellbeing programmes

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) has launched new Entry 3 and Level 1 Practical Horticulture qualifications, designed to make gardening and horticulture accessible to a wider range of learners, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), beginner gardeners and individuals taking part in wellbeing or social prescribing programmes. These qualifications support the RHS vision of ensuring everyone can enjoy and benefit from gardening, regardless of age, background or ability.

Focusing on practical, hands-on learning, learners develop essential horticultural skills through activities such as growing plants, using tools safely, preparing soil, composting, and producing fruit, vegetables and herbs. Alongside gardening knowledge, the qualifications help build confidence, communication, teamwork and independence.

"These qualifications have been developed to open up horticulture to learners who may not have traditionally engaged with formal qualifications. By providing flexible, practical and accessible learning, we hope to inspire confidence, improve wellbeing and create meaningful pathways into further learning, volunteering and employment in the green sector."

RHS Qualifications

The flexible unit-based structure makes the qualifications ideal for SEND schools, mainstream secondary schools, colleges, alternative provision, community projects and health and wellbeing programmes. Assessment is designed to be accessible, using observation, oral questioning and workbooks, with appropriate adjustments available for SEND learners.

Could horticulture enhance your curriculum?

As awareness grows of the positive impact gardening can have on wellbeing, these qualifications offer a meaningful way to engage learners outdoors, regardless of age, and gain recognised achievement. They can complement existing study programmes, life-skills curricula and employability pathways, while helping learners develop a lifelong relationship with gardening.

To find out more, contact RHS Qualifications at qualifications@rhs.org.uk.





KIRKLEES COLLEGE

Business Support Team of the Year – KC Stars 2026

We are incredibly proud to share that the Business Development Team was awarded Business Support Team of the Year at the KC Stars 2026 Awards on Friday!

This recognition celebrates the dedication, collaboration, and commitment our team brings every day to support employers, students, and colleagues.

A huge thank you to everyone we work with across the college and to our employers' partners who support us in making a difference every day.

It was fantastic to come together with colleagues from across [Kirklees College](#) to celebrate the achievements, successes and contributions of teams and individuals throughout the year. KC Fest 2026 was a brilliant opportunity to recognise the amazing people who make our college such a special place and reflect on everything we've accomplished together this academic year.





National Business College Celebrates Ofsted Feedback

Huddersfield-based training provider, National Business College is celebrating a significant milestone after receiving positive feedback from Ofsted across several key areas of its provision. The inspection, which took place in mid-April, was carried out under Ofsted's updated framework, where single word overall judgements are no longer awarded.

The outcome highlighted NBC's commitment to inclusion, earning a "strong standard" in Inclusion, as well as in Participation and Development. This recognises the Provider's efforts to create an environment where learners from all backgrounds are supported and encouraged to succeed. Other areas reviewed during the inspection were graded as expected.

According to National Business College Ltd (NBC), the achievement reflects the combined dedication of staff, learners and employer partners. Leaders praised apprentices for their consistent commitment, while emphasising the vital role of employers in supporting training and development programmes. Inspectors were particularly impressed by the college's inclusive culture, noting its focus on the individual needs of apprentices. Feedback highlighted how learners are supported to feel safe, valued and confident in their progress. This emphasis on personal development and wellbeing has become a defining feature of the organisation.

Keely Carleton, Operations Manager at National Business College Ltd, expressed pride in both the outcome and the journey taken to achieve it. She highlighted that while the result marks a significant success, the organisation remains focused on continuous improvement.

The college has made clear it will continue building on this foundation, with plans to further enhance its provision for both current and future learners. Looking ahead, the message from the provider is clear, a continued focus on growth, collaboration and delivering high quality training that enables learners to thrive.





Enterprise Made Simple have secured Skills Bootcamps funding to support individuals/business owners in the York and North Yorkshire area

Enterprise Made Simple (EMS) is celebrating the fact that they have secured Skills Bootcamps funding to support individuals and business owners across York and North Yorkshire.

The fully funded programmes will help participants develop practical skills in areas including digital marketing, business digital skills and leadership & management, enabling businesses to grow, improve productivity and build confidence in an ever-changing business landscape.

The funding follows a successful year of Skills Bootcamp delivery, with learners praising the programmes for helping them gain valuable qualifications, strengthen their businesses and increase their confidence through practical, hands-on learning. With flexible, employer-focused training and experienced tutors, EMS continues to support local businesses and individuals to develop the skills they need to succeed.

If you're based in York or North Yorkshire and are looking to upskill yourself or your team, now is the perfect time to explore the fully funded Skills Bootcamp opportunities available through Enterprise Made Simple.





City of Doncaster Council

New 'OnDemand' service set to transform travel across Doncaster and Rotherham at click of a button

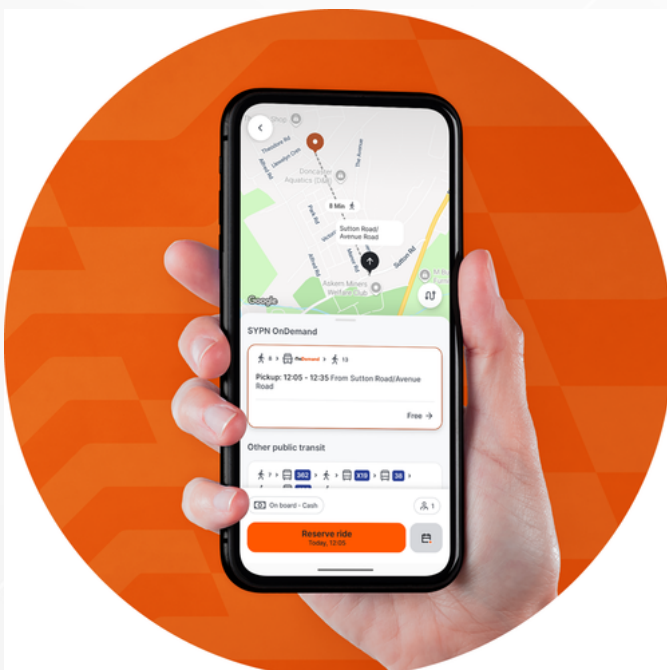
A new flexible public transport service, OnDemand, is launching across parts of Doncaster and Rotherham from 3 August as part of a 12-month pilot led by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) and technology partner Via.

Passengers will be able to book shared bus journeys through the OnDemand app or by phone up to seven days in advance, with no fixed routes or timetables. Designed to complement the existing public transport network, the service aims to improve access to jobs, education, healthcare and other key destinations, particularly in areas with limited bus services.

Fares start from £3, with concessions available, and the service will operate Monday to Saturday, 5am-6pm.

South Yorkshire Mayor Oliver Coppard said the service will give residents "more choice and greater control over how to travel", helping to build a public transport system that works for everyone.

The pilot will run for 12 months, with customer feedback helping to shape the future of transport across South Yorkshire.





**LEEDS
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY**

Leeds Beckett joins thousands in celebrating the 20th anniversary of Leeds Pride

Around 40 colleagues, students and representatives from Leeds Beckett Students' Union joined thousands of people at the Leeds Pride parade on 19 July, celebrating the event's 20th anniversary.

Marching through the city centre with banners and Pride flags, the Leeds Beckett group proudly demonstrated the university's commitment to inclusion, belonging and allyship.

Marije Davidson, Associate Director for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, said: "It was fantastic to see so many colleagues and students representing Leeds Beckett at this year's Pride. It was a proud moment to celebrate LGBTQIA+ communities while reaffirming our commitment to creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, respected and able to be themselves."

The university thanked everyone who took part in helping represent Leeds Beckett at one of the city's biggest annual celebrations.





From A Difficult Start To A Brighter Future: Louise's Story

Louise, 17, from Parkgate, Rotherham, joined Street League after being referred by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Looked After Children's service. Having faced a number of personal challenges, she wanted to gain her Maths and English qualifications and progress to a Level 3 course.

Since joining the Academy, Louise has shown outstanding commitment, maintaining excellent attendance, fully engaging in sessions and building strong friendships that have boosted her confidence and social skills.

She is on track to achieve her Level 2 Maths and English qualifications, alongside a Level 1 Award in Progression for Customer Service and Preparing for Work. Louise has also passed her driving theory test, moved into independent accommodation, and secured a place on a Level 3 Hair and Beauty course starting in September.

Louise said: "I'm loving my time on the Street League programme. The staff are so helpful and friendly, and they have helped me believe in myself much more."

Her Functional Skills Tutor, Kelly Milner, added: "Louise works incredibly hard, and it's been fantastic to see her confidence grow."





New Investment in Youth Employment must Unlock Opportunity for all

The Government has announced new investment in youth employment through the Youth Jobs Grant and Youth Guarantee, backed by up to £2.5 billion to help almost one million young people into work, education or training.

The Youth Jobs Grant will provide employers with up to £3,000 for each young person they hire, creating more opportunities for those struggling to enter the workforce.

Alban Stowe, Director of Government Partnerships at The King's Trust, welcomed the investment, saying: "Young people are full of potential, but too often they're held back by a lack of opportunity. These initiatives will help employers invest in the next generation while giving young people the chance to build confidence, gain experience and start their careers."

The King's Trust says collaboration between employers, charities and government will be key to ensuring more young people can access meaningful opportunities and fulfil their potential.





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