

RNN Group

Employer and Community

Newsletter

Edition 15

May / June 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.

- **RNN Group Secures Major Defence Technical Excellence College Bid in Partnership with UK Government**
- **Employer Awards Event April 2026**
- **CSCS Testing and Forklift Truck Training**
- **National Fluid Power Centre Update**
- **Bridge Skills Hub - Bridging the Skills Gap**
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RNN Group Secures Major Defence

Technical Excellence College Bid in

Partnership with UK Government.

***RNN Group* is proud to announce that it has successfully secured a major national defence technology bid, in partnership with the UK Government, to establish a new Defence Technical Excellence College (DTEC).**

The initiative is being delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence and the Department for Education.

This landmark achievement positions RNN Group at the forefront of strengthening the UK's defence skills pipeline, supporting the development of advanced technical capabilities critical to national security and economic resilience.

The DTEC will focus on delivering high-quality education and training in key areas including:

- Digital Technologies
- Advanced Manufacturing

These programmes will directly support the evolving needs of the UK defence sector and its supply chains, aligning with the ambitions of the UK's Defence Industrial Strategy.

A Strategic Milestone for Skills, Defence and South Yorkshire

RNN Group, a leading further and higher education provider spanning South Yorkshire and North Nottinghamshire, has long been committed to delivering industry-aligned technical education. The successful bid reflects the Group's strong track record in employer engagement and its growing role in higher technical education and training.

The new initiative will:

- Create clear pathways into defence careers
- Strengthen regional and national skills capacity
- Support innovation in defence-related technologies
- Enhance collaboration between education providers, industry, and government

Regional and National Impact

Located within the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) region and the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) region, the DTEC will build on the area's strengths in advanced manufacturing – recognised as a critical enabler of the UK defence sector.

By working closely with employers and partners, RNN Group will help develop a highly skilled workforce capable of meeting the long-term needs of defence industries across the UK.

Jason Austin, CEO & Principal, RNN Group commented,

“This is a significant moment for RNN Group and for the regions we serve; securing this bid demonstrates our commitment to supporting the UK's defence Industrial Strategy through the provision of high-quality technical education.

“We are proud to work alongside the Ministry of Defence and the Department for Education to deliver a step change in how defence skills are developed.

“By collaborating closely with SYMCA and EMCCA and our local educational partners and institutions, we are ensuring the development of high-level skills in this area.”

Strengthening Collaboration

This success builds on RNN Group's work regionally in collaboration with universities, industry leaders, and government partners working at the cutting edge of defence education and innovation.

[Click to read more about RNN Group securing Technical Excellence College Bid.](#)

[Click for more information about RNN Group please visit: https://www.rnngroup.co.uk.](https://www.rnngroup.co.uk)

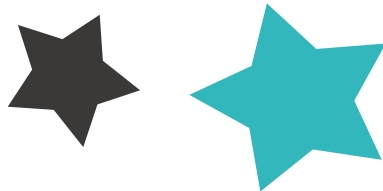
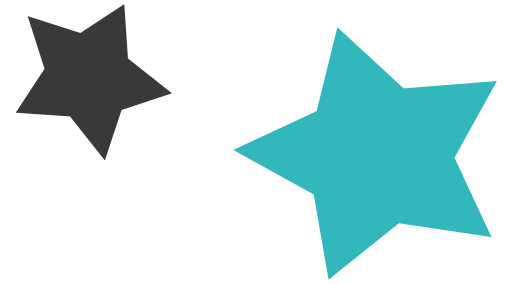
Employer Awards

Event April 2026

RNN Group Celebrates Outstanding Employer Partners at 2026 Awards

RNN Group proudly recognised the achievements and contributions of its employer partners at the annual Employer Partner Awards 2026 - in this, the RNN Groups 10th Anniversary celebration year - celebrating organisations that go above and beyond to support students, apprentices, and skills development across the region.

The event, held for the first time at our fine dining restaurant, [The Wharncliffe](#), brought together leading employers, educators, and stakeholders to honour excellence in collaboration, innovation, and commitment to workforce development.



[Continued on next page](#)

Award Winners and Highlights

Business of the Year Supporting RNN Group

Winner: Abbey School
Highly Commended: Oakhill Primary Academy

Subcontractor of the Year

Winner: Construction Skills People
Highly Commended: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (Rotherham Creative)

Employer 'We Deliver' Partner of the Year

Winner: KP Snacks
Highly Commended: Benchmark

Employer Academy of the Year

Winner: Souths Electrical
Highly Commended: Limetree Nursery

New Business Partner of the Year

Winner: CINCH
Highly Commended: Lotus Home Care

Small Business 'Team' of the Year

Winner: IPW Joinery
Highly Commended: BCVS

Large Business 'Team' of the Year

Winner: Bekaert
Highly Commended: Dawsons

'Skills for Employment' Business of the Year

Winner: Flowplant
Highly Commended: TT Electronics

Most 'We Have Integrity' Employer

Winner: Barrett Steel
Highly Commended: Mears Group

Most 'We Are Inclusive' Employer

Winner: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (Lord Hardy Court)
Highly Commended: Nexus Multi Academy Trust

Innovative Business Partner of the Year

Winner: Skills Street
Highly Commended: Rotherham NHS

Community Focused Business Partner of the Year

Winner: Equans
Highly Commended: RDaSH

RNN Group praised all winners and nominees for their dedication to creating meaningful opportunities for learners and strengthening the link between education and employment.

Jason Austin, CEO and Principal of the RNN Group, said,

"Our employer partners are vital to the success of our students and apprentices."

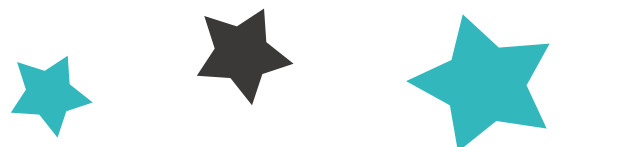
"These awards recognise the outstanding commitment, innovation, and support shown by organisations across our network."

"We are proud to work alongside such inspiring partners who are shaping the future workforce."

The Employer Partner Awards continue to highlight the importance of collaboration between education and industry, ensuring learners are equipped with the skills, experience, and confidence needed to succeed in their careers.

[Click to find out more about RNN Group's Apprenticeship Scheme for Employer](#)

[Click to find out more about RNN Group's Employer Awards.](#)



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](#)



Logistics

TRAINING CENTRE



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 BFA 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.](#)

[Click for the NFPCs recent update, visit:](#)



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.

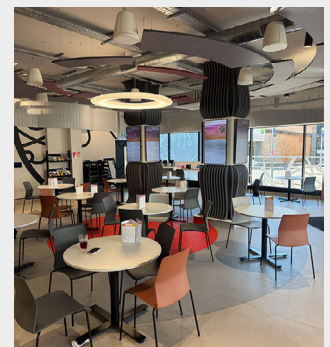
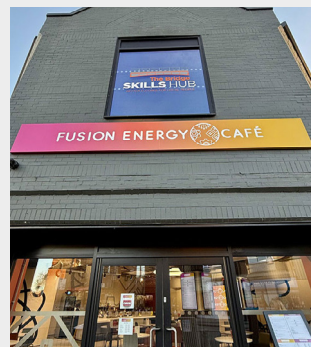
For more information read some blogs on the Bridge Skills Hub:

[Click to read How The Bridge Skills Hub can connect you to a career change](#)

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

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

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



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](#)

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](#)



[Click to read more](#)



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[Click to read more](#)

Employer Partners

Our Students

Need You!

Careers Support October 2026 and March 2027

Twice a year, the RNN Group holds Careers and Skills weeks for its learners as part of their induction programme in October and National Careers Week in March.

We hold workshops, fairs, sessions, mock interviews and guest speaker slots for learners to find out more about the world of work and engage them in their next step.

If you would like to support with hosting a short workshop on your business, have a stall at our March event, engage learners in some short sessions on power skills or do some mock interviews, please contact

lucy.barnwell@rnn.ac.uk

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](#)



Latest News

and Blog

Mears Group Donates Equipment to RNN Group

[RNN Group](#) and [Mears Group](#) have strengthened their long-standing partnership through a significant donation of construction equipment.

Many pieces of professional-grade equipment have been transferred to RNN Group, directly benefiting students across multiple trades.

The donation spans key vocational areas including plumbing, plastering, bricklaying, and joinery, supporting RNN Group's continued expansion of its construction training programmes. The contribution ensures that learners have access to modern, industry-standard tools, helping to better prepare them for real-world working environments.

With demand for skilled workers in the UK construction sector continuing to rise, access to high-quality training resources remains a critical challenge for education providers. This partnership demonstrates how collaboration between industry and education can help address that gap while supporting local communities.

For Mears Group, the initiative reflects a strong commitment to social value and workforce development. By investing in the next generation of tradespeople, the organisation is playing an active role in tackling the construction skills shortage while creating meaningful opportunities for learners.

RNN Group has welcomed the donation as a valuable enhancement to its training provision. Working closely with an established industry partner enables the college to keep its curriculum aligned with current employer needs, ensuring students graduate with relevant, job-ready skills.

Donna-Marie Robertson, Head of Learning at Mears Group, says:

“At Mears, we’re committed to investing in the future of the construction workforce. We’re proud to support RNN Group through this donation, which provides students with industry-standard equipment that closely reflects real workplace conditions and helps bridge the gap between education and employment.”

“In our Rotherham branch alone, we have 18 apprentices through our long-standing relationship with the RNN Group. This partnership plays a vital role in ensuring our apprentices make the most of their journey with Mears.”

James Godsell, Director of Apprenticeships and Employee Engagement at the RNN Group, added

“This generous donation from Mears Group makes a real difference to our learners.”

“Having access to industry-standard equipment allows students to train in environments that closely reflect the workplace, building both confidence and competence.”

“Partnerships like this are vital in ensuring we can continue to deliver high-quality training that meets the needs of employers and supports the future of the construction workforce.”

“By aligning shared priorities – skills development, community investment, and industry growth – Mears Group and RNN Group continue to demonstrate a collaborative model that delivers tangible benefits for students, educators, employers, and the wider economy.”

[Click to find out more about our Employer Partnerships.](#)

[Click to find out more about Construction courses at Rotherham College, North Notts College and Dearne Valley College.](#)



Latest News and Blog

RNN Group at Skills Street: Championing Skills for Employment and Inspiring the Next Generation

This week, [the RNN Group](#) was proud to attend a business breakfast at Skills Street, an innovative initiative co-founded by [Gullivers](#) and [Work Wise](#), supported by [Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#) and funded by the UK Government.

At the event, Skills Street were talking about how they bring real industries to life for learners, providing hands-on, employer-designed sessions that help young people explore different career paths and recognise the skills they need to succeed.

The breakfast provided a fantastic opportunity to meet with local businesses committed to prioritising skills development. They were explaining how Skills Street offers young people the chance to think through their career pathways, experience real-world industry challenges and imagine the future they want to build through fun and engaging activities.



The RNN Group plays a key role in supporting learners to achieve these ambitions by providing high-quality education and training across [Rotherham College](#), [North Notts College](#), [Dearne Valley College](#) and [the University Centre Rotherham](#), helping students gain the qualifications necessary to pursue careers in sectors like; [engineering](#), [aviation](#), [construction](#), retail and beyond.

At the RNN Group, we share Skills Street's social values of raising aspirations and empowering young people to translate their academic knowledge into meaningful careers. By connecting education with industry, we equip the next generation with the practical, technical and employability skills that employers value, opening doors to rewarding futures and building a stronger, more resilient workforce.

Together with our partners, RNN Group is proud to support initiatives like Skills Street, inspiring confidence, ambition and achievement in every young person who passes through its doors.

[Click to read more about Skills For Employment at RNN Group.](#)

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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Don't forget to follow our social media platforms



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Ofsted

Good
Provider



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

Part of

RNN GROUP

Rotherham College

Website: rotherham.ac.uk
Email: info@rotherham.ac.uk
Phone: 01709 362111

North Notts College

Website: nnc.ac.uk
Email: contact@nnc.ac.uk
Phone: 01909 504500

Dearne Valley College

Website: dearne-coll.ac.uk
Email: learn@dearne-coll.ac.uk
Phone: 01709 513355

University Centre Rotherham

Website: ucr.rotherham.ac.uk
Email: ucr@rotherham.ac.uk
Phone: 01709 722806

National Fluid Power Centre

Website: nfpc.co.uk
Email: enquiries@nfpc.co.uk
Phone: 01909 504539