



Go North East apprentices James (l) and Matthew Barnes

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## National award acclaim for Go North East and Gateshead College

The region's largest bus operator, [Go North East](#) has won the Best Apprentice/School Leaver Recruitment Strategy accolade at the national Recruiter Awards for its apprenticeship scheme, implemented to tackle the industry's skills shortage and running in partnership with [Gateshead College](#).

Held at the Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane in London, on the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017, the [Recruiter Awards](#) are the UK's largest event for the entire recruitment community, recognising outstanding achievements across the UK.

Having demonstrated to the judges, which comprised leading business, HR and recruitment specialists, a recruitment approach which had: “a clear attraction strategy [and] which was multi-chained and well diversified,” Go North East came out victorious above Egger UK, Compass Group and the DirectLine Group. The Recruiter judges said: “Go North East’s entry demonstrated a clear attraction strategy, which was multi chained and well-diversified. It has an excellent reputation in the region.”

Run in partnership with Gateshead College, the four-year employee-embedded scheme receives more than 500 (545 in 2016) applications for the average intake of 10 new apprentices, each year. Presently, around a quarter of its engineering workforce are apprentices at varying levels of training.

The selected apprentices train at Gateshead College’s £5.5 million Skills Academy for Automotive, Engineering, Manufacturing and Logistics based at Team Valley in Gateshead, which recently received an investment of more than £300,000 in brand new engineering workshops, providing state of the art lathes, milling machines and supporting tools.

Kevin Carr, Managing Director at Go North East said: “An ageing workforce and a period when young people turned to more academic, rather than vocational employment opportunities has resulted in the bus and coach industry facing a national skills shortage.

“Before partnering with Gateshead College, we relied heavily on agency staff to maintain our vehicle fleet, which was unsustainable. Now our apprentices are a core component of our engineering team recruitment and the dropout rate for apprentices has decreased from 75% to just 10% proving how well it works for our workforce.

“To be acknowledged at a national level for our apprenticeship programme proves we have a winning formula for our engineering recruitment needs.”

Ivan Jepson, director of business development at Gateshead College, said: “Vocational qualifications, such as our apprenticeship partnership with Go North East, are a fantastic education option; they give school leavers work-ready skills demanded by employers as well as providing organisations with the talented workforces they need now and in the long run. For our work to be recognised at a national level further demonstrates that the vocational route shouldn’t be overlooked by young people as they consider their options

after school as they lead to exciting and worthwhile careers.”

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[Go North East website](#)