

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



SEPTEMBER 2026

NEWSLETTER



Employability Academy: For young people aged 16-29 who are NEET

A new 8-week Employability Course is launching for young people aged 16-29 who are not currently in education, employment or training (NEET).

The programme will run Monday to Thursday from 10am, with just 12 places available to ensure a supportive, small-group environment.

Start Date

Monday 26 October 2026

Location

Gryphon Sports Centre
LS2 9LZ

What the programme includes

- CV workshops
- Life skills
- Interview preparation
- Support into employment, education or training
- Free sport opportunities, with no requirement to take part
- Monday-Thursday delivery, starting at 10am

What participants will receive

- Free breakfast
- Free Nike sports kit
- Travel reimbursed
- Small class sizes
- Opportunities to take part in both non-competitive and competitive sport

Strong outcomes

This will be the second Employability Academy of the year. Of the 15 young people who started the first programme, 13 have either progressed into work or college, or have an offer to start in the coming weeks.

Referral deadline

Because the programme starts on Monday 26 October, all young people need to be enrolled by Wednesday 21 October so that the required paperwork and registration can be completed.

How to refer

Referrals are now open.

You can:

- Reply with a brief description of the young person, or
- Contact Harry Whittaker directly

Please note that, due to annual leave, contact with referred young people is likely to begin from week commencing 28 September.

Places are limited to 12, so early referrals are encouraged.

AGED 16-29 IN LEEDS?
REGISTER FOR FREE TODAY!

**STREET LEAGUE
LEEDS
EMPLOYABILITY
PROGRAMME**

#ownyourfuture

- Support to secure a job or college course.
- Get help with CV and interview techniques.
- Set your goals and let us help you achieve them.
- Meet employers leading to potential interviews.
- Travel costs covered.
- Free refreshments.
- Free Nike kit.

• Start Date: Monday 26th October 2026.

WHEN 10AM-2PM
MON-THURS
8 WEEKS

WHERE Gryphon Sports Centre,
Woodside Road,
Woodhouse, Leeds,
LS2 9LZ

Contact: Harry or visit streetleague.co.uk/join
07719 057238 | harry.whittaker@streetleague.co.uk

West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Leeds City Council | Funded by UK Government



Who are Cognissoft?

CogniSoft has been developing digital solutions for the skills and employability sector since 1986. Its flagship platform, YETI, has evolved from early learner management systems into a comprehensive solution supporting Learning, Skills and Employability providers across the UK.

Today, CogniSoft systems support more than 3 million individuals across 250 provider organisations.

What do they offer?

YETI is an end-to-end learner and programme management system designed to support providers, learners and employers within one platform.

Key features include:

- Management of Learning and Skills contracts, with funding rules built into data entry
- Funding and compliance tools to improve accuracy and data quality
- Standard and customised reporting with real-time insights
- Timetabling and attendance management
- AI integration to support automation and workflows
- Automated SMS and email communications with audit trails
- Employer engagement and CRM functionality
- Ongoing technical support and system development

Employability Features

YETI can also support a wide range of employability programmes, including DWP and Local Authority funded provision.

Features include:

- Management of employability programmes
- Vacancy matching between candidates and opportunities
- Action planning and assessment to evidence progress and distance travelled

CogniSoft's solutions are designed to reduce administration, improve accuracy and strengthen the learner and employer experience.

What's Going Well?

CogniSoft continues to grow across the skills, apprenticeship and employability sector.

Its long-standing sector experience, combined with ongoing innovation, means YETI remains flexible, reliable and responsive to changing provider requirements.

Ask to the Network

As skills and employability become increasingly aligned, CogniSoft is keen to connect with providers looking to:

- Manage multiple programmes within one system
- Improve digital delivery and efficiency
- Strengthen employer engagement
- Reduce administrative burden
- Improve learner outcomes

Find Out More

For a no-obligation demonstration and quote, contact:

Michelle Chambers

Michelle.chambers@cognissoft.co.uk

Michelle or Chloe will be happy to get back to you.





Heart of Yorkshire Education Group to Lead Technical Education Excellence

The Heart of Yorkshire Education Group, comprising Castleford College, Selby College and Wakefield College, has been named the Technical and Vocational Excellence (TVE) Hub for Yorkshire and the Humber by the Association of Colleges.

As one of only nine hubs nationally, the Group will help strengthen technical and vocational education across the region, working with schools, colleges, training providers, employers and industry partners.

The Hub forms part of the Department for Education-funded Technical and Vocational Professional Development Programme, supporting educators as T Levels expand and new V Levels and revised Level 2 qualifications are introduced.

The Group will lead regional collaboration, share best practice and support professional development to ensure learners benefit from high-quality, industry-relevant technical education.

The appointment builds on the Group's strong track record in technical education and employer engagement. It has also been selected as one of just three Digital Insight Hubs nationally, supporting digital transformation across Further Education.

Earlier this year, the Group was ranked first in Yorkshire and the Humber for student achievement among General Further Education Colleges, and fifth nationally.

Find out more:

<https://www.heartofyorkshire.ac.uk/>





York College & University Centre are among the UK's top five training providers across a range of apprenticeships we deliver

According to statistics published over the last few weeks by [Find A Training Provider](#), based on 2024/25 data, York College and University Centre ranked:

#1 in the country for Autocare Technician achievement rates

#1 in the country for Craft carpentry and joinery achievement rates

#3 in the country for Bricklayer achievement rates

#5 in the country for Plumbing and domestic heating technician

We're incredibly proud of all our team, employers, and apprentices that made this happen.

This is alongside our overall apprenticeship qualification achievement rate of 73.2% for the academic year (24/25) outperforming the national average achievement rate of 65.4%.

You can see the [whole range of our apprenticeships on our website](#), or get in touch to find out more: Apprenticeships@yorkcollege.ac.uk.



OFFICIAL DFE ACHIEVEMENT RATES

#1 of 11 providers
Autocare Technician

[findatrainingprovider.co.uk](#) · 2024/25

OFFICIAL DFE ACHIEVEMENT RATES

#1 of 3 providers
Craft carpentry and joinery

[findatrainingprovider.co.uk](#) · 2024/25

OFFICIAL DFE ACHIEVEMENT RATES

#3 of 35 providers
Bricklayer

[findatrainingprovider.co.uk](#) · 2024/25

OFFICIAL DFE ACHIEVEMENT RATES

#5 of 29 providers
Plumbing and domestic heating tec...

[findatrainingprovider.co.uk](#) · 2024/25

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YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

York St John University Degree Apprenticeships – Autumn Update

York St John University has welcomed new apprentices onto its Chartered Manager, Project Management and Data Science Degree Apprenticeships as the 2026/27 academic year gets underway.

Celebrating Success

At the North Yorkshire Apprenticeship Awards:

- Donna Jones – Professional Services Apprentice of the Year
- Louise Green, Aqua Consultants – Degree Apprentice of the Year
- Lucia Bond, E.ON – Highly Commended
- David Bassett, Network Rail – Highly Commended

York St John University was also shortlisted for Provider of the Year.

Staff Spotlight

Jenny Wells supports apprentices across Senior Leader, Healthcare Science Practitioner and Laboratory Scientist programmes, helping learners build confidence, prepare for End Point Assessment and progress professionally.

Sector Updates

Victoria Murden has been featured by the Chartered Management Institute, sharing the impact of her Senior Leadership Apprenticeship.

Skills England is also consulting on the future of occupational standards, with responses invited by 16 October 2026.

New Programmes

The University is preparing to launch new apprenticeship opportunities, with webinars covering:

- Data Skills
- AI & Automation
- Specialist Teaching Assistants
- Digital Design

Christmas Closure

The Apprenticeships Team will be closed from 21 December 2026 to 4 January 2027.





LXP are looking for your help!

Network members LXP Skills and LXP Talent have been on the road doing a pulse-check for the FE and Skills Sector.

And they'd love you to take part and share your views.

AI in recruitment- yes or no?

This has already been getting people talking about their own experiences, both in recruiting and also from candidates they've spoken to.

LXP Talent is asking what you think about whether AI tools should be used to help screen applicants.

Why? Because LXP Talent is a specialist recruitment partner to the education and skills sector and very much keeps the human in the process. But is that what colleges and training providers are looking for, or do we need to consider the efficiencies which technology could bring to hiring?

[Share your thoughts here](#): it's a two-question survey and completely anonymous.

What are your priorities in developing the skills of your workforce?

LXP Skills wants to find out what is currently on the agenda for those who are planning CPD or training needs.

LXP Skills delivers teaching, training, assessor and IQA qualifications, alongside bespoke CPD solutions for education and skills professionals. They are passionate about building confident educators and strengthening quality across education and training, including support for new people transitioning into the sector from industry, as well as colleagues with more experience.

If you're happy to do a quick ranking from a short list, [your opportunity to do so is here](#). Again, all anonymously.

Find out more: we will be sharing the results from our research shortly, so let us know if you'd like to receive a copy of our report. Please email rebecca@lxpskills.co.uk



KAPLAN

Kaplan Named No. 1 Best Workplace in Education & Training

Kaplan has been ranked No. 1 in the Large category on the 2026 Fortune Best Workplaces in Education & Training™ List, created by Great Place To Work® and Fortune.

This is Kaplan's first time achieving the top spot, following three consecutive years of Great Place To Work® certification.

Kaplan CEO Gregory Marino said the recognition reflects the company's focus on investing in its people, supporting continuous learning and helping employees adapt to changing technologies, including AI.

Key employee benefits and development opportunities include:

- Flexible remote and hybrid working
- Community and volunteering initiatives
- Tuition assistance and course discounts
- Develop U virtual learning conference
- Emerging Leader Programme
- Leadership Forum for senior development

The ranking is based on Great Place To Work® employee survey data assessing workplace culture and trust.





Anna Merricks Named Apprentice of the Year Finalist at the National NMT Nursery Awards

Juniper Training apprentice Anna Merricks has been named a finalist for Apprentice of the Year at the National NMT Nursery Awards 2026.

During her Level 3 Early Years Educator apprenticeship, Anna has shown strong commitment, leadership and passion for supporting children. Alongside her role, she has led breakfast and after-school clubs, supported around 30 children with rehearsals for Young Voices, and created inclusive learning experiences within her setting.

Anna also volunteered with the One Love Project in Uganda, helping collect donations and teaching at the project school.

Following her return, she shared her experience with more than 200 guests at the Juniper Training Apprenticeship Awards, where she was also named Juniper Training Early Years Apprentice of the Year.

The National NMT Nursery Awards winners will be announced on 7 November 2026 at Park Plaza London Westminster Bridge.

Congratulations to Anna on a fantastic achievement.





Gateway Qualifications Games Night Raises £600 for Prison Learner Book Fund

Colleagues from across Gateway Qualifications came together for an evening of friendly competition and fundraising at a virtual Games Night, raising money for books for prison learners.

As part of Gateway Qualifications' charitable giving programme, the organisation matched the £300 raised, bringing the total donation to £600.

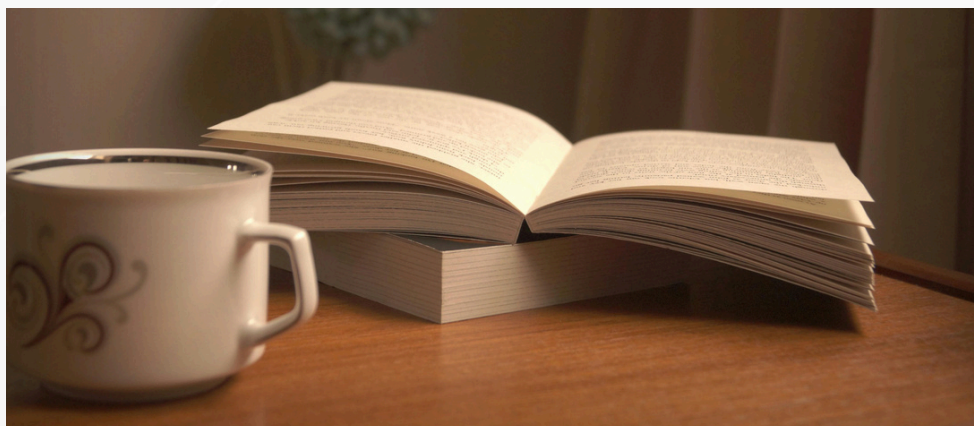
The event featured a range of games and activities, including a general knowledge quiz and a "Guess the Baby" competition, with colleagues joined by family members, friends and even a few furry companions for the evening's entertainment.

Participants also had the opportunity to enter a raffle, with a fantastic selection of prizes generously donated by supporters.

There were plenty of rewards up for grabs throughout the evening, including vouchers, chocolates, event tickets, a Whitby experience, and an extra day's annual leave.

The funds raised will be used to purchase books for prison learners undertaking apprenticeship programmes. Learning resources play an important role in helping prisoners develop skills, gain qualifications, and improve their employment prospects on release, supporting positive futures and reducing reoffending.

Through initiatives like this, Gateway Qualifications continues to support prison learners, building on previous colleague-led fundraising and [book donation projects](#) that have helped improve access to learning resources in prisons.





New partnership will connect Trafford's growth with local skills and jobs

The Growth Company has joined Trafford Council, Trafford & Stockport College Group, Therme Manchester, the University of Salford and Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce to identify future workforce and skills needs across Trafford.

A new Labour Market and Skills Assessment will gather employer insight to help shape future training, curriculum and employment pathways.

The work comes as investment continues across Trafford City, including Therme Manchester, which is expected to create around 1,200 jobs across 47 disciplines when it opens in 2028.

Opportunities are expected across areas including hospitality, leisure, wellness, customer experience, facilities management and digital technology.

The aim is to ensure local people, particularly young people, can benefit from new jobs and progression opportunities created by ongoing regeneration.

Businesses can contribute by completing the Trafford City Skills Needs Survey before 31 October:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PKK9T5S>

Findings will help inform future skills provision, investment and partnership activity across the area.





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-  Leeds, LS15 8GB
 -  0113 3970 375
 -  info@wylp.org.uk
 -  www.wylp.org.uk

