



L-R Colin Barnes, Engineering Director at Go North East with apprentice Oliver Barry and Suzanne Slater, Assistant Principal for Apprenticeships at Gateshead College

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## Go North East calls for next generation of apprentices

One of the region's leading bus companies is on the hunt for apprentice engineers to bolster its growing and highly skilled team of home-grown talent.

Go North East is working with Gateshead College to recruit eight new apprentice bus and coach mechanical technicians keen to progress a career in transport engineering.

The successful applicants will complete a four-year apprenticeship which includes one day a week training using state-of-the-art equipment at Gateshead College's Skills Academy for Automotive, Engineering, Manufacturing and Logistics. At the end of the programme they'll become fully qualified, skilled engineers who will be offered a full-time job with Go North East.

Go North East's apprenticeship scheme is one of the most successful training programmes in the region. The bus operator has a longstanding partnership with Gateshead College with several new apprentices joining each year.

Nearly 90% of Go North East's engineering workforce started their careers as apprentices, including Engineering Director Colin Barnes who himself trained at Gateshead College.

He said: "We're facing a big skills shortage in mechanical engineering and to futureproof our business and the wider sector we need to find and develop our future workforce.

"Our programme with the college is really innovative and they have in place a highly bespoke and specific candidate recruitment process that enables us to find the right people for the roles.

"The apprenticeship is integral to our future success and empowers us to train fresh talent that will strengthen our sustainability and help to develop our position in new markets such as electric buses and hybrid technology.

"Since working with Gateshead College, the calibre of applicants has hugely improved. We're very impressed with the quality of apprentices we've interviewed over the last few years who have or are going to progress into skilled technicians with strong career prospects.

"The college really understands our business, and our growth journey, as well as the wider transportation sector which really helps.

"I joined Go North East as an apprentice when I was 17. Three decades later, I am still doing a job I love and I am now Engineering Director.

"If applicants are willing to get their head down and hands dirty then this

apprenticeship is the perfect opportunity for them to become a fully qualified engineer with the region's biggest bus company.”

Go North East has a long-established partnership with Gateshead College. This has included apprenticeship programmes in vehicle, engineering and customer service sectors. The college has also supported the bus operator with bus driver training and recruitment.

The college takes candidates through a series of tests to determine levels of aptitude, dexterity and skills such as time management and team building abilities. Go North East is presented with a shortlist of 40 potential apprentices. From the 40 candidates this year, eight applicants will be successful in securing a place in the highly selective apprenticeship.

Suzanne Slater, Assistant Principal for Apprenticeships at Gateshead College, said: “We’ve worked closely with Go North East for many years creating an apprenticeship programme specifically tailored to meet their unique needs in developing future transport engineers.

“Delivering bespoke, innovative apprenticeships that enable business growth is what we do best. There’s no one-size-fits-all approach - every business has distinctive needs.

“In the North East we work with a wide range of employers, helping them with their talent development challenges.

“We get under the skin of each business to fully understand them and the sector they’re in to create an apprenticeship that delivers true value to the business and resolves genuine workforce challenges they’re facing.

“We’re proud to be a long-standing talent development partner of Go North East and we’re excited to welcome the next cohort of talented apprentice engineers.”

To apply for the apprenticeship, which closes on Monday May 31st, please visit [www.gateshead.ac.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.gateshead.ac.uk/apprenticeships).

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[Go North East website](#)