

# THE Bulletin

Issue 54 April Edition 2025

**Businesses in Barnsley  
and Rotherham Brace for  
National Insurance Hike.**



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# A Quarter of Resilience and Unity



**Thank you for taking the time to read this quarter’s bulletin. Since the beginning of the year, I’ve had the privilege of attending many of the Chamber’s events, each one showcasing the best of the Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber business community.**

**I**n March, I had the great opportunity to attend the International Women’s Day celebrations hosted at the AESSEAL New York Stadium in Rotherham, a powerful reminder of the strength and diversity that drives our region forward.

It was an inspiring occasion, highlighting the contributions of local women in business and reinforcing our commitment to creating an inclusive environment where every voice is heard and valued.

I was also delighted to speak at our recent Budget & HR Event: Navigating Key Changes in National Insurance, National Minimum Wage, and HR Practices.

This event provided a critical platform to explore the profound impact of these legislative shifts on businesses across Barnsley and Rotherham. From the rise in National Insurance contributions to adjustments in the National Minimum Wage, these changes will demand adaptability and foresight from our members.

I’d like to extend my thanks to Mark Smallman from Brearley & Co for his expert advice during the session. His insights into financial planning strategies were invaluable, equipping our attendees with the tools to navigate this evolving landscape with confidence.

It is with a heavy heart, however, that I must acknowledge the sudden passing of Dame Julie Ann Kenny DBE DL. Dame Julie was a towering figure in our Chamber and the wider South Yorkshire community. Her dedication to championing local business, coupled with her boundless energy and vision, left an indelible mark on us all and the Rotherham region. She was

a mentor, an advocate, and a friend to so many, and her loss is deeply felt with the Chambers business community. We extend our sincerest condolences to her family and loved ones.

I also want to take a moment to thank each one of you who contributed to our recent Charity Quiz, raising over £1,000 for our Chamber Charity of the Year, Barnsley FC Community Trust. These funds will make a tangible difference, supporting the Trust’s efforts to enrich lives and strengthen our local area through sport and outreach initiatives.

Finally, I am thrilled to welcome Sally Taylor as our new Chambers Membership Manager. Sally brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the role, and I have no doubt she will be a tremendous asset as we work to support and grow our membership. Her fresh perspective will help us strengthen the connections and services that make our Chamber such a vital resource for local businesses.

As we move forward, the Chamber remains steadfast in its mission to stand by our members, advocate for your needs, and celebrate your successes.

**Together, we will face the challenges ahead and seize the opportunities they bring. Thank you for your continued commitment to making Barnsley and Rotherham a great place to do business.**

Matt Travis  
President, Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber

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South Yorkshire women's charity joined regional leaders, friends and supporters to officially launch a poetry series co-produced by Rachel Bower and the women of YWCA Yorkshire.

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# Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber Welcomes New Membership Manager

**Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the appointment of Sally Taylor as the new Membership Manager.**

**W**ith over a decade of experience in recruitment and talent acquisition, Sally brings a wealth of expertise in building strong relationships, identifying growth opportunities, and delivering outstanding membership services.

In her new role, Sally will lead the membership team to enhance and expand the Chamber's support for businesses across Barnsley and Rotherham. She will play a crucial role in attracting and retaining members, ensuring businesses can fully leverage the Chamber's diverse range of services, from business support and networking events to growth-driven initiatives.

Sally is passionate about connecting businesses and creating opportunities for local businesses. She will be working closely with members to understand their needs, enhance their Chamber experience, and ensure they gain maximum value from their membership. She will also collaborate with key partners to develop member benefits that keep the Chamber at the forefront of business support in South Yorkshire.

Speaking about the appointment, Shane Young, Operations Director at Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber, said "We are thrilled to welcome Sally to the team. Her expertise in relationship management and business engagement aligns perfectly with our mission to provide businesses with the support and opportunities they need to grow. Sally's fresh perspective and proven



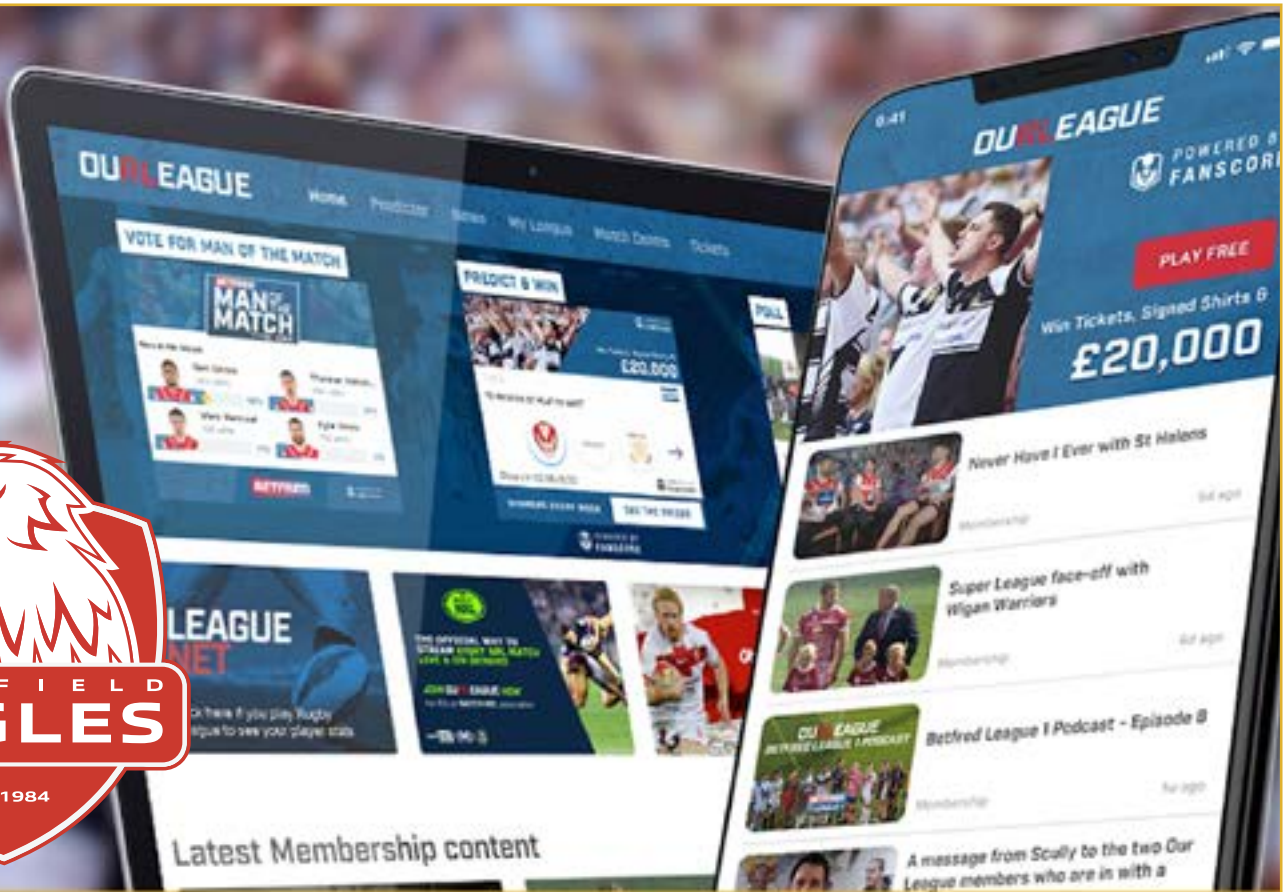
track record will be invaluable in strengthening our membership offering and driving long-term success for our members."

On her new role, Sally Taylor said, "I am excited to join Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber at such a pivotal time. My passion lies in connecting businesses, creating strong relationships, and ensuring our members feel truly supported. I look forward to working alongside local businesses, listening to their needs, and helping them unlock the full potential of Chamber membership."

Sally's appointment marks an important step in the Chamber's continued commitment to business growth and community engagement. She is available for consultations and discussions with members and prospective members via email at [sally.taylor@brchamber.co.uk](mailto:sally.taylor@brchamber.co.uk) or by phone at 01709 386210.

**For more information on Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber's membership services, visit [www.brchamber.co.uk](http://www.brchamber.co.uk).**





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# Mason Thomas Law triumphs again at Sheffield & District Legal Awards

**Mason Thomas Law has cemented itself as a leader in the field of commercial property law after winning the prestigious Award at the Sheffield & District Legal Awards 2025.**

**T**he 2025 win is the second consecutive year Mason Thomas Law has received the honour which came just 10 days after the firm learned it had been shortlisted in four categories in the annual awards.

In addition to Commercial Property Team, the Sheffield-based firm was also nominated for the Niche Law Firm of the Year, and Residential Property Law Firm of the Year awards, with the firm's founder, Cathy Thomas being shortlisted for Partner of the Year.

Delighted to retain the prestigious award for a second year, Cathy Thomas, Solicitor and Director of Mason Thomas Law, said: "To retain the title of Commercial Property Team of the Year is wonderful. We were only just coming back down to earth after learning we had been shortlisted in four categories, so to get the win is amazing."

The Commercial Property Team of the Year Award acknowledged the significant work Mason Thomas Law has completed over the past 12 months for businesses throughout Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley, and the surrounding areas. The firm's portfolio includes high-profile property transactions and leases for notable clients including Yard Ball, The Psalter, Glass Onion, and Tufcot Engineering.

The awards, organised by the Sheffield & District Law Society, were held at the Crowne Plaza Royal Victoria Sheffield on Friday 28 February, and celebrated



Sheffield and its districts, brightest and best lawyers, and their achievements over the past year

Established in 2019, Mason Thomas Law is the region's only all-female specialist property law firm. Cathy added: "As well as creating a supportive and empowering environment that encourages professional growth and leadership for women in law, I am dedicated to ensuring that Mason Thomas Law stands out as an example of modern, progressive legal practice. The award is testimony to the team's shared commitment to the founding principles of Mason Thomas Law. I am very proud."

In addition to commercial property, Mason Thomas Law also specialises in residential property law, and

secured lending, providing expert legal support for leases, purchases, and other property-related transactions to businesses across the UK.

Alongside legal work and award nominations, the team are currently taking part in a number of fundraising initiatives as well as volunteering their time and participating in awareness-raising activities within the local community to raise funds for Support Dogs, a small Sheffield charity based on Brightside Lane.

**For more information about Mason Thomas Law and their services, or for more information on their Charity of the Year 2024/25 please visit Mason Thomas Law.**



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# Rotherham IT provider secures prestigious double accolade

**A Rotherham-based IT provider has been named as one of Yorkshire’s most exciting and promising businesses of 2025.**

**B**alliante, which is headquartered in Rotherham town centre, was singled out in recognition of the company’s growth and expansion plans, both in the UK and US markets.

Compiled by influential regional business publication, Yorkshire Business Insider, the most exciting companies list highlights 50 businesses that deliver “something special” and features businesses predicted to make their mark on the regional economy during the next 12 months. Balliante is one of just two Rotherham-based businesses to make the list.

Craig Boddy, Balliante’s managing director, was also named by the publication as one of Yorkshire’s top 42 entrepreneurs aged under 42, in recognition of the growth and success the specialist IT provider has enjoyed during the past year, as well as recognising Craig’s commitment towards breaking down barriers and creating collaborative business opportunities, designed to support businesses operating in Rotherham and South Yorkshire.

The success topped off a remarkable 12 months for Balliante, which saw the business celebrate its fifth anniversary and create two new full-time jobs as well as establishing a presence in the US, through the opening of a new office in New York.

Co-founded by Craig and business partner Louis Marcus in 2020, Balliante delivers 24/7 IT support,

network infrastructure management, cybersecurity, custom software development, CRM systems, as well as bespoke web design and app development.

In November 2023, the company relocated to Rotherham town centre, transforming Furness House, a historic property built during the American War of Independence, into a state-of-the-art IT Hub.

Under Craig’s leadership, Balliante has also actively sought to foster stronger connections with Rotherham’s local business community, where the company has pioneered a number of innovative initiatives designed to break down barriers and encourage greater collaboration between businesses.

With his sights firmly set on future growth in 2025, Craig believes that as more companies adopt emerging technologies, such as AI and automation, Balliante is well-placed to help businesses, not-for-profit and public sector organisations.

Craig Boddy, Managing Director, Balliante, said:

“The IT sector is incredibly competitive and to see our work recognised in this way is something I feel incredibly proud to have achieved. It’s a testament to the hard work and commitment of everyone who has played a part in our growth journey to date.

Over the past five years, our business has grown from an idea on the kitchen table

to one that is creating new jobs, targeting growth and perhaps most importantly of all, helping our clients to respond to the opportunities offered through cutting edge technology.

At the same time, we wanted to create opportunities to collaborate with and support like-minded businesses in Rotherham and South Yorkshire. We’re proud to work with organisations of all sizes, from sole traders and SMEs to blue chip companies, not-for-profits and the public sector, and I’d like to thank everyone who has supported our business so far – I’m very much looking forward to seeing what the next 12 months will bring.

**We’ve got exciting plans to grow our business, not just in South Yorkshire, but also to develop our presence in America”.**





# Chamber Celebrates **International Women's Day** with Inspiring Accelerate Action Event

**In recognition of International Women's Day 2025, Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber successfully hosted an impactful event championing this year's global theme; Accelerate Action.**

**T**he event, sponsored by AESSEAL, called for greater momentum in strategies, resources, and activities that advance gender equality.

Held on 7th March at the AESSEAL New York Stadium in Rotherham, the event brought together businesswomen, advocates and guests to discuss and drive forward actionable change for businesses in South Yorkshire and how this can positively impact women in the workplace. The event was hosted by Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber Vice President, Mark Smith, a well-respected voice in leadership development and business training. Opened by YWCA Yorkshire, with their rendition of Sunflowers, voiced by Nicole Cannon and written by Rachel Bower as part of the YWCA Listening Project, the poem was a powerful performance, conveying the voice of women which often goes unheard.

Former Barnsley & Rotherham





President, Lisa Pogson, paid a heartfelt tribute to Dame Julie Kenny DBE DL following her recent passing, reflecting on the profound impact she had on her own career and the wider Rotherham business community. Lisa shared how Dame Julie's guidance and unwavering encouragement played a pivotal role in her decision to step forward for the Chamber President role, a position Julie herself had once held at Rotherham Chamber.

She recalled how Julie's tenacious spirit, resilience, and determination made her an inspiring businesswoman and friend—someone who never shied away from a challenge and always championed those around her. Lisa credited Julie for not only offering support but for instilling the confidence to break barriers and strive for greater achievements.

Attendees had the opportunity to hear from an exceptional line-up of speakers who have championed progress in their respective organisations. The keynote speaker, Lindsay James, Founder & Director of Active Fusion, shared her 25-year journey in youth development and sports. Recognised with the King's Award for Voluntary Service, Lindsay's dedication to improving young people's wellbeing has had a profound impact in South Yorkshire. As a competitive duathlete and triathlete, Lindsay gave a talk on the themes of compassion, the role of potential and her passion for sport and the impact this has had on her career and overcoming obstacles in her personal life.

Onto the panel of local businesses, guests were able to hear from leaders in local businesses including Ava Jones, Head of Marketing & Executive Assistant to the Group Managing Director at AESSEAL, who discussed her career progression from apprentice to leadership highlighting AESSEAL's commitment to sustainability, continuous improvement, and workforce diversification. Ava was joined by Karen Thomas, Finance Director at ASD Holdings Ltd & Rotherham United



Football Club, who spoke about the strategies required to operate in both manufacturing and professional sports and the key role women have played in these industries. Finally, Ken Perritt, Senior Director at GXO Logistics, brought his expertise in logistics and supply chain management, discussing workforce development and GXO's vision for the future in this field.

This year's International Women's Day campaign emphasised that while gender equality still faces challenges, progress is achievable through swift, decisive action and widespread support. The event explored successful strategies making a difference today, inspiring attendees to implement similar approaches within their own organisations and communities.

The event received overwhelming support from attendees, who praised the engaging discussions, thought-provoking insights, and valuable networking opportunities. Many left with a renewed

commitment to accelerating gender equality in their own workplaces and industries.

Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce would like to thank all speakers, panellists, and attendees who contributed to making this event a resounding success.

For more information on Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber visit [www.brchamber.co.uk](http://www.brchamber.co.uk) or contact [info@brchamber.co.uk](mailto:info@brchamber.co.uk)

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# Chamber Welcomes

# Barnsley Council's £5 Million Support Package

# for Local Barnsley Businesses

**Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce fully supports Barnsley Council's proposed £5 million support package, designed to safeguard jobs and protect the Barnsley high street.**

**A**nounced during today's Council meeting, this vital scheme will provide 100% business rate relief for eligible retail, leisure, and hospitality businesses operating in Barnsley when the scheme goes live.

Set to launch on Tuesday 1 April 2025 and run until Tuesday 31 March 2026, this one-off reinvestment demonstrates a clear commitment to supporting the local economy from Barnsley Council.

Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber welcomes these measures, which will provide much-needed relief and give businesses the confidence to continue investing in Barnsley.

Carrie Sudbury, Chief Executive of the Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber, said, "Businesses in the leisure, hospitality and retail sectors have played a transformational role in the regeneration of Barnsley's town centre – the net result of which is job creation, entrepreneurship and a boost to the local economy through the thousands of visitors attracted to the town each week.

"Yet against this backdrop, businesses are facing uncertain futures. The triple whammy of rising cost pressures, cuts to business rate relief and April's employer



National Insurance increases have forced some to place recruitment plans on hold, whilst others are facing the stark reality of redundancies or survival.

"When the Chamber relayed the very real concerns of our members, Barnsley Council listened and responded. We welcome and fully support the measures introduced by Barnsley Council which will offer some vital relief to some, as well as giving businesses the confidence to continue investing in the town.

"I hope other areas across the UK will follow the example of the progressive and collaborative work being delivered in Barnsley."





# Utility Source Powers

# Transformation of Historic Coltran Mill in Mexborough

**Utility Source Ltd has been appointed to deliver essential utility infrastructure for the redevelopment of Coltran Mill in Mexborough, a landmark project set to transform the historic building into 60 luxury apartments and 26 homes.**

**L**ed by The Investment Room Ltd, with construction by Scorpion Construction UK Ltd, the development combines heritage preservation with modern living. Inspired by the mill workers' cottages of the past, the design will breathe new life into one of Mexborough's iconic sites, which was among the first to be added to Doncaster's Local Heritage List.

The project presents unique challenges due to the site's ageing utility infrastructure, with some connections dating back to the early 20th century. Utility Source has been tasked with delivering a comprehensive package of utility works, including temporary power for construction, upgrades to drainage systems, and new connections for water, electricity, and telecom services. Electric vehicle charging points will also be installed, ensuring the site is future-ready.

Dean Pattison, Owner of Utility Source, said:

"Coltran Mill is a project that perfectly blends history with innovation. It's an honour to play a role in bringing this site into the modern era while respecting its heritage. We're working closely with The Investment Room and Scorpion Construction UK to deliver robust, compliant, and future-proof utility solutions for both the construction phase and future residents."

Julie Jones, Owner of The Investment Room Ltd, added:

"This redevelopment is about honouring



the past while meeting the needs of modern living. Utility Source's expertise in managing complex infrastructure challenges ensures the project runs smoothly and delivers high-quality results."

Craig Allen, Owner of Scorpion Construction UK Ltd, commented:

"Every heritage project brings its own set of challenges. Utility Source's proactive approach allows us to focus on

delivering a build that combines quality craftsmanship with respect for the site's legacy."

The transformation of Coltran Mill marks an exciting step forward for the local community, creating high-quality homes and preserving a vital piece of Mexborough's heritage.

**For more information about Utility Source, visit [www.utilitysourcelimited.co.uk](http://www.utilitysourcelimited.co.uk) or call 01709 931297.**





# Business community comes together to champion social value in Rotherham

**“What does Social Value mean to Rotherham” event inspires community collaboration at Wentworth Woodhouse.**

**M**ore than 100 people from South Yorkshire businesses came together as Esh Construction delivered a networking event to lead the conversation on meaningful social value delivery in Rotherham.

Esh’s Social Value Manager for Yorkshire, Megan Roberts, was joined by Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Carrie Sudbury to host the event at Wentworth Woodhouse, which enabled conversations to go past the discussion of social value, with representatives from the South Yorkshire Careers Hub, Rotherham Hospice, Skills Street and the Work-wise Foundation, among others, coming together to celebrate successes and focus on ‘doing the doing.’

Megan opened the conversation by discussing Esh’s Constructing Local strategy which has been built around six key E’s – economy, education, engagement, employment, even greener and employees. Alongside, guest speakers Carole Foster, Fundraising Manager at Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust and Simon Hartley, Skills Consultant for RNN Group UK shared aligned values throughout the morning.

Megan said: “It was incredible heading down to the main networking area to see all our exhibitors in deep conversation and many of our visitors gaining new



contacts. I am so grateful to our key speakers and exhibitors for getting involved and making the event a success.”

In Rotherham alone, Esh Construction has delivered £2.1 million worth of social value return on investment across its schemes since 2023. With community engagement being built across employment, education and the

third sector, Chamber Chief Executive Carrie acknowledged there are always opportunities for more businesses to capitalise. She said:

“The Chamber would encourage all businesses – any shape or size – to always collaborate and have those conversations. Events like today are so important to the borough, its people, the voluntary sectors, to service





providers, to retail and to hospitality – the golden thread, through all of this is collaboration and conversation.

“Esh have done an incredible job already for the local region. And Megan has done a wonderful job in her role, not just today but on a long-term basis and she shared some incredible stories through the event.”

Working as a Skills Consultant at RNN Group, which supports 10,000 students across five colleges at any one time, Simon Hartley urged businesses to up their game on social value, explaining that it takes a two-way street for a real impact to be made. He said: “At RNN our aim is to get students into the industries they want to work in so it’s about matching the employee with the right class to get that support.

“Events like today not only raise awareness of the great things happening in Rotherham and South Yorkshire but they showcase how businesses can benefit too. Social value isn’t just about charities doing something to help learners, it can also aid businesses – it’s a two-way street.”

The historic setting for the networking session wasn’t lost on the 100+ businesses present, but it was sobering to hear from fundraising manager at Wentworth Woodhouse Carole Foster, who highlighted that hosting the community event would help the charity attract further business support.

She said: “Bringing different organisations and businesses together is vital, especially for a charity like ours. We are just at the beginning of our journey – to create a thriving community hub and restore a heritage site for future generations. While visitors see a grand building, they often don’t realise that three-quarters of it, hidden from view, is still in urgent need of restoration.

“What stood out from the event is the strong desire to collaborate, which is something I truly love about Rotherham. Having worked in the town for many years across various charities and community organisations, I’ve seen firsthand how people come together to support one another—and that’s what makes this community special.”

A key message of togetherness and

collaboration resounded through the Grade I listed country house on the outskirts of Rotherham, from the outset, with a heartfelt round of applause paying homage to Dame Julie Kenny, who passed away earlier this week after a short illness – Dame Julie played a key role in charity SAVE Britain’s Heritage buying and restoring Wentworth Woodhouse and has been a prominent community champion across Yorkshire.

**Attendees were invited to sign up for Esh’s first Constructing Careers programme in the region, through which businesses can offer interviews for candidates to help provide positive destinations.**



# International Women's Day

#AccelerateAction – Driving Change, Creating Opportunity



At AESSEAL®, we believe that real progress happens when action meets commitment. That's why we're not just supporting International Women's Day 2025, we're actively working to accelerate gender equality in engineering, manufacturing, and beyond.



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- **Making an Impact:** Gender equality is not just a goal, it's a necessity for innovation, growth, and success. By taking bold, decisive steps today, we can build a more equitable tomorrow.

Accelerate change and make equality happen—faster.

#AccelerateAction





# Doncaster Racecourse Recognised As One Of The UK's Best For Guest Experience

Doncaster Racecourse has been officially recognised as one of the best racecourses in the UK for guest experience, a prestigious achievement marking a continued commitment to excellence in hospitality and customer services.

Published by The AA, the results of the Racecourse Association's annual Quality Assured Racecourse Scheme (QARS) for 2024 has placed Doncaster Racecourse firmly amongst the top racecourses in the UK. The QARS scheme recognises high standards of service and guest satisfaction and has once again seen Doncaster secure a spot alongside some of the most renowned racecourses in the country.

Since its commencement in 2011, the Quality Assured Racecourse Scheme (QARS) has provided an in-depth evaluation of the customer experience across racecourses in the UK. The assessment takes into account every element of the raceday, from the initial planning stages to the post-event experience. Unannounced assessors visit racecourses and offer comprehensive feedback based on their observations as part of the judging process.

Rachel Harwood, Executive Director at Doncaster Racecourse, commented: "The customer experience is at the heart of everything we do at Doncaster Racecourse. As such, I am delighted that we have been acknowledged with such a high score in this prestigious scheme. It is testament to the hard work of everyone here at the Racecourse, which



we will look to maintain and improve on in 2025."

Paul Swain, Head of Raceday Experience & Communications at the RCA, commented: "Customer experience is integral to our sport's future. Whether you attend with friends, family or on your own, a trip to the races should live up to the expectation that it will offer a fun and vibrant day out whilst watching elite sport.

"Having an authoritative voice in The AA confirm that our year-on-year scores have risen is testament to the significant emphasis placed on customer

experience by racecourses.

"We look forward to collaborating with The AA, racecourses and wider industry stakeholders to maintain this positive trend in 2025."

Simon Numphud, Managing Director at AA Media, commented: "2024 saw another great year of high-quality racecourse experiences, with an average increase of more than 3% compared to the previous year's assessments.

"2024's scores are a true testament to the hard work and commitment that each racecourse and their respective teams achieve."

## DIAMOND MEMBERS





# South Yorkshire's 'Get Up To Speed' Bigger Than Ever As It Celebrates 15th Year And Extends To Two Day Event

**South Yorkshire's largest STEM careers showcase, 'Get up to Speed with STEM', is set to return bigger and better than ever with up to 6,000 young people and educators set to take part.**

**F**or the first time ever, Get up to Speed will be a two day event, with the first day geared up for secondary school students (11-25 years) and the second day dedicated to primary school (aged 8-11 years) and SEND young people.

There's still space for businesses to sign up as exhibitors on Wednesday 19 March, with a bonus half-day on Thursday 20 March at no additional cost. Exhibitors benefit by building relationships with young people and educators for the future, raising brand awareness and having the opportunity to engage with attendees in a highly immersive environment.

John Barber, CEO of The Workwise Foundation which organises the event said: "We've had overwhelming demand from teachers and employers to extend Get up to Speed into a two-day event, which means we can offer an even wider breadth of events and activities and a more dedicated focus for each

day. Like every year, we will be offering visitors a variety of hands-on STEM activities, with a wide range of different businesses and organisations running demonstrations and interactive challenges."

Get up to Speed offers a unique opportunity for businesses to connect directly with future talent, showcasing their innovations while helping to bridge the skills gap in STEM. Over the 14 years, this interactive showcase has introduced STEM career opportunities to more than 45,000 young people, parents and teachers.

The event kicks off with a Business Breakfast to mark the 15th anniversary of Get up to Speed, with an exciting line up of guest speakers. It will highlight the achievements of the past 15 years, showcasing the region's current talent and explore the skills and expertise needed in the next 15 years.

After the Business Breakfast, young people will have the opportunity to explore and get hands-on with many of the

region's STEM innovations and discover the broad range of exciting careers and opportunities that await them.

The Magna visitor attraction will also be open on 19th March including access to the Big Melt, bringing the region's steel heritage to life.

Current sponsors include AESSEAL, CBE+, Sheffield Forgemasters, Stream7 and The Worshipful Company of Ironmongers as gold sponsors, alongside silver sponsors including Dragonfly PR, Hydra Creative, Forged Solutions Group, The IET, The UK Atomic Energy Authority, Rowan Campbell Pilling F4 Driver and bronze sponsors, AMG Chrome, Ametek Land, Esh Construction, Vulcan to the Sky Trust, The Royal Navy, Element Materials Technology, Withers & Rogers LLP and The UoS AMRC Training Centre.

John Barber continues: "Every year, we receive incredible feedback from schools about how Get up to Speed provides students with a first-hand experience of STEM careers. The event offers





interactive workshops where students can engage with industry professionals and take part in hands-on activities from organisations as varied as United Cast Bar, casting metal to The UK Atomic Energy Authority, learning about Nuclear Fusion. We'll also be announcing the winners of AMETEK Land's annual Business Challenge, involving eight schools, which offered students an opportunity to showcase their creative design and environmental knowledge and skills."

To mark the 15th anniversary, GUTS are hosting a special after-show celebration on the evening of 20th March, "The Big 15", open to all exhibitors, sponsors and anyone who just wants to join in the fun and celebrations. Attendees can enjoy an evening of entertainment, group challenges, magic, music, prizes and good food and company.





# Businesses in Barnsley and Rotherham Brace for National Insurance Hike

With the rise in employer National Insurance (NI) contributions having taken effect from 1 April 2025, businesses across Barnsley and Rotherham are expected to experience significant financial strain.

**T**he research published in March from the British Chambers of Commerce has suggested that 82% of firms are anticipating a negative impact, with recruitment and pricing strategies shifting dramatically.

The British Chambers of Commerce research found that 82% of businesses expect the increase to impact operations, 58% foresee reduced recruitment, and 54% predict rising prices to offset costs. Additionally, 79% of businesses believe the government has not adequately assessed the implications, 77% are worried about the speed of policy changes, and 55% say changes to statutory sick pay will impact their investment, recruitment, prices, or daily operations.

With firms having faced incredibly challenging conditions for a prolonged period, higher National Insurance contributions from April 2025, combined with a lower threshold at which payments begin, have made it difficult for many businesses to sustain their operations.

The retail and hospitality sectors—which employ large workforces—are among the hardest hit. Many firms are increasing prices or scaling back operations, adding pressure to an economy already grappling with inflation.

Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber fully supports Barnsley Council’s proposed £5 million support package, designed to safeguard jobs and protect the Barnsley high street. Announced in February, this



vital scheme will provide 100% business rate relief for eligible retail, leisure, and hospitality businesses operating in Barnsley when the scheme goes live.

Increased employer National Insurance contributions could change hiring plans and lead to raised prices, according to findings published by the British Chambers of Commerce.

Research revealed that 8 out of 10 businesses expect to be impacted by the new costs. Nationally, 6 out of 10 businesses expect recruitment to be affected, while more than half expect prices to rise. Barnsley & Rotherham

Chamber is urging the government to look at the impact following the changes to support businesses with a clear approach to employment costs, a clearer tax roadmap to provide businesses with long-term certainty and a system that incentivises investment, and more time for businesses to adjust to upcoming changes in employment rights.

Maintaining profitability while absorbing increased costs is an enormous challenge for many Barnsley and Rotherham Businesses with many SME’s unable to invest in planning and sound financial strategies to navigate the ongoing hurdles.



Responses from those surveyed by the British Chambers of Commerce show that many firms report that the NI increase has forced redundancies, discouraged recruitment, and resulted in job losses. Businesses also warn that National Insurance Contributions have directly impacted profitability, stopping investment in people and growth, with some even stating that these changes make it unviable to continue trading for no return.

With the National Insurance hike now in effect, the uncertainty surrounding employment costs, taxation, and regulatory changes is fueling concern across industries. As the local economy strives for stability and growth, ensuring businesses can sustain their workforce and continue investing in the future remains a critical challenge.

Commenting on these developments, Carrie Sudbury, CEO of Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber, said: “As these changes come into effect today, we’re committed to standing by our local businesses and members. The increased National Insurance contributions and shifting employment costs are a heavy blow, but we’re here to help navigate these challenges. I strongly encourage businesses to tap into the support and resources available through your local Chamber of Commerce. From guidance on financial planning to advocating for clearer tax policies, we’re working tirelessly to ensure our members have the tools they need to adapt and thrive.

“The reality is that many businesses—especially SMEs—are at a breaking point. The combination of higher National Insurance rates and a lower threshold has blindsided firms already stretched thin by inflation and post-pandemic recovery. Our role at the Chamber is to amplify their voices, pushing for policies that don’t just pile on costs but offer breathing room and a clear path forward. We’re in constant dialogue with local and national

leaders to ensure these concerns don’t fall on deaf ears.

“For those feeling the pinch, our team is ready to step in with practical support. Whether it’s helping you understand how the increased Employment Allowance might offset costs or connecting you with experts to rethink your financial strategy, we’re a resource that’s here for you. We’ve seen firsthand how resilient Barnsley and Rotherham businesses can be, and we’re determined to help them weather this storm.

“Beyond immediate relief, we’re advocating for a long-term vision. Businesses need predictability—a tax roadmap that doesn’t shift beneath their feet every few months. They need incentives to invest in their people and their growth, not penalties that stifle ambition. We’re pressing the government to rethink the pace and scale of these changes, giving firms time to adapt rather than forcing them into survival mode.

“This is also a call to action for our local business community. Joining your Chamber isn’t just about weathering the tough times—it’s about building a network that strengthens us all. We offer training, networking opportunities, and a platform to shape the policies that affect you. Now, more than ever, unity is our strength, and we invite every business to get involved.

“Looking ahead, we’ll keep fighting for measures like Barnsley Council’s support package to become a model for others. Our high streets and local economies depend on it. Together, with the right support and a louder collective voice, we can turn these challenges into opportunities for growth and stability. The Chamber is here for the long haul—let’s navigate this together.”





# Northern College backs campaign celebrating further education students and staff

**Northern College is supporting a national campaign that celebrates the positive impact of the further education sector and the achievements of students and staff.**

**T**his year's Colleges Week is highlighting the contribution that colleges make to building brighter futures and supporting their communities.

The national campaign champions the adults and young people who study and train at colleges as well as the staff who teach them and runs from 3rd to 7th March 2025.

Northern College, based at Wentworth Castle, Barnsley, specialises in adult education and provides short community courses as well as academic and vocational qualifications.

As the only adult residential college in the North of England, it serves learners across South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire as well as further afield.

Students can study residentially or non-residentially. The college is also developing an online course offer.

A high proportion of students are from under-represented or disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and have additional learning needs.

During 2023/24, 78% of learners were unemployed when they joined the college and 56% had no qualifications above Level 1.

Of 976 learners last year, 90% continued in education, started paid employment

or self-employment or got involved in voluntary work after finishing their studies at the college.

Adult learner Kay Fielder has fulfilled a lifelong ambition of going to university after returning to education later in life and studying at Northern College.

Kay completed an Access to Higher Education course at Northern College in 2024. She also passed a Functional Maths course.

Now the 57-year-old, from Rotherham, South Yorkshire, is studying for a BSc Honours Degree in Occupational Therapy at Sheffield Hallam University.

Kay said: "I have become a new person, I no longer recognise my old self. I feel so empowered. Thanks to Northern College, I have grown in confidence renewing my passion for life and learning."

Kay decided that she needed a fresh start after going through several major life events. She explained: "I had always wanted to go to university but did not have enough qualifications. I thought it was a pipe dream and something that wouldn't come to fruition."

Access courses prepare adult learners, who do not have academic qualifications such as A Levels, for study at degree level. The one-year courses lead to credits and a Level 3 qualification





recognised by colleges, universities and employers.

“I fell in love with Northern College the first day I walked through the door even though I was shaking like a leaf,” added Kay, who was a residential student, and heard about the college through her previous job working for a government agency for 32 years.

“I was in a new environment and way out of my comfort zone as a neurodivergent person. After being out of education for so long, I thought I would not fare that well. But the support from staff was amazing from day one.

“Staying as a residential student for a couple of nights a week was the best thing for me. When you are in that academic environment, it puts you in the right mindset for learning. The structure and routine really helped me to adapt, focus and learn.”

Kay is enjoying her degree course and looking forward to a new career in occupational therapy. She added: “Getting into university was a dream come true. You are never too old to learn. Don’t let age or any other barriers hold you back. Give yourself a chance.”

Emma Beal, Principal and Chief Executive, Northern College, said: “It is incredibly rewarding to see learners like Kay overcome barriers and develop the confidence to learn and achieve.

“We provide a supportive environment that inspires adults to achieve more than they thought possible enabling them to gain qualifications, secure employment and progress in careers.”

**To find out more, visit [www.northern.ac.uk/](http://www.northern.ac.uk/).**





# BCC Infrastructure:

# UK Must Transform Archaic Infrastructure

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) is calling on the Government to tackle the problems of the UK's worn-out infrastructure to fire up growth.

**A**mong the recommendations in a new report, the BCC is calling for ministers to:

- Improve road and rail capacity and electrify key sections of the rail network
  - Deliver regional transport projects and grid connectivity
  - Listen to business on its national and regional infrastructure needs, and provide long-term policy stability and improved planning capacity
- The report has been produced by the BCC's Local Economy of the Future Challenge Group, drawing on expertise from Chambers and businesses of all sizes and sectors.

It advises that the Infrastructure and Planning Bill, which is expected to be put before Parliament soon, must have the interests of business at its heart. And it calls for Government to introduce long-term policy stability to help restore business confidence that was hit by the cancellation of the latter stages of HS2.

The report also sets out a pathway to improve capacity in the planning system, through a joint initiative with business to get 100 more trained planners into local authorities. The BCC has set up the programme to address the bottlenecks in decision-making due to a lack of resources.



BCC research has found that more than three-fifths of business leaders (62%) say they just don't have the right skills in their workforce, rising to nearly three-quarters (74%) in the manufacturing and construction

sectors.

Two-thirds (66%) of business leaders say their views aren't taken into account when it comes to local infrastructure decisions – on everything from digital to





road improvements. This rises sharply to more than eight in ten (81%) when it comes to national infrastructure decisions.

Transport is a major challenge that needs fixing. For low-paid workers, buses are key. But more than six in ten (62%) company leaders say their local bus and tram networks are poor.

Shevaun Haviland, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, said:

“The story of large-scale infrastructure development in the UK has travelled a rocky road over the past few decades.

“The perception remains that projects either end up getting cancelled, massively overrun or cost ten times the original asking price.

“The shadow of HS2 hangs heavy over the debate as businesses no longer feel they can take government announcements at face value.

“Firms find it hard to plan for their own future investment if they fear the rug will be pulled from under them halfway through delivery.

“The problems lie in the lack of a national cohesive strategy, a moribund planning system, coupled with an over-zealous legal approach and a dearth of skilled labour.

“If the Government’s plans to power economic growth through a new era of construction are to be realised, then these are the issues that must be fixed.

“It has already taken some

positive steps in this direction. The recommendations in this report set out what needs to happen next. We must rebalance our approach to infrastructure and give businesses the confidence they need to align their investment plans.

“These are the reforms that our planners, engineers and the business community have been waiting on for decades. In an increasingly competitive global economy, they cannot afford to wait any longer.”



British Chambers of Commerce

**WE’RE HERE  
TO HELP.**



# Creating an effective wellbeing strategy

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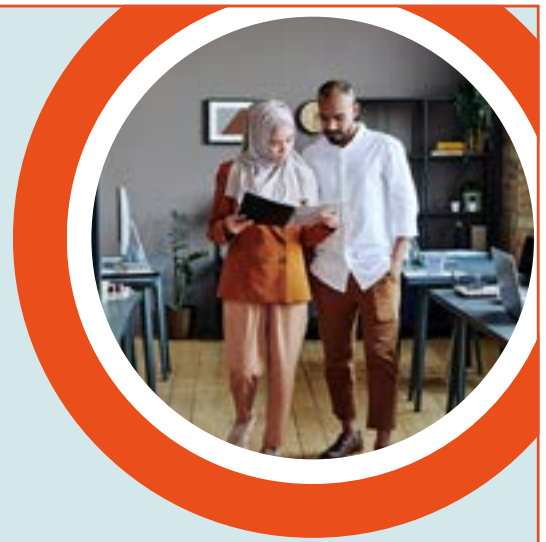
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# Over £1,000 Raised for Barnsley FC Community Trust at Sold-Out Chamber's Charity Quiz

**Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber's Charity Quiz was a resounding success, raising over £1,000 in support of the Barnsley FC Community Trust, the Chamber's Charity of the Year.**

**H**eld at the Holiday Inn Barnsley on Tuesday, 25th February, the sold-out event brought together businesses, community members, and quiz enthusiasts for an evening of fun, friendly competition, and fundraising.

Teams battled it out over a range of quiz rounds, covering everything from general knowledge, picture rounds and US states, all while supporting an incredible cause.

A key highlight of the evening was the charity raffle, which contributed significantly to the final fundraising

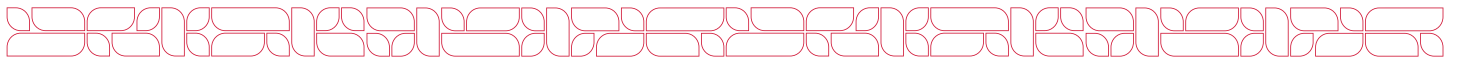
total. Generous donations from local businesses and the Barnsley FC Community Trust's helped raise crucial funds that will directly support the Trust's work in the local community.

Shane Young, Operations Director of Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber, said, "It was fantastic to see such strong support for this event, with businesses and individuals coming together to make a real difference. The funds raised will go a long way in supporting the vital work of the Barnsley FC Community Trust, and we're incredibly grateful to everyone who took part, donated, and helped make the night such a success."

The Chamber extends a huge thank you to everyone who attended, donated prizes, and supported the evening. A special congratulations to our winning team Virgin Money, who claimed the title of Chamber's Charity Quiz 2025 Champions!

**For more information about upcoming events and how to support the Barnsley FC Community Trust, please visit [barnsleyfccommunity.co.uk](http://barnsleyfccommunity.co.uk) or contact [events@brchamber.co.uk](mailto:events@brchamber.co.uk).**





# University of Sheffield

## leads the UK in engineering research income and investment

**The University of Sheffield leads the UK in engineering research income and investment, according to the latest figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).**

**T**he stats, published annually, show that Sheffield attracted the highest level of funding for engineering research for two academic years in a row – 2021/22 and 2022/23 – more than any other UK university, including Cambridge, Oxford and Imperial College London. In 2021/22 the University of Sheffield received £121 million and in 2022/23 it received £110 million.

Across the two years, industry and the UK government provided the most funding, with over £70 million invested by each, followed by UKRI (mostly the EPSRC) with almost £60 million. The remaining funding came from charities and other organisations. The figures demonstrate the vital role the University is playing in driving innovation and encouraging inward investment, both in South Yorkshire and nationally.

The HESA data covers projects from across the University of Sheffield's Faculty of Engineering and research centres including the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC).

One of the biggest projects included in the figures is investment in the National Epitaxy Facility at Sheffield, which is a critical part of the UK's semiconductor capabilities and supports the government's Semiconductor and Quantum Technologies Strategies. The facility provides the key materials needed to develop new semiconductor

technology and underpins semiconductor R&D between universities and industry across the whole of the UK.

Professor Koen Lamberts, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, said: "I would like to congratulate my colleagues from across the University of Sheffield's Faculty of Engineering, AMRC and research centres on this significant achievement – attracting more engineering investment than any other university in the UK is a remarkable feat.

"Sheffield's position is a testament to the confidence that industry and research funders have in the capabilities of the University and the region. As the government looks to turbo-charge innovation-led growth by strengthening connections between the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor and the rest of the UK, innovation hubs in areas like South Yorkshire can play a key role in offering innovative companies both R&D expertise and space to scale-up operations.

"I would also like to thank our partners in the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and regional government for helping to create the conditions needed to attract funding from a range of sources."

Further examples of Sheffield's engineering research includes the ROSEHIPS project, which is revolutionising how high value

infrastructure throughout the UK is monitored and maintained, such as major bridges, vital to the UK's transport infrastructure, and offshore wind turbines that are key to the UK's energy supply.

Sheffield was awarded funding to establish a UK-first Sustainable Aviation Fuels Innovation Centre (SAF-IC). Built in the University's Innovation District on the former site of Sheffield City Airport, which closed in 2008, the facility is developing, testing and helping to certify new sustainable aviation fuels.

It is considered one of the most advanced facilities of its kind in Europe, is working with aviation leaders such as Boeing and UK fuel producers, and is putting the UK at the very forefront of efforts to reduce global aviation emissions.

Professor Conchúr Ó Brádaigh, Vice-President for Engineering at the University of Sheffield, said: "The data from HESA shows that Sheffield is one of the UK's strongest engineering universities and a real asset to the nation's R&D capabilities. We are very proud of our track record not only in fundamental research, but in our ability to translate this at scale into meaningful outcomes for industry.

Aside from this impact on industry, innovation and growth, our research also informs our teaching as we train the next generation of engineers.





We have one of the biggest cohorts of engineering students in the UK and our approach to research-led teaching ensures they are developing the skills needed throughout industry and society.”

At the University of Sheffield AMRC, engineers are leading projects to address key manufacturing challenges in the production of electrical machines, motors and generators for high value sectors such as aerospace, renewable energy and automotive. As part of the Future Electrical Machines Manufacturing Hub, AMRC engineers are developing a remote laser cutting process that is three times faster than conventional methods.

AMRC researchers are accelerating decarbonisation throughout Yorkshire and the Humber – the UK’s most carbon-intensive industrial region. The Zero Carbon Humber project could help the region reach net zero by 2040 through low carbon hydrogen, carbon capture and carbon removal technology.

The AMRC is also leading on a project to revitalise the traditional aluminium casting process for the future of aviation. Funded by the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI), the project is demonstrating how technology and optimisation can make casting a more sustainable and efficient manufacturing method.

Professor Ben Morgan, Interim Chief Executive Officer at the University of Sheffield Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre, said: “This remarkable achievement reflects the world-class expertise we possess at the AMRC and across the University.

“The AMRC is driving impactful research across aerospace, defence and nuclear energy, while leveraging our capabilities to address critical challenges and opportunities in advanced manufacturing – putting South Yorkshire, north Wales and Lancashire on the map for innovation and technological development.

“Our industry and government partnerships, like those with Rolls-Royce and Boeing, further demonstrate our commitment to real-world solutions and our drive to push the boundaries of what’s possible. We’re incredibly proud to be part of the University of Sheffield’s thriving research ecosystem and excited to continue shaping the future of innovation.”

**HESA data on UK universities research funding.**





# Charity enhances end-of-life care with Purple Butterfly Room upgrades at Rotherham Hospital

Thanks to the public's donations to Rotherham Hospital and Community Charity's Purple Butterfly In-Memory Giving Fund, the charity has recently been able to enhance and maintain the four beautiful Purple Butterfly end-of-life rooms at Rotherham Hospital.

**K**ind donations made by Rotherham residents are ensuring that families can spend precious moments together in a comfortable, peaceful space during difficult times.

As these rooms are always in use, everyday items naturally become worn over time. Donations to the Purple Butterfly In-Memory Giving Fund allows the charity to keep the rooms in top condition for families when they need it most.

Rotherham Hospital and Community Charity are proud to have funded brand new enhancements in the end-of-life rooms, including:

- Smart TVs for entertainment and comfort
- Microwaves and lamps for convenience
- Sofa beds and day beds to allow families to stay close to their loved ones
- Kitchen essentials – plates, mugs, cutlery
- Plants to create a calming atmosphere
- Games and radios for cherished moments together



Sensory night light projectors and bubble tubes for relaxation

Diffusers to bring calm

Rotherham Hospital and Community charity are here to make sure that the care you and your loved ones receive is the best it can be.

Want to support your NHS charity?

Make a donation

Every penny raised stays in the Rotherham community. To make

a donation please visit [www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/charity](http://www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/charity)

Take part in an event!

Join the fun and make a difference. If you're feeling inspired to get out and do something amazing, Rotherham Hospital and Community Charity have a jam-packed events calendar for 2025.

To find out more visit [www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/charity/events](http://www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/charity/events)

## PLATINUM MEMBERS



# New initiative on the hunt to find South Yorkshire's rugby stars of the future

An exciting new partnership to find the rugby stars of the future has been announced between a Rotherham secondary school and Yorkshire Rugby Academy.

**W**ath Academy in Wath-upon-Dearne has embarked on the initiative which will provide a clear and structured pathway for any talented young players to develop and progress towards professional rugby, enhancing rugby opportunities for aspiring athletes within the state school system.



Officially launching in September 2025, it will see Wath Academy, which is part of Maltby Learning Trust, participate in the national Academy, Colleges and Education (ACE) league and serve as a key hub within Yorkshire Rugby Academy's talent pathway, supporting boys aged 11-18 in their rugby development.

The partnership will enable student-athletes to access elite-level coaching, strength and conditioning support, and a high-performance training environment, all while continuing their academic studies at a high-performing school.

Stuart Dixon, Yorkshire rugby academy manager, said: "We are delighted to partner with Wath Academy as part of our ongoing mission to develop the best rugby talent in the South Yorkshire region. This initiative will not only raise

the standard of rugby at the school level but also strengthen the future of the sport in Yorkshire."

Ryan Burrows, rugby development manager at Wath Academy, added: "This is a huge step forward for our rugby programme at Wath. We are still in our infancy with the programme only being in its third season but with the involvement now of Stuart and the other guys at Yorkshire Rugby Academy it will really put Wath Academy back on the map as a Rugby playing school"

Wath Academy's OFSTED-rated Outstanding Sixth Form provides an exceptional academic environment,

ensuring that students receive top-tier education alongside their rugby commitments with the advantage of academic excellence, well-equipped facilities, and expert faculty support.

**By integrating rugby development into the academy's education framework, students will benefit from a holistic approach that balances sporting ambitions with academic success. The partnership extends across multiple aspects of development, including scholarships, academic mentoring, and professional-level training structures giving student-athletes the advantage of academic excellence, well-equipped facilities, and expert faculty support.**





# ‘Your story matters’ says Women’s Charity at YWCA Listening Project Launch

**South Yorkshire women’s charity joined regional leaders, friends and supporters to officially launch a poetry series co-produced by Rachel Bower and the women of YWCA Yorkshire.**

The launch, on 3 March 2025, was hosted in the Lord Mayor’s Parlour at Sheffield Town Hall and attended by The Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Cllr Jayne Dunn, The Mayor of Rotherham, Cllr Sheila Cowen and the Civic Mayor of Doncaster, Cllr Julie Grace, as well as supporters of the YWCA Listening Project and the women of YWCA Yorkshire.

The YWCA Listening Project ran throughout 2024, collecting hundreds of lived experiences from women through workshops, one-to-one conversations and anonymous letters.

These stories were crafted into a series of ten linked poems by poet, author, and women’s advocate Rachel Bower; ‘Look how far you have come.’ The poetry series is being released ahead of International Women’s Day, 8 March 2025, to raise awareness of the challenges faced by women and to signpost support.

Whilst the YWCA Listening Project listened to the voices of women in South Yorkshire, the message to all women everywhere is that ‘your story matters’.

The poems describe the journeys, successes, friendships and hopes for the future as told by young women supported by YWCA Yorkshire. Themes explored throughout the YWCA Listening Project include homelessness, domestic abuse, financial hardship, trauma, parenting, sexual violence, exploitation and relationship breakdowns.

Author, Rachel Bower, said, “It has been an honour to listen to the experiences,



feelings and hopes of women in this project. I’m grateful to the women who trusted me with their stories, and I hope the poems do justice to the huge range of experiences the women shared.

Projects like this are important as everyone has a story to tell, but sometimes people feel that they haven’t ever really been listened to before. It can be transformational when people are offered the chance to connect with other people and explore their experiences in creative ways.”

The launch marks the first in a series of regional International Women’s Day events that will see the charity share learning and stories from the YWCA Listening Project. Supporters from the business, health, education and charity communities have gifted their platforms

and speaker spots, amplifying women’s voices and signposting support across a range of networks.

The YWCA Listening Project featured at unLTD Business Expo 5 March, South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Violence Against Women and Girls event 7 March, Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber International Women’s Day event 7 March, Voluntary Action Rotherham International Women’s Day event 7 March, South Yorkshire Women’s Network Conference 10 March and an installation hosted by Northern College 12 March.

By joining the broader International Women’s Day conversation, the charity aims to reach more women and support them to speak up and speak out about their experiences.





YWCA Yorkshire Chief Exec, Tracy Gollins, explains. “Evolving from one of the oldest women’s organisations in the world, our charity works to empower women to advocate for themselves and each other. By sharing our learning from the YWCA Listening Project, we hope to engage more people to listen to and understand the challenges faced by women and girls. And to signpost the vital support that is available to women through community, charity, and third sector organisations local to them.”

Through a mix of housing and trauma-informed services, YWCA Yorkshire supports 250 women children and families to create better futures in South Yorkshire.

The book of poems ‘Look how far you have come’ was sponsored by Wesco Anixter EMEA’s Women’s Impact Network (WIN) business resource group. Joanne Broomhead from WIN, said, “As a women’s network we’re proud to be

supporting the women of YWCA Yorkshire to tell their stories through poetry. Today we celebrate all women everywhere who lift each other up, empower each other, and advocate for change. We’re thrilled to be part of this movement to support women in telling their often unheard and misunderstood stories, because all women everywhere need to know, their story matters!”

Wesco Anixter represents the international go-to-market brand of Wesco and brings to life the company’s mission to build, connect, power and protect the world to its customers and supplier partners in the regions of APAC, CALA and EMEA.

Alongside the publication of the poetry book, YWCA Yorkshire has released a video of the poem ‘Sunflowers’ and is calling on communities to help spread awareness and signpost vital support by sharing this video <https://bit.ly/YWCAsunflowers>

The spoken word recordings and music production by Hybrid3 were sponsored by Together Housing and the video, produced by LensGo, was sponsored by Roy Hatfield Group.

**People can order their own print of ‘Look how far you’ve come’ and donate to YWCA Yorkshire in support of women and girls here: <https://bit.ly/YWCApoetrybook>**





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# SMH Group Appoint Steve Fern as Chief Financial Officer

**SMH Group, a leading professional services firm with offices across Yorkshire and Derbyshire, is delighted to announce the appointment of Steve Fern as Chief Financial Officer (CFO), effective January 2025.**

**S**teve brings a wealth of experience in financial leadership, strategic growth, and business transformation, gained over a 25-year career across the UK, USA, and Australia.

Steve gained his ACA qualification early on in his career and has gone on to hold several senior roles across a diverse range of industries, including business turnaround, insurance and professional services. His fantastic track record includes his most recent success story where he held the role of Managing Director, taking the business on an incredible expansion journey which ultimately concluded with a sale to a national business. Steve fostered a workplace culture where all staff felt valued and part of the company's growth, aligning with the business's core values. Earlier in his career, Steve supported hundreds of businesses during the financial crisis and implemented an industry-leading Enterprise Risk Management process while working in the US insurance sector.

Steve said:

"I'm thrilled to join SMH Group at such an exciting time in its journey. The firm has a strong reputation for its client-first ethos and a dynamic approach to growth, with ten acquisitions since 2018. I'm looking forward to contributing to its continued success and helping build on the robust financial foundations already in place."

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Steve's people-



focused approach and commitment to fostering positive company cultures have been instrumental in his career. Beyond work, he dedicates time to family, youth sports coaching, and charitable fundraising, including cycling the length of Britain.

Jonathon Dickens, CEO at SMH Group, said:

"Steve's wealth of expertise and his impressive track record in driving growth make him the perfect addition to our leadership team. His values align seamlessly with ours, and his appointment reinforces our commitment to delivering the best possible outcomes for our clients and staff alike."

With Steve's appointment, SMH Group continues its mission to expand its reach and enhance its service offering, delivering bespoke financial solutions to businesses and individuals across the region.

**For more information about SMH Group, visit <https://smh.group>.**





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# What Market-wide Half-Hourly Settlement Means for Businesses in 2025

The energy landscape is set to undergo significant change in 2025 with the rollout of Market-wide Half-Hourly Settlement (MHHS), a national initiative led by Ofgem.

**L**inda Spencer, MD of Professional Energy People, explains how businesses can prepare now to maximise the benefits of this transformation.

MHHS will impact all businesses on non-half-hourly (NHH) meters in the UK, changing how electricity usage is measured, settled, and billed. From October 2025, changes will roll out across the industry, with all relevant customers transitioned to MHHS over an 18-month period. While much of the transition will happen behind the scenes, businesses will notice changes in settlement, billing, and available services.

## What Businesses Need to Know

### Moving to Half-Hourly (HH) Settlement

All Meter Point Administration Numbers (MPANs) will transition to HH settlement, which provides a detailed, real-time picture of energy use.

For others, HH settlement means more accurate billing and potential updates to contracts and costs.

Businesses already using HH meters will see no changes.

### New Industry Terminology and Market Segments

The MHHS program introduces new categories for MPANs: Smart, Advanced, or Unmetered.

Existing NHH processes will be replaced with updated services and data management tools.

### Potential Benefits of MHHS



Ofgem estimates MHHS could deliver £1.5–4.5 billion in net benefits by 2045. For businesses, this presents opportunities to enhance efficiency and reduce costs.

### Key Benefits Include:

**Smarter Energy Insights:** Access accurate HH data to better understand and manage energy usage, predict demand, and plan for future needs.

**Cost-Saving Opportunities:** Unlock new products and time-of-use tariffs, supporting the transition to Net Zero and reducing energy bills.

**Simplified Processes:** Avoid the hassle of manual meter data downloads by upgrading legacy meters to smart or advanced options.

### Preparing for MHHS

To maximise MHHS benefits, businesses need smart meters capable of recording HH data, such as SMETS2, AMR, or HH meters.

2024 marked the deadline for the Government's smart meter mandate, which requires suppliers to upgrade non-smart meters. Having smart metering in place is critical for accessing future opportunities in areas like flexible tariffs, EV charging, and battery storage.

By preparing early, businesses can position themselves to benefit from improved data, cost savings, and greater flexibility under MHHS.

### We're here to help

Your supplier will guide you through the mandatory transition to MHHS. Professional Energy People's in-house experts are also here to support you with advice and services tailored to your business needs.

Professional Energy People are the Energy Partner for Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber members. Contact them for your free energy consultation today.

0330 0022180 | [info@pepgb.com](mailto:info@pepgb.com)





# Chamber Statement on the Passing of Dame Julie Kenny DBE DL

**We are profoundly saddened by the unexpected loss of Dame Julie Kenny DBE DL, a truly remarkable business leader, speaker, and advocate for Rotherham and the wider South Yorkshire region.**

In 1998, Julie became the very first female president of Rotherham Chamber of Commerce. The transformational journey she began with Chamber was rewarded just a few years later when the Chamber was crowned British Chamber of the Year in 2005.

Julie continued to play an active role in the Chamber, for many years, generously giving up her time to share her experiences and knowledge with others.

Carrie Sudbury, Chief Executive, Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber said, “Julie will be remembered as a progressive visionary who brought out the very best in everyone she met. She will be fondly remembered by many in the Chamber community for her tireless work, drive and sheer will to succeed, often against all the odds. My thoughts and sympathies are with her family and loved ones during this sad time.

“From the very beginning of her business career, Julie didn’t just break through glass ceilings; she smashed them, often in her own inimitable way. She was proof that with drive, energy and self-belief that anything could be possible.

“Julie always brought out the best in the people she met. She was a source of inspiration, guidance and support, particularly when it came to nurturing the talents of women in business, always on hand to help those who followed in her footsteps and she will be greatly missed.



“Perhaps her true legacy isn’t just in the business success she achieved during her lifetime, nor in the good causes she passionately supported, or even in the transformational projects she delivered which played such key roles in reshaping South Yorkshire. She will be remembered for the lives she changed, the opportunities she created and the belief that anything can be possible, which she inspired in so many.”

Her leadership and dedication to making South Yorkshire a better place to live and work were inspirational. From

founding Pyronix and growing it into a globally recognised company to her tireless efforts in preserving Wentworth Woodhouse, Dame Julie’s contributions to our region leave an enduring legacy in Rotherham and beyond.

Dame Julie’s passing is a profound loss to the Rotherham and wider South Yorkshire business community. Our thoughts are with her family, friends, and all who knew her.

Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce





**In Memoriam  
Dame Julie Kenny DBE DL  
1957 - 2025**



**‘My view is that nothing is impossible with  
time, energy, and belief’**



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[actusinsurance.co.uk](http://actusinsurance.co.uk)



#TeamActus



# Brew with a view: Students celebrate social enterprise café success

Visitors to Ulley Country Park are enjoying tasty homemade treats, thanks to a pioneering social enterprise that is helping students with special educational needs and disabilities to prepare for life after college.

Launched last June, the ROC Café was developed through a unique collaboration between Ulley Country Park and Rotherham Opportunities College. Operated by students with physical and learning disabilities and/or autism under the watchful eye of experienced catering co-ordinator, Gaynor Cooper, the café operates every Tuesday and Thursday.

Since opening its doors last summer, the ROC Café has helped more than 40 students to develop practical life skills, with the underlying aim of helping them to live as independently as possible in adulthood, as well as securing future employment within the hospitality industry.

Working under supervision, students spend time serving customers, preparing food, as well as learning about customer service.

Many of the tasty snacks and treats sold in the ROC Café are prepared by students in college, using locally sourced meat, fruit and vegetables and bread.

To date, the café has received rave reviews from visitors to the park, as well as achieving a five-star food hygiene rating, the highest available.

Dr Perdita Mously, Principal, Rotherham Opportunities College, said:

“Many of our students look forward to spending time in the café, and for many it is one of the highlights of the college week. Our mission at Rotherham Opportunities College is to equip our



learners with the vital skills to enjoy rich and fulfilling lives in adulthood, and providing work experience in a safe, welcoming environment has helped many of our learners go on to secure jobs in the hospitality industry after successfully completing their studies. The café is one of a number of activities we deliver in college to help our students to feel connected to the local community.

Time spent working in the café helps our students to develop important life skills, including how to communicate effectively, preparing food safely and learning about handling money. The café also forms an important part of our commitment towards investing in the local community. Through our collaborations with local businesses, visitors are able to enjoy a wide range

of tasty, home-cooked produce, and it's been truly heart-warming to hear the positive feedback we've received from visitors.”

Rotherham Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Cllr Victoria Cusworth said: “We want Rotherham to be a great place to grow up, where all children and young people are safe, valued, able to enjoy their lives, achieve their aspirations and get the best possible start in life.

“We're pleased to welcome the students in the café, and we can see the positive impact it has had on the visitor experience at Ulley Country Park. Taking part has helped students to achieve a greater sense of independence and personal growth by developing their skills as they prepare for adulthood.”

Based in Rotherham town centre, Rotherham Opportunities College is an independent specialist college that supports young adults aged 16-25 who have learning disabilities and/or autism.

The college provides tailored education programmes, which take a holistic approach towards understanding the individual needs of each student, helping them to develop the vital skills needed to live independently, secure employment and build rich and fulfilling lives during adulthood.

**The ROC Café operates from Ulley Country Park every Tuesday and Thursday between 10:00am and 2:00pm.**



# Events

For further event details and to book your attendance, please visit our website [www.brchamber.co.uk](http://www.brchamber.co.uk) or call 01709 386 200

**April 15 at 11:30 AM- 2:00 PM**

**Directors Lunch 2025**

*Mercure Barnsley Tankersley Manor Hotel & Spa*

Join us for an exciting afternoon of networking at the Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber Directors Lunch, hosted at Tankersley Manor on Tuesday 15th April.

This event offers the perfect platform to expand your business network and forge valuable connections with like-minded professionals from a range of industries, all whilst enjoying a fantastic two-course meal. Whether you're looking to establish new partnerships, share the activities going on in your business, or simply looking to catch up with existing contacts, the Directors Lunch is the place to be.

**April 22 at 9:00 AM- 10:30 AM**

**South Yorkshire Chambers Networking (online)**

*Zoom*

Our popular South Yorkshire Chamber Business Networking Event is back (online).

The three South Yorkshire Chambers are working together to bring you a unique networking event. This event is free for Chamber Members and £10+vat for Non-Chamber Members.

Membership of the Chamber is all about helping your business to grow and what better way to meet new businesses and make new contacts from across the area than at the City Region Business Networking Event.

**April 30 at 9:30 AM- 11:30 AM**

**Netwalking with South Yorkshire Chambers at Gulliver's**

*Barnsley College Business Centre*

The three South Yorkshire Chambers are delighted to bring back a hair-raising 'netwalking' experience at the amazing Gulliver's Valley Resort, Rotherham.

Enjoy a delicious breakfast whilst networking around this fun filled theme park. We will break delegates off into small group where you can discover a truly fantastic selection of rides, attractions, and spacious areas across the park. You will also have the opportunity to take a ride on the new and exciting Billy Bob's Planes, Grand Prix Gears Racecoaster and if you are really daring, the amazing Drop Tower. Membership at the Chamber is all about helping your business to grow and what better way to network, meet new businesses and make new contacts from across the area.

**May 8 at 6:00 PM- 8:30 PM**

**Chamber Curry Club – Barnsley**

*Curry Mahal*

Join us for a networking experience that tantalizes both your taste buds and your business connections. At the Chamber Curry Club, we bring together the vibrant Chamber community of Barnsley & Rotherham and surrounding areas for an evening of delicious food and fruitful networking.

This event offers the perfect setting to foster new business relationships, exchange ideas, and explore collaboration opportunities.

Looking to promote your own Event?  
Get in touch with our Chamber team





# Chamber Skills Solutions

For further event details and to book your training please visit our website [www.brchamber.co.uk/chamber-skills-solutions](http://www.brchamber.co.uk/chamber-skills-solutions) or call 01709 386 200

## Understanding Microsoft 365

April 11 at 9:00 AM- 4:00 PM

Member price – £100.00 + VAT

Non-member price – £120.00 + VAT

Duration – 1 Day

Have you asked yourself these questions about your Microsoft system?

Our Microsoft 365 training take you through all the features of the software, making the transition straightforward for your employees and causing minimum disruption to your business.

## City & Guilds 2377-77: Certificate of Competence for the Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment

April 14 at 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM

Member price – £325.00 +VAT

Non-member price – £360.00 +VAT

Duration – 2 Days

Specifically aimed at those who are actively involved in day-to-day inspection and testing of electrical equipment, this course is also suited to those who are tasked with management of electrical safety testing and those who are responsible for electrical equipment in general.

## Notes & Minute Taking

May 6 at 9:30 AM- 4:30 PM

Member price – £195.00 + VAT

Non-member price – £210.00 + VAT

Duration – 1 Day

This course aims to give delegates the skills, tips and shortcuts to ensure that your meetings are productive and effective and that vital information is not lost through poor minute taking.

Who should attend Minutes and Note Taking training?

Anyone who is new to or regularly requested to take notes and minutes of meetings.

## IOSH Managing Safely

May 8 at 8:00 AM- 5:00 PM

Member price – £500.00 + VAT

Non-member price – £525.00 + VAT

Duration – 3 Days

This course is unlike any other. You'll find a practical programme, full of step-by-step guidance, and with a sharp business focus. A highly innovative format and content, which engages, encourages and inspires delegates – critical to getting essential health and safety messages across.

Browse the full range of training available from Chamber Skills Solutions



# New Members

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ipmgroupuk.com

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www.j36photography.com

### **Juice Personnel Limited**

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01924 377500  
www.juicepersonnel.co.uk

### **Midlands Power Networks Ltd**

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01782 313121  
midlandspowernetworks.co.uk

### **Peterman Fork Lift Trucks**

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0114 2488180  
www.petermanforklifts.com

### **Secure Power Renewable Energy**

Energy, Utilities, Water  
0114 3493480  
www.securepower.com

### **Assure Business Consultancy**

Financial Services  
01226 643271  
www.legacyfinancial.co.uk

### **Barnsley Healthcare Federation**

Health & Wellbeing  
01226 729896  
www.barnsleyhealthcarefederation.co.uk

### **Chef's Counter CIC**

Leisure, Tourism, Hospitality & Events  
07490 956517  
www.chefscounters.com

### **IPM Group-Cleaning**

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www.ipmgroupuk.com

### **IPM Group-Security**

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www.ipmgroupuk.com

### **JJP Door Solutions Ltd**

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www.jjpdoorsolutions.co.uk

### **Mim Training Ltd**

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www.mimtrainingltd.co.uk

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mrmk.co.uk

### **nineteen47 Ltd**

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prl-logistics.com

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www.rlb.com

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www.funhubactivities.co.uk

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www.barratthomes.co.uk

### **Consort Hotel**

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www.consorthotel.co.uk

### **North West Aerospace Alliance**

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01772 648800  
www.aerospace.co.uk

### **Safeway Fork Lift Training**

Training  
07497 201382  
safewayforklifttraining.co.uk

### **The George Wright Boutique Hotel and Restaurant**

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01709 382898  
www.georgewrighthotel.com

### **Video Pros**

Videography  
07545 877677  
www.videopros.co.uk

### **Barnsley Youth Zone Ltd**

Charitable & Voluntary Organisations  
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www.onsideyouthzones.org

### **Burkitt Productions**

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www.lanceburkitt.com

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Health & Wellbeing  
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www.rdash.nhs.uk

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www.gardenworldrotherham.co.uk

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www.panenkasheffield.com

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www.st-connect.co.uk

### **Sky High Tree and Ground Maintenance Services Ltd**

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www.skyhighservices.co.uk

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www.yatesdrywall.co.uk

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A full list of our latest Chamber members over the past 12 months

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www.jibbavoip.com

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www.lpoweredltd.com

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www.mwaycomms.co.uk

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platinumtravelbarnsley.co.uk

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www.pmpsurfacing.co.uk

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www.rhplastering.co.uk

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www.sperohero.co.uk

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www.visionaryfs.co.uk

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www.adien-utility-detection.com

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arcdataprotectionservices.co.uk

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www.arctrainingacademy.co.uk

## AWJ Business Services Ltd

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07922 273328  
www.awjbs.co.uk

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01226 729896  
www.bhfcleaningsolutions.co.uk

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www.marsebfilipinocuisine.com

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highhopescounselling.co.uk

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www.doylesecurity.co.uk

## **O CPR**

Marketing Agency  
07540 635872  
www.ocpr.co.uk

## **Pass Logistics**

Transport  
01302 249012  
www.passlogistics.co.uk

## **Ridley & Hall Solicitors**

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01226 213434  
www.ridleyandhall.co.uk



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Charitable & Voluntary  
Organisations  
07778 963979  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### **Snooker4All Academy**

Leisure, Tourism, Hospitality &  
Events  
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[www.snooker4all.co.uk](http://www.snooker4all.co.uk)

### **The Charity Hub**

Charitable & Voluntary  
Organisations  
0773 8066987  
[www.thecharityhub.org.uk](http://www.thecharityhub.org.uk)

### **Gravitate Accounting**

Accountancy  
0114 3217459  
[www.gravitate.digital](http://www.gravitate.digital)

### **GrowTraffic Ltd**

SEO  
07850 556244  
[www.growtraffic.co.uk](http://www.growtraffic.co.uk)

### **JM Passive Fire Protection**

Health & Safety  
0151 3293230  
[www.jmpfp.co.uk](http://www.jmpfp.co.uk)

### **Matrix Consulting Engineers Ltd**

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[www.matrixce.co.uk](http://www.matrixce.co.uk)

### **Natural Cement Distribution Ltd**

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01226 381133  
[www.naturalcement.co.uk](http://www.naturalcement.co.uk)

### **Pell Frischmann**

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01924 368145  
[pellfrischmann.com](http://pellfrischmann.com)

### **Ropesafe Ltd**

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0161 7060545  
[www.ropesafe.co.uk](http://www.ropesafe.co.uk)

### **Support and Safety Group**

Services  
Security  
01709 212829  
[www.supportandsafety.co.uk](http://www.supportandsafety.co.uk)

### **TwentyFour IT Services Ltd**

IT Services  
01302 732190  
[www.twenty-four.it](http://www.twenty-four.it)

### **Vision Sales Consultancy Limited**

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0748 4379314





# MARKETING



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