

One Engineering Company's Approach to the National Skills Shortage

Based in Oldbury, voestalpine High Performance Metals (vHPM) is one Midlands business that is addressing the challenge of attracting talent into the engineering sector through their commitment in Apprenticeships by working with companies like The Apprenticeship Works and Next Gen Makers.

Government figures show the UK engineering sector would need to recruit around 186,000 skilled engineers, each year, until 2024 to gain enough candidates to reduce the skills gap, with over 20,000 annually required to fill roles at companies within the West Midlands region alone.

Those often hit hardest by the skills shortage are businesses like vHPM, that form the rich industrial supply chains who support crucial sectors such as automotive, aerospace, medical, oil & gas, advanced manufacturing, materials processing and many more.

Bev Smith, HR Manager at voestalpine High Performance Metals UK shares their approach, "Apprenticeships provide an invaluable route for training and recruiting new talent for our business, however, attracting new talent in the engineering sector isn't easy. Over the last few years we've taken on 26 Apprentices, 13 have already taken full time positions, we currently have 13 completing their training with one to start shortly and a further four open positions at interview stage.

We cover a full spectrum of roles from administration to engineering and I'm particularly pleased to see a good mix of girls moving into more technical roles. This success has been achieved by working with a number of providers who support us in the recruitment process. We also operate a very successful graduate training programme. Three graduates have already been offered full time positions. Our workforce in Oldbury is largely made up of long service employees, but we recognise that new talent is the lifeblood of creating a successful business."

This week, the vHPM UK team were delighted to learn they had been shortlisted for the Medium Employer of the Year at this year's The Ladder for Birmingham Apprenticeship Awards, to be held on Thursday July 4 at Edgbaston Stadium. The awards are a celebration of the best and brightest young learners and the people who are helping them to succeed.

The nomination for the award came from The Apprenticeship Works, who have been working with vHPM for over 7years. Lisa Kelly, Apprenticeship Agency Manager comments, "we have been working with voestalpine for many years and are so pleased to see our young apprentices progress through the business. The team at voestalpine truly believe in the value of apprenticeships. This is promoted from the top, as Tom Gowans Managing Director and Country Manager started his working life as an apprentice at Lucas."

Life-long learning is part of voestalpine's corporate culture and underpins their goal of being "one step ahead". It's vital that Midland based businesses continue to nurture new talent for the future success of this engineering region. Adam Tipper, Co-Director of Next Gen Makers, adds, "We create a platform for West Midlands engineering and manufacturing firms to raise their profile as a good employer of young people and their apprenticeship opportunities, directly to engineering students at local Colleges. For students to feel excited about a career in engineering and ignite their passion, they need to link their classroom learnings to real-life companies, processes and career opportunities through seminars, work experience and factory visits."

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Images



Back from left to right: Nathan, Lauren, Duaine, Joe, Aiden, Israel, Jon, Luke.
Front from left to right: Jack, Courtney, Nicola, Dylan, Lauren



Back from left to right: Nathan, Lauren, Duaine, Joe, Aiden, Israel, Jon, Luke. Front from left to right: Lisa Kelly from The Apprenticeship Works, Jack, Courtney, Nicola, Dylan, Lauren, Bev Smith HR Manager at voestalpine High Performance Metals UK.



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