

RNN Group

Employer and Community Newsletter

Edition 13

January / February 2026

Welcome

Welcome to our bi-monthly RNN Group E-Newsletter. This newsletter aims to ensure we communicate key information that is happening within the Group to employers and local partners so that you are up to date with all our latest news and activities.

As you will know, RNN Group works in partnership with schools, employers and local organisations to continually ensure we are leading and delivering on innovation and skills in our communities. It includes four campuses of career-focused further and higher education in South Yorkshire and North Nottinghamshire alongside our partner organisation, the National Fluid Power Centre and outdoor centre at Idle Valley. We educate school leavers, undergraduates, employees and those re-joining the workforce with a focus on ensuring learners leave equipped with the necessary skills to join or re-join the workforce.

Our focus is on skills development through vocational courses up to Level 7 including T Levels, Apprenticeships, HN Flex, HNCs and HND, HTQs, traditional degrees and others - both on campus and through distance learning - to ensure we support the LSIPs, employers and the needs of our local economy to develop a better and more prosperous future for our communities.

Jason Austin CEO & Principal RNN Group



In this edition, there are bite-size pieces of information on each section with more detailed information included in links if you would like more information.

- **CSCS Testing and Forklift Truck Training**
- **FREE Lunchtime Webinars**
- **Employer Awards Lunches and Employer Awards Event April 2026**
- **Apprenticeship Week February 2026**
- **RNN Group Leaders**
- **Skills for Employment**
- **Bridge Skills Hub - Bridging the Skills Gap**
- **National Careers Week & Business Breakfasts March 2026**
- **National Fluid Power Centre**
- **Useful Publications**
- **Latest News & Blog**
- **Recommend a friend / employer**
- **Our Social Media Platforms to follow**

PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PE

★ ★ RNN Group Employer Awards Celebration

★ ★ Is being held on ★ ★
Thursday April 23rd
★ at the Wharncliffe!

Save the Date

More information to follow!

CSCS Testing and Forklift Truck Training

Our Logistics Training Hub is up and running! In it we have new course offerings including Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Testing & Warehousing & Forklift Truck Training.

RNN Group is proud to be offering Warehousing & Forklift Truck Training & CSCS Testing and are the only provider to be offering this.

[Click to read more about our courses](#)



Employer Awards Lunches and Employer Awards Event April 2026

Our next employer lunch is on Thursday March 12th for employer award winners January to March 2026.

Held at the Wharncliffe for an hour, employers get presented with their certificate and enjoy a two course lunch in our fine dining restaurant.



FREE Lunchtime Webinars

RNN Group runs a monthly lunchtime and evening webinar series which is totally free.

These webinars are for adults, employers, partner organisations, school's careers leads, Headteachers, prospective and current learners and parents who might be interested in some or all of the topics that we will be running.

Sessions have been run on Apprenticeships, T Levels, Higher Technical Qualifications, Distance Learning, Community Courses and Adult Skills Courses to name a few!

We have launched our 2025/2026 programme.

[Catch up on our free lunchtime webinars here.](#)



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Apprenticeship Week

February 2026

It's National Apprenticeship Week from Monday 9th to Friday 13th February 2026. We will be having our annual Apprenticeship Awards during the week on Wednesday 11th February at the Wharncliffe and celebrating our amazing apprentices and you - our employers - that week and at the dinner.

We can also reveal that we are welcoming Anthony Impey MBE to a special event before the awards dinner from 5-6pm in the Wharncliffe. Small businesses who have apprenticeship challenges are welcome to attend and speak with Anthony about their experiences.

Also during the week we will be having lunchtime webinars every day, progression events on Tuesday 10th and Thursday 12th at all of our campuses that week between 10-1pm for employers to speak to potential apprentices and ultimately employees!

If you wish to attend either or both dates at one of our campuses, please email [Simon Hartley](mailto:Simon.Hartley@rnngroup.ac.uk) on shartley@rnngroup.ac.uk



[Click for more information about Apprenticeship week](#)

[Click for more information about RNN Group Apprenticeships.](#)

RNN Group Leaders

RNN Group has extended its Leadership in recent months with new Directors of Campus for Rotherham and Dearne Valley as well as Inclusive education, Estates and IT.

[Click to find out more about who is leading the RNN Group](#)

Skills for Employment

Skills for Employment is an innovative new learning approach to Power Skills / transferable skills to our learners and employers. This is an employer backed and driven initiative for learners to gain the transferable skills they need to succeed in employment and for employers to recruit learners with these vital employability skills.

[Click to read more information about skills for employment and how you can get involved as a business](#)



Bridge Skills Hub - Bridging the Skills Gap

North Notts College delivers a variety of Higher Education (HE) courses at The Bridge Skills Hub, located in the heart of Worksop town centre. Whether you or your employers are looking to switch careers, retrain, or further your/their education, our committed tutors will be there to help every step of the way.

With courses from level 3 up to level 6, The Bridge Skills Hub is the perfect place to begin university education.

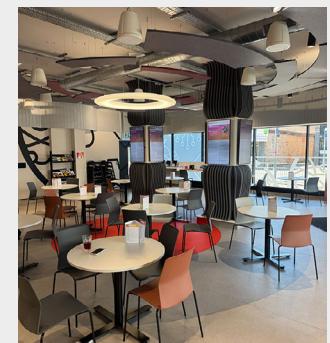
Our degree courses are accredited by top universities, meaning you can access the same high-quality education, without having to pay travel or accommodation expenses!

We boast strong industry links in the local area and this is reflected in the diversity of the courses we have on offer across health, childcare, and business.

For more information read some blogs on the Bridge Skills Hub

[Click to read our blog Worksop 2025: A Town at a Crossroads - And a Comeback Where Clean Energy Meets Skills, Opportunity and Hope](#)

[Click to read our blog Wonderful Worksop - Bridging the Higher Skills Gap at the Bridge Skills Hub](#)



National Careers Week & Business

Breakfasts March 2026

It's the Annual National Careers week during 2nd - 5th March and we are having careers fairs at each campus, workshops and sessions with guest speakers to support our students career development during the week.

Before each session during the week, we will be hosting business breakfasts for networking between businesses and short updates on the RNN Group:



Thursday 5th March: Dearne Valley College

Business Breakfast at the Enterprise Way Offices between 8.30am - 10am followed by the careers fair in the Reception area social space, Dearne Valley College between 10-2pm.

For more information or to support with a careers fair and or a guest speaker sessions, please contact Simon Hartley at:
rnn-group.ac.uk

National Fluid Power Centre (NFPC)

The NFPC is a hidden gem within the RNN Group. As a world class approved training provider in Worksop supported by in excess of 60 national and international companies who form the NFPCs advisory and strategic planning group, the NFPC is the UK's No.1 training provider for Integrated Systems Engineering, offering its services to over 300 major companies both across the UK and Internationally.

The NFPC is a BFPA certified CETOP Education Centre and is an approved training provider for many 'blue chip', industry leading corporations. The Centre employs Training Engineers who have many years of Industry experience, offering support and advice to all who attend our Training Courses.

[Click for more information, or to book onto courses.](#)



Useful Publications for Businesses

We have a number of publications that businesses might find interesting and helpful especially in these areas:

- Commercial Lets and Office Space
- Adult Training Courses
- Apprenticeship Information
- RNN Group Information

[Click to read more from our publications](#)



[Click to read more RNN Group Prospectus](#)



Latest News and Blog

RNN Group Named Headline Sponsor for Wentfest 2026

RNN Group is to be the headline sponsor for Wentfest 2026, an incredible family festival of music, comedy and performing arts hosted at Hooton Lodge Farm, Rotherham on Saturday 13th June with confirmed headline act – star of music, stage and screen – Jason Donovan!

RNN Group (made up of campuses including Rotherham College, North Notts College, Dearne Valley College and University Centre Rotherham (UCR)) is proud to be supporting this local community event right in the heart of South Yorkshire and two of our Colleges, Rotherham College and Dearne Valley College.

The Group is excited to be involved primarily for the opportunities it brings to our students including providing a platform for Performing Arts students from the College to programme and perform their own schedule of entertainment throughout the day, talks and workshops in a variety of industries including event planning / management, facilities management, catering, audio / visual creative production marketing, performing arts facilitated by the Wentfest team in the run up to the event, as well as work experience on the day at the event.

Wentfest started life as Wentworth Festival back in 2017, organised by local residents Toby Foster and Steve White and bringing huge chart names including Blue, Scouting For Girls, Heather Small, Five, Tony Hadley, The Feeling, Lemar and Kim Wilde to Rotherham.

In addition to the Main Stage, there will be a Comedy & Spoken Word Stage, programmed by our sister company The Last Laugh Comedy Club, Yorkshire's longest-running comedy club. Since it's inception in the 1990's The Last Laugh has introduced Yorkshire to some of the biggest names in comedy, including Peter Kay, Alan Carr, Jason Manford, Ross Noble, John Bishop and Jimmy Carr to name just a few.

The addition of the New Music Stage is our chance to support fantastic up and coming grassroots talent from our area, giving them the chance to appear on the same bill as some of the world's biggest chart acts. Examples of bands that have gone on to huge success since performing on the Wentfest New Music Stage are Late Night Legacy, Shanghai Treason and The Rosadocs, the latter who have band members who went to Rotherham College.

Mark Ryan, Vice-Principal, Curriculum, RNN Group said,

"This is a fantastic collaboration for the RNN Group and its colleges and the opportunities for students will be immense.

"To be able to offer work experience and workshops on various key career opportunities to our students in the run up and on the day of a local Rotherham event of this scale is fantastic for our students across all of our sites."

Toby Foster, Wentfest Founder, added

"This a fantastic partnership for Wentfest as it really reflects what our event is about, a truly local festival for the people of Rotherham. Not only do we bring the biggest stars of music and comedy to our doorstep, we're also very passionate about offering a platform for up-and-coming talent to showcase their skills - whether that be performing, working behind the scenes or even helping us plan the event in advance."

As a former Rotherham College student myself this feels like a full-circle moment for me and both Steve and myself, as well as the extended Wentfest team, can't wait to work with both staff and students."

For more information on the RNN Group of Colleges visit: <https://www.rnngroup.co.uk/>

To find out more on Wentfest 2026 visit: <https://www.wentfest.com>



Latest News and Blog

Rotherham College in partnership with Rotherham Markets

Rotherham College is working to support Rotherham Markets through using pop up stands and supporting with student engagement at the market.

Students are being encouraged to the market through the opening of Milk from the Hills and the new flavoured smoothies including real milk from real cows – you can even enjoy cow cam from where the milk comes from!

Students who bought some milkshakes at the launch event today said,

“They are beautiful and taste so good and not too sweet!”

Rotherham College students will be engaging with the markets over the upcoming months with art, catering, hair and beauty and Flex students being a part of two stands that have been made available with taster sessions for the public and gallery openings.

Learners will be able to enjoy the space to relax and enjoy their milkshakes or other refreshments bought in the market, a sort of bespoke common room.



Latest News and Blog

Frontline Policing: Insight from Dog Handlers

We were incredibly proud to serve as a sponsor for the Before Christmas, Protective Services students welcomed Dog Handlers PC Dean Allen and PC James Sills from Nottinghamshire Police.

Both officers shared their insights into how trained police dogs support frontline policing across the county.

Through discussion and demonstration, learners explored how dog handlers operate in demanding situations. Real examples showed how police dogs assist with searches, public safety operations, and specialist detection work.

Focus then moved to career pathways within policing and specialist units. Officers explained how dog handlers begin as police constables before progressing through experience and advanced training.

Links were also made between the Protective Services courses and careers within policing and uniformed services. By developing leadership, discipline, and public service values, the course supports progression into these specialist roles.

Engaging directly with serving officers strengthened learning by showing how classroom theory applies in real operational policing. Learners also gained clear insight into career expectations and professional standards.

[Click to find out more about Protective Services courses at North Notts College](#)



Latest News and Blog

Project Based Learning Celebrates First Successful Cohort

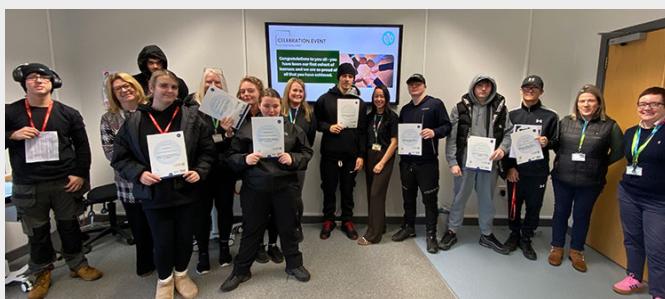
Yesterday at their base in Idle Valley Nature Reserve, staff and learners from Project Based Learning gathered to celebrate the first successful cohort.

Twelve weeks ago, this small group began a journey that brought together diverse backgrounds, experiences, and goals.

Developed for 16 to 19-year-olds who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), Project Based Learning lets learners explore education at their own pace. Through practical projects, confidence grows as communication, problem-solving, and resilience are strengthened. Personalised plans provide clear direction, supporting each learner towards vocational opportunities at North Notts College or beyond.

Celebration kicked off with a presentation reflecting on twelve weeks of learner progress. Staff highlighted moments of determination and skill development as students embraced new challenges. Outdoor and collaborative activities showed learners stepping beyond comfort zones, growing in confidence and independence. Each story demonstrated the remarkable progress made and personal milestones achieved throughout the programme.

Following the presentation, certificates were presented by staff members to recognise effort, achievement, and development. Applause filled the room as learners received their awards, marking a proud milestone and providing a strong foundation for future learning or employment opportunities.



Jenny Marsden, Project Based Learning tutor at North Notts College, said:

"This programme has been about more than completing projects. Learners gained confidence and belief in themselves. Week by week, they engaged, supported each other, and celebrated achievements. These certificates show what learners can achieve when given the right opportunities."

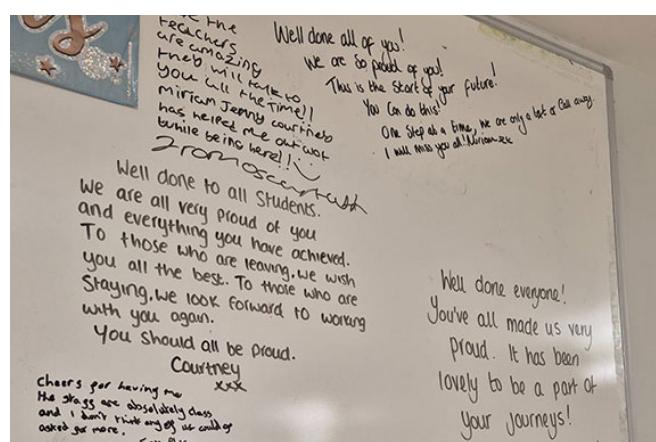
Miriam Fieldsend, Pastoral Life Coach at North Notts College, added:

"Through both indoor and outdoor experiences, each student stepped beyond their comfort zone, trying new things. Their greatest breakthroughs did not come from textbooks alone, but from honesty, reflection, and a belief that steadily grew within them. It is in this space, where challenge meets support and that confidence was rebuilt and lasting success was formed."

Tracey Mace-Akroyd, Deputy CEO/Principal at RNN Group, said:

"I am delighted with the success of the Project-Based Learning curriculum, which supports our most vulnerable young people to overcome disadvantaged barriers. This new programme delivers high-quality, project-based practical lessons reinforced with trauma-informed and restorative approaches. Learners develop positive behaviour management strategies and personal skills in a safe supportive learning environment. They achieve, belong and thrive. We are proud to make a real difference, often in ways that are not immediately visible but that are lasting and transformative."

[Click to find out more about Project Based Learning at North Notts College](#)



Latest News and Blog

National Esports Performance Campus Trip

Recently, some of our esports students and staff enjoyed a two-day skills bootcamp in partnership with the British Esports Federation at their National Esports Performance Campus.

Going head-to-head with Sunderland College's team, our students put on a spectacular performance and walked away with the top spot. Congratulations to the team on their well-deserved victory!

What is the National Esports Performance Campus?

More than just a venue for playing games, the NEPC is a dynamic, cutting-edge ecosystem designed to foster the entire UK esports industry. It is a large investment comprising multiple zones, including:

The Place: A hub featuring modern classrooms, high-tech performance and training rooms, and innovation suites.

Gaming Houses: Luxurious on-site residential accommodation where teams can hold intensive, focused bootcamps to train and strategize

The Arena: A versatile esports and entertainment complex equipped with 5G connectivity, a dedicated esports stage, broadcasting facilities, and seating for spectators to host major live tournaments

The NEPC is nurturing the next generation of British talent and is at the forefront of this booming global esports industry.

[Find out more about Esports at Dearne Valley College](#)

[Click to read what our staff and students had to say.](#)



Latest News and Blog

Community Cheers: Our First Ever Christmas Event!

We are thrilled to share that our first-ever Christmas Event was a lovely, fun, and festive day!

The atmosphere was brimming with festive cheer and warmth as people from the community came out to join the celebrations and get involved.

The highlight for many of our younger guests was undoubtedly meeting Santa Claus and his trusty Elf! Children had the magical opportunity to sit next to Santa and tell him what they would like for Christmas! After speaking with Santa, they then got to pick a present out of Santa's sack.

Children could then also go up to one of our classrooms and write more of their Christmas wishes and post them directly into our special Santa Post Box – an experience that sparked true Christmas excitement!



The event offered a fantastic array of activities, blending fun with our curriculum themes:

Animal Encounters: Guests got the unique chance to explore and handle some of our wonderful animals, guided by our Animal and Land-based tutors who were also busy making delicious s'mores outside!

Creative Competitions: Our Esports team hosted thrilling gaming competitions, while Construction showcased their skills by building Santa's chimney out of bricks and crafting a fun toss the hoop game.

Motor Vehicle Magic: The Motor Vehicle department truly brought the North Pole to life by constructing the amazing sleigh that Santa sat in! They also hosted popular games like 'Guess how many nuts and bolts are in the jar'.

Health's Generosity: The Health department organised a fantastic raffle table that was overflowing with amazing prizes, which added to the day's overall excitement. FLEX had a wonderful stall with all sorts of handmade goodies that students and staff had made throughout the month leading up to the event.

Our canteen was transformed into a little marketplace featuring stalls stocked with wonderful, handcrafted goods. Attendees could find handmade wooden reindeers, beautiful plants, unique baubles and trinkets, special reindeer food and much more! With hot food and drinks readily available, everyone stayed warm and energised throughout the day.

The event was a beautiful display of Christmas spirit and community happiness. A massive thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making our Christmas event so memorable. We are already looking forward to making next year's event even bigger and better!

What's

Happening?

To keep up to date with all that is happening across the Group and the Colleges, click on the relevant news pages below.

RNN Group News and Events

[Click to read more RNN Group News](#)

[Click to read more RNN Group Blog](#)

Recommend Us

Why not recommend friend / employer who might benefit from the RNN Group and the information included in this as well as the courses and programmes we have to offer.

Email: enquiries@rnngroup.ac.uk

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**Rotherham College
North Notts College
Dearne Valley College
University Centre Rotherham
and
National Fluid Power Centre**

Part of
RNN GROUP



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University Centre Rotherham

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National Fluid Power Centre

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