RNN Group Employer and Community Newsletter

Edition 18

November / December 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 launches South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Construction Partnership**
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RNN Group launches South Yorkshire and North Notts Construction Partnership

Bringing businesses, educators and industry professionals together to shape the future of construction across the region.

RNN Group was proud to officially launch the South Yorkshire and North Notts Construction Partnership, welcoming businesses, trainers and educators to the Wharncliffe for its inaugural meeting.

The launch marks an important step towards strengthening collaboration across the regional construction sector, bringing together key stakeholders to identify opportunities, address industry challenges and help shape the future of construction across South Yorkshire and North Nottinghamshire.

Hosted by RNN Group's Natalie Dodds and Daniel Stanbra, the first meeting provided an opportunity for attendees to share their perspectives, discuss priorities and explore how closer working relationships could support the continued growth and development of the sector.

The event included an interactive workshop, giving participants the opportunity to consider key actions, establish priorities and discuss future meeting arrangements and engagement plans for the partnership.

A key commitment emerging from the discussions was the importance of turning conversations into meaningful action, ensuring the partnership delivers tangible progress for the construction industry across the region.

By connecting employers, training providers and educators, the partnership aims to create a collaborative platform through which industry needs can be better understood, skills and training opportunities can be developed, and businesses can play an active role in shaping the future workforce.

The launch represents the beginning of an ongoing conversation, with RNN Group keen to encourage further involvement from businesses and organisations working across the construction sector.

Get involved
Businesses, employers, trainers and educators interested in becoming part of the South Yorkshire and North Notts Construction Partnership are encouraged to get in touch.

To find out more and register your interest, email *marketing@rnngroup.ac.uk.*

Together, we can help drive action, collaboration and progression across the region's construction sector.



WE INVITE YOU TO TAKE PART IN

RNN DTEC WORKING GROUP

Our working groups bring together defence contractors, supply chain leaders, training providers and industry bodies to direct and refine defence focused technical education across South Yorkshire.

We would be delighted for you to share your knowledge and expertise at the following forthcoming working groups:

Advanced Manufacturing & Materials in Defence

Wednesday 9th December 2026
2.00pm-3.30pm

The Wharncliffe
Percy St
Rotherham
S65 1E

Defence Technical Excellence College

ONE OF FIVE IN THE UK

Advanced Robotics & Autonomous Systems

Wednesday 16th December 2026
2pm-3.30pm

Dearne Valley College
7 Enterprise Way
Manvers Park
Wath-upon-Dearne
S63 7EW

Digital, Cyber & Defence Software Systems

Wednesday 13th January 2027
2pm-3.30pm

The Wharncliffe
Percy St Rotherham
S65 1ED



National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) 2027 coming up!

Two Decades of Transforming Futures: National Apprenticeship Week 2027

The countdown is officially on for a major milestone in the UK education and employment sectors.

From Monday 8 February to Sunday 14 February 2027, the UK will celebrate the 20th anniversary of National Apprenticeship Week (NAW 2027).

For two decades, this week-long campaign has served as the ultimate platform to highlight the exceptional impact of apprenticeships on individuals, businesses, and the wider economy. As the campaign enters its landmark 20th year, the 2027 iteration is shaping up to be the most expansive and influential celebration of skills yet.

A Twenty-Year Legacy of Skills

What started as a modest initiative to promote vocational pathways has grown into a massive national movement. Today, apprenticeships are universally recognized as a premier route into high-skilled careers, spanning across industries like aerospace engineering, digital tech, healthcare, and law.

NAW 2027 brings together the entire skills community:

- **Apprentices** showcasing their career progression and hands-on achievements.
- **Employers** demonstrating how alternative talent pipelines future-proof their workforces.
- **Schools and Colleges** guiding the next generation toward rewarding, debt-free career paths.
- **Training Providers** bridging the gap between classroom theory and real-world execution.



What to Expect for NAW 2027

The week will feature a dense schedule of regional skills shows, virtual networking opportunities, and interactive events across the country. Major exhibitions like *The National Apprenticeship Show* will host thousands of school and college leavers, parents, and carers looking to connect directly with top-tier employers.

The Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education are rolling out dedicated digital tools to anchor the week. This includes the official **NAW Events Map**, enabling organisers to register their virtual or face-to-face activities to maximise reach. Furthermore, Apprenticeship and T Level Ambassadors will be deployed nationwide to share real-world success stories directly in classrooms.

Early Planning: How to Get Involved

With the 20-year milestone drawing significant national attention, early preparation is key for organisations looking to make an impact.

RNN Group hosts a number of workshops and webinars as well as daily promotion of the themes, promotion of case studies and our very own Apprenticeship Awards held on Wednesday 10th February 2027 at the Wharncliffe Restaurant from 6pm!

For Employers: Businesses looking to showcase their early careers vacancies or highlight their existing apprentice talent can participate in dedicated industry webinars. These sessions offer strategic planning tips, marketing assets, and advice on hosting internal networking events.

As the UK workplace evolves alongside rapid technological shifts, apprenticeships remain a vital anchor for economic growth. National Apprenticeship Week 2027 will not just look back at 20 years of incredible success—it will set the blueprint for how the country builds its future workforce.

Employer Academies

RNN GROUP | Employer Academies

We have been bringing more companies into the RNN Group family as employer academies in the last few months.

Our Employer Academies bring together learners, educators and employers to establish long term partnerships that will inspire the next generation into your industry.

As part of this dedicated approach, Employer Academies are the result of our investment toward consistently improving skills and job opportunities for learners and employers. By involving employers in the design and delivery of our curriculums, we are further aligning our strategy with employer needs by ensuring our learners develop modern and sector specific skills for success.



e-training
LEADING THE WAY IN AESTHETIC QUALIFICATIONS

Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce
Together We Achieve More.

BENCHMARK GROUP

EQUANS

ESH CONSTRUCTION

EVERLAST GYMS

HBC

LEYTON HOUSE PROFESSIONAL

LimeTree NURSERY

lotus home care

MEARS

MOMENTOUS FOOTBALL ACADEMY

neXus Multi Academy Trust
Learning together to be the best we can be

NHS The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

SOUTH ELECTRICAL Limited

THORNBERRY ANIMAL SANCTUARY
For the neglected we care

TITANS Community Foundation

WENTWORTH WOODHOUSE

WILLMOTT DIXON
SINCE 1852

Wright renewables
HEATING SOLAR INSULATION

your space
Worksop Leisure Centre

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



Click to read more



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 or October event, engage learners in some short sessions on power skills or do some mock interviews, please contact:
lucy.barnwell@rnngroup.ac.uk

RNN Group FREE Webinars

RNN Group hosts monthly lunchtime and some evening webinars to support all our stakeholders with topics and areas that need a little bit more detail and discussion.

We have launched this years webinars which you can view here:

Sign up to enjoy these FREE webinars and even if you cannot watch live, a recording will be sent to you after to watch at your leisure.



Adult Courses for All

RNN Group offers a variety of courses for all employers and employees to take advantage of including:

Adult Skills Courses
Adult skills courses are flexible training programmes designed for individuals aged 19+ to gain qualifications, retrain or improve their employability.

Click for more information about our adult skills courses.

Commercial training courses
The RNN Group has created strong relationships with local employers and has listened to the needs of these local employers with regard to training courses that employers would like to see offered for their staff.

Click for more information about our commercial training courses

Distance learning courses
Study a distance learning course with the RNN Group. Distance learning allows you to do just that – study on a course and complete, in many cases *free online courses and *free online training, in the comfort of your own home.

Click to take a look at our distance learning courses

Click for more information about our distance learning courses.

Employment support courses
RNN Group offers Employment Support Courses which can benefit unemployed individuals – including you – in a multitude of different ways.

Click for more information about employment support course.





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

National Fluid Power Centre: Industry Exhibition 2026

Excitement is building for the annual National Fluid Power Centre (NFPC) Industry Open Day Exhibition, running from 9:30am to 3:30pm on 21 October 2026 in Worksop.

Up to 50 companies from across the fluid power, hydraulics, filtration and applied electronics industries will showcase the latest industry developments.

Industry Exhibitors

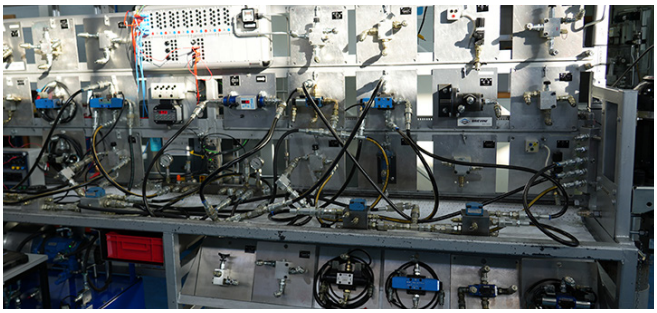
Throughout the day, visitors can meet industry specialists, discover new products and discuss solutions for a wide range of applications.

- NFPC
- Hydac Technology
- WEBTEC
- Bosch Rexroth
- Torishima
- Witham Group
- Antec
- MICRON VH
- Stauff UK
- Hercules Hydraulics
- 1017 Marketing
- Ross/pneumatrol
- Flowfit
- Filtrec UK Ltd
- WANDFLUH
- BALLUFF
- Hydraulic System Products
- SHELL
- MP Filtri
- Emmegi Heat Exchangers Ltd
- Related Fluids
- Hydrastore
- Hydrotechnic UK Test Eng
- Filtertechnik
- UK Flowtechnic
- Danfoss Power Solutions
- Atlantic Fluid Tech
- MECWASH
- HUSCO
- VHS Hydraulic Components Ltd
- GS Hydro
- FESTO Ltd
- SCHMERSAL
- Kawasaki
- HAWE Hydraulik Ltd
- HIFI Filter UK
- R&G
- Industrial Monitoring Systems Ltd
- SAI (GB) Ltd
- Donaldson Hy-Pro
- M&R Hydraulics
- Fluid Filtration Ltd
- Savery Hydraulics
- Rotary Power
- OILGEAR
- Murrelektronik
- Filtration Group
- IFM
- CEA

Technical Lectures

Three specialist technical lectures will cover hydraulic control, lubricant manufacturing and proportional valve technology. Sessions will be delivered by HAWE Hydraulik, Witham Group and Vickers by Danfoss, with each lasting around 45 minutes.

Click to find out more about these sessions







Interested?

Register your attendance for the next NFPC Industry Open Day Exhibition on 20th October 2027.

Attendees will also have access to free car parking, refreshments, a buffet lunch and a charity prize draw.

Click to book now

Latest News and Blog

BAE Systems inspires Rotherham College engineering students with industry insights

Learners studying *BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Advanced Manufacturing* at Rotherham College recently had the opportunity to hear first-hand about careers in engineering from BAE Systems representative, Zeeshan Mahmood, who is a Through Life Support Engineer for Fast Jet Support.

The session, held at *University Centre Rotherham*, explored the engineering industry, the range of careers available and what employers look for when recruiting future engineers.

Routes into Engineering
Zeeshan shared his journey into engineering, from gaining his GCSEs and studying for an engineering degree at Sheffield Hallam University to securing roles within the sector. He also spoke about working part-time at ASDA alongside his studies and how the skills he developed there have continued to benefit him, including providing useful examples to draw on during job interviews.

His experience showed students that there isn't always one straightforward route into engineering and that experience gained outside education can be just as valuable as qualifications. Students were encouraged to make the most of opportunities such as part-time work, volunteering and sport to develop transferable skills, including communication, teamwork, reliability, leadership and problem-solving, which can strengthen their CVs and help build a portfolio of experience.

Students also learned what employers look for during recruitment, including qualities beyond academic qualifications. Character, attitude, motivation and teamwork can all help candidates stand out when applying for engineering and other professional roles.

Simon Hartley, Skills Consultant Team Leader at Rotherham College, also shared practical interview advice, encouraging students to prepare thoroughly, use specific examples to demonstrate their skills and practise through mock interviews with friends or family.

Discovering BAE Systems
Zeeshan introduced students to BAE Systems and the work carried out by the company.

The session explored the company's history and its position as one of the UK's largest manufacturers and a major defence contractor in Europe. Students learned about the wide range of products and technologies developed by BAE Systems, from iconic aircraft such as the Spitfire, Concorde and Typhoon to the highly advanced technologies being developed today.

Zeeshan demonstrated how engineering continues to evolve, showing students examples of the types of technology they could potentially work with during a career in the sector.

One of the highlights was discovering the latest technologies and emerging projects apprentices could get involved with, including the development of new aircraft and cutting-edge technologies at the Falcon Works drone range.

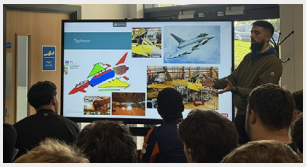
Apprenticeships and Opportunities
The session also gave students an insight into the apprenticeship opportunities available at BAE Systems, including the types of roles they could apply for, the training involved and the salaries available.

Students were able to see how an apprenticeship can provide an alternative route into a highly skilled engineering career, combining practical experience and on-the-job training with further study.

For students studying Advanced Manufacturing at Rotherham College, hearing directly from industry professionals helps them understand employer expectations and how to prepare for the world of work.

The visit highlighted how the skills they are developing could lead to opportunities in *higher education*, *apprenticeships* or employment, potentially taking them from the classroom and workshop to working on some of the UK's most advanced engineering projects.

Click to explore your route into engineering at Rotherham College.





Latest News and Blog

Pitching for Success: Business Students Take on the Dragons

Working in teams of three, T Level Business students at *North Notts College* put their entrepreneurial skills to the ultimate test during an Elevator Workshop led by *The Protocol Group.* Over two sessions, they built bold business concepts from scratch before pitching their ideas for the chance to secure a £100 investment.

From Concept to Delivery

Beginning with the "Convince Me Task", students stepped into the shoes of entrepreneurs. Each group developed viable business concepts from everyday items and impractical product ideas. Teams mapped out their core business models, defined target audiences, and identified key selling points to make their products market-ready.

As their concepts took shape, teams faced high-pressure "Investor Challenges". Sudden twists included cost increases, new competitors, celebrity endorsements, and negative reviews. Forced to think on their feet, students quickly adapted their strategies and refined their ideas under tight deadlines.

Having refined their concepts, students moved into the "Perfect Pitch" session to practice presenting with confidence. The task challenged them to introduce themselves in 60 seconds without revealing their name, course, or hometown, using their achievements and challenges to tell their story. Speed networking rounds raised the pressure, with students refining their pitches to fit 30-second and 15-second time limits.



Facing the Dragons
With their business plans tested and delivery skills sharpened, each team took the stage for the final showcase. Teams delivered a three-minute business pitch detailing their model, target audience, and competitive edge, followed by a live investor Q&A session.

Judges praised each group on presentation quality, commercial feasibility, and overall teamwork before awarding the £100 prize. The workshop concluded with a debrief on the transferable skills developed throughout the day, including persuasion, problem-solving, and calm under pressure.





Jack, Foundation T Level Business student, said:
"The presentation was overall great. Dean included us multiple times and ensured that it wasn't boring or dull. I learned multiple things including talking in front of people and gaining more confidence. When under pressure, I learned to keep my cool as well. I felt included at all times, which made it easier to learn and retain information."

Rawan, Foundation T Level student, said:
"I enjoyed this lesson as it felt like I was in a real-life scenario. Every speech interaction or presentation helped me learn new skills. My confidence feels better, especially with body language, and I think this would be good for people who want to develop their skills. I would recommend it 10/10."

Favour, Foundation T Level student, said:
"I thought the session was great and beneficial. I learned about communication, first impressions, body language and how to start conversations. I think the lesson was beneficial overall."

Feeling Inspired?
Discover how Business courses can help you develop practical skills for your future career.

Find out more about *T Levels* and *Business* courses at North Notts College.

Latest News and Blog

From Classroom to the World Stage: Esports Student Reaches the WorldSkills National Finals

We are thrilled to announce a monumental achievement for our *Esports* department! One of our Esports students, Sam Walker, has officially secured a spot in the prestigious WorldSkills National Finals, scheduled to take place this coming November.

This incredible milestone highlights not only our students dedicate work ethic and strategic talent, but also the rapid rise and recognition of Esports as a top-tier professional skill discipline.

What is WorldSkills?

Often described as the 'Skills Olympics' WorldSkills is a global movement that celebrates excellence in technical, vocational, and creative disciplines. The competition tests young talent across a vast array of industries ranging from digital technologies and engineering to creative arts.

In the Esports category, competitors are judged on far more than just raw gaming talent. The competition evaluates critical professional competencies including:

- **Strategic Execution and Analysis:** In-game decision-making, drafting strategies, and adaptability under pressure.
- **Communication and Leadership:** Team coordination, rapid problem-solving, and sportsmanship.
- **Digital and Technical Mastery:** Understanding broadcast production, event management, and performance optimisation.

Reaching the finals means Sam successfully navigated through regional qualifiers, competing against some of the brightest up-and-coming talent in the nation.



Immense Pride Across Campus

The entire department and college community could not be prouder. Watching Sam progress through each stage of the qualifiers with determination, focus and integrity has been an absolute inspiration.

Quote from the Esports Staff

"Everyone in the Esports department is delighted for Sam and his success in reaching the inaugural World Skills Esports enterprise finals. Sam has worked tirelessly during his time at Dearne Valley College and has blazed a trail for all budding entrepreneurs with his well-developed and highly developed enterprise idea and his professional approach to presenting his idea to a panel of experts.

Everyone at Dearne Valley College is behind Sam in his attempt to win the final and bring home yet another trophy for esports at Dearne Valley College."

The Final Showdown in November

As the finals approach in November, preparation is already underway. No matter the outcome, making it to the top tier of WorldSkills is an outstanding accomplishment. We will all be cheering him on every step of the way as he takes to the stage.

Join us in wishing him the very best of luck!

Click to find out more about Esports and Dearne Valley College.

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 | Dearne Valley College | North Notts College | UCR University Centre Rotherham | NFPC Integrated Systems Engineering

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

Part of RNN GROUP

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