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No. 009.18 18 May 2018

**N E W S R E L E A S E**

**National Apprenticeship Awards open for entries**

There is still time for the best of Buckinghamshire’s apprenticeship stars to shine by entering the [National Apprenticeship Awards 2018](http://www.appawards.co.uk/).

The Awards, now in their fifteenth year, are open for nominations and entries across ten categories to recognise apprentices, employers and those who are positive champions for the programme.

Employers and apprentices from all sectors are encouraged to enter the awards. Entrants have the opportunity to be crowned a regional winner at nine awards ceremonies across the country. From the regional champions, a national judging panel will select the overall National Apprenticeship Award winners, to be celebrated at a prestigious ceremony on 28 November 2018.

The application process is straightforward, entry to the awards is free and online at [www.appawards.co.uk](http://www.appawards.co.uk). To help with entries, guidance documents for employers and apprentices are available to download. The **deadline for entries is the 25 May** 2018.

Paddy Patterson, Apprenticeships Manager, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP), said: “With 2,000 people starting an apprenticeship each year across Buckinghamshire and around 10% of all local businesses taking on apprentices, we know we have many brilliant individuals and employers benefitting from the programme. There is increasing interest and

**more…**

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confidence in apprenticeships locally as an accessible and effective way to develop skills and talent. Awards like these are a fantastic way to recognise and celebrate apprenticeship excellence and achievement.”

**Ends**

**Note to editors**

The National Apprenticeship Awards:

There are three Employer of the Year categories (SME, Large, Macro) and a Recruitment Excellence Award open to apprentice employers from all sectors.

Recognising individual successes, there are three Apprentice of the Year categories (Intermediate, Advanced, Higher/Degree level) as well as a Rising Star, Recognition Award, and Apprenticeship Champion of the Year award. For a full list of winners from 2017 visit: [www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/national-apprenticeship-awards-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/national-apprenticeship-awards-2017)

The [Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/) (BTVLEP) is a business-led ‘partnership of equals’ between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the County.

[Buckinghamshire Business First](http://www.bbf.uk.com/) (BBF), is the Growth Hub for Buckinghamshire and is backed by Buckinghamshire based entrepreneurs, thousands of SMEs and Local Authorities.  BBF provides the link between public policy and the business community in Buckinghamshire and works with partners to create a dynamic business environment in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain.

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