

NETWORK

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NEAA appoints Skills Strategy Lead to deliver employer-led skills initiatives

Interview of the Quarter: Fastening the future - Masfix's commitment to the automotive sector

Building SME resilience: NEAA launches new working group



FUELLING COLLABORATION AND GROWTH AT THE NEAA EXPO 2025

The North East Automotive Expo 2025 has once again proved to be a cornerstone event for the region's automotive industry.

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Cover photo:
NEAA Expo 2025 (l to r): Jeff Pratt, Head of
UK Operations, AESC; Matt Boyle, NEAA
Chairman; Paul Butler, CEO, NEAA; Adam
Pennick, VP of Manufacturing, NIMUK

CEO CORNER

As 2025 draws to a close, the NEAA reflects on a year of resilience, growth, and collaboration. Despite global challenges - from supply chain disruption to economic uncertainty - the region continues to strengthen its position as a leader in automotive manufacturing and innovation.



The transition to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) remains one of the industry's most significant challenges. While the UK fell short of its ZEV mandate target for 2024, optimism persists. Battery production and new model launches promise over £2 billion of growth and thousands of new jobs in the North East over the next five years. Nissan's Qashqai and Juke remain among the UK's top-selling models, and the all-new Nissan LEAF begins production in Sunderland this December.

Government and regional support for the sector remains strong. National initiatives such as the Industrial Strategy, Advanced Manufacturing Sector Plan, and Drive35, alongside the North East Combined Authority's £14.67m Made NE investment, underline a commitment to growth.

Membership growth and collaboration have been central themes this year. Initiatives like the Sustainability Working Group and Plant Managers Forum have driven best practice sharing, while new groups focused on SME resilience and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion are in development. Flagship events such as the North East Automotive Expo continue to provide a platform to connect and showcase the region's expertise. There is growing evidence that this is fuelling local purchasing, member collaboration and major contract awards.

Another standout moment was the NEAA Annual Awards, a celebration of talent and innovation across the region. The awards also reinforced the industry's commitment to STEM education. Thanks to donations from winners and individuals, the cluster is now very close to reaching the £100,000 milestone for STEM school projects which is a testament to the power of collaboration and community impact.

Skills remain a top priority. In August, NEAA was reappointed as the designated Employer Representative Body (ERB) for the NELSIP 2026-2029, now covering the entire North East Combined Authority region. This alignment will ensure skills provision meets employer needs and emerging opportunities across strategically important sectors.

Technology leadership also continues, with NEAA delivering over £33 million in publicly funded projects, including pioneering Connected & Automated Logistics initiatives. The next phase, P-CAL, will showcase the UK's first autonomous container transport demonstration at the Port of Tyne.

Looking ahead to 2026, NEAA will continue to champion regional competitiveness, ensuring the North East remains a powerhouse for the global automotive sector. To achieve this, we will focus on two strategic priorities:

- Driving operational excellence - supporting initiatives aimed at streamlining processes, accelerating innovation, and optimising cost efficiency.
- Supporting supply chain diversification into new sectors through collaboration with UK cluster groups - helping future-proof businesses and utilise excess capacity.

While 2025 has tested the sector's resilience, it has also highlighted the strength of the North East community. Through collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to growth, I hope the region is well-positioned to thrive in the years ahead.

Paul Butler / CEO / NEAA

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CONNECTING IDEAS AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AT THE NEAA EXPO

The North East Automotive Expo 2025 has reaffirmed its status as a flagship event for the North East automotive sector.

Returning to Sunderland in September for its 11th year, the Expo brought together industry leaders, innovators, and supply chain partners for a day dedicated to collaboration, knowledge sharing, and showcasing the latest advancements shaping the future of mobility.

With attendance remaining strong and on par with last year, over 700 delegates and an impressive lineup of exhibitors demonstrated the strength and resilience of the North East's automotive community during what continues to be a challenging time for the sector.

Highlights from the Expo:

- 100 exhibitors representing cutting-edge technologies and services.
- Keynote sessions tackling critical topics such as electrification, future mobility, and the role of women in automotive leadership.
- Networking opportunities and buyer meetings that sparked potential new partnerships and business growth.
- Skills and innovation spotlight, reinforcing the region's commitment to talent development and advancing technology.
- School engagement that inspired the future generation by showcasing the career opportunities available within the sector.

The response from attendees has been positive. Exhibitors and delegates praised the Expo as an invaluable opportunity to reconnect with customers and suppliers, strengthen relationships, and explore new business opportunities.

Some cited the event as "a very useful way to catch up with key contacts," while others reported significant interest in new products and services, reinforcing the Expo's role as a driver for innovation and growth in the automotive supply chain.

Paul Butler, CEO at the NEAA, said: "We continue to bring this event back to the region because we see the value it brings to our members and the wider supply chain.

"During what is a challenging time for the sector, we remain strong together and this event reflects the collaborative spirit that drives innovation in the North East. Together, we are shaping a sustainable future for the automotive sector."

Thank you to all exhibitors, sponsors, and attendees for making this event a milestone in the sector's journey toward a sustainable automotive future.

Missed the event?

Save the date for the next Expo taking place on Thursday 24th September 2026!

To express early interest in exhibiting, please contact Laura Gage at lgage@northeastautomotivealliance.com



BUILDING SME RESILIENCE: NEAA LAUNCHES NEW WORKING GROUP

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the lifeblood of the automotive supply chain, yet they face mounting challenges from economic uncertainty and rising costs to the pressure of digital transformation. Recognising these realities, the NEAA has taken proactive steps by launching its new SME Resilience Working Group, bringing together regional business leaders to strengthen the backbone of the automotive supply chain.

The group's inaugural meeting in November, held at Womble Bond Dickinson's Newcastle office, marked an important step in building shared capability, insight, and preparedness among SMEs.

Chaired by Simon Merchant of Interdigitate, with Joe Routledge of the NEAA coordinating activities between sessions, the group has been established to turn discussion into action. Its focus is to help SMEs anticipate and respond to risks across financial, governance, compliance, and operational fronts. Participants agreed that true resilience goes beyond surviving disruption, it's about adapting, innovating, and building long-term confidence in people, systems, and partnerships.

The meeting explored the evolving risk landscape facing the sector, from cybersecurity threats and policy uncertainty to rising costs, skills shortages, and the unregulated use of AI. Members recognised the importance of creating an environment that enables honest conversations about challenges and failures, as well as successes.

Several practical outcomes were agreed to ensure momentum continues between meetings. These include a monthly newsletter to share early warnings and best practice, targeted risk briefings with practical mitigation measures, and peer clinics for shared learning. The group will also develop safe AI adoption guidelines and explore collaborative certification routes to help SMEs demonstrate resilience to customers and investors alike.

Looking ahead, the working group is currently reviewing SME resilience priorities and will be developing a calendar of themed events for 2026. This programme will be opened to the wider NEAA SME membership, offering opportunities for businesses to engage directly with expert insights, peer discussions, and practical support.

A key part of the group's ethos is to remain small, active, and outcome-driven - ideally between 20 to 30 members representing a balanced cross-section of the region's automotive community.

Simon Merchant noted: "Resilience isn't just about responding to shocks, it's about building confidence and capability so that SMEs can thrive, not just survive."

Get involved

By bringing your challenges to the table and sharing your insights, you can help shape a stronger, more resilient future for SMEs within the region, while gaining valuable networking opportunities for your own business.

If you'd like to learn more or become part of this working group, please contact Joe Routledge on jroutledge@northeastautomotivealliance.com



NEAA APPOINTS SKILLS STRATEGY LEAD TO DELIVER EMPLOYER-LED SKILLS INITIATIVES

The NEAA is delighted to announce the appointment of Margherita Pasquariello as Skills Strategy Lead; a pivotal role focused on shaping the future of the region's skills supply.

Margherita will lead the development of employer-driven actions within the North East Local Skills Improvement Plan (NELSIP) and the Training for Growth programme, ensuring the North East has the skilled workforce required to thrive in a rapidly evolving industrial landscape.

Bringing over 18 years of experience in strategy, engineering, and skills development across Europe, Margherita began her career with Accenture, progressing to lead complex innovation and transformation projects for world-leading automotive and advanced manufacturing brands including BMW, Rolls-Royce, Vauxhall, Ford, and Nissan. Her expertise spans both technical execution and high-level strategy, a combination that has also shaped her work within the education and skills sector.

Margherita's approach is defined by her ability to bridge ambitious strategic goals with practical delivery, leveraging modern tools and data analytics to turn transformation plans into reality.

Speaking about her new role, Margherita said: "I am delighted to join and collaborate with the NEAA on the development and implementation of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for our region.

"The LSIP is our strategic blueprint, powered by strong collaboration between employers, educators, and local authorities. I am passionate about translating our region's skills needs into an actionable strategy. Our goal is to build the work-ready, skilled, and inclusive talent pipeline required to support current and future employer demand and fuel the North East's future economy."

Paul Butler, CEO at the NEAA, added: "I am pleased to welcome Margherita to the NEAA, which will help strengthen our already multifaceted team. Her experience will be a fantastic addition to the team as we work towards a new NELSIP, covering the broader North East region. She will work alongside Mark David and key stakeholders including employers, providers, employer representative bodies and the North East Combined Authority, to develop the NELSIP 2026-2029.

"In addition, Margherita will support the Training for Growth programme bringing her apprenticeship expertise to support SMEs in Sunderland to realise the benefits in investing in future talent."



NEAA ANNUAL AWARDS TO RETURN IN 2026 WITH £100K STEM MILESTONE IN SIGHT

One of the most anticipated events in the North East automotive calendar is the NEAA Annual Awards - a celebration of talent, innovation, and excellence across the region.

This prestigious event shines a spotlight on the individuals and companies driving progress in the automotive sector, from apprentices and graduates to trailblazing women and pioneering businesses.

The 2026 NEAA Awards will recognise achievements across eight key categories:

- Geoff Ford MBE Apprentice Award
- Graduate Award
- Women Who Inspire in Automotive Award
- Innovation Award
- Sustainability Award
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Employer Award
- SME of the Year Award
- Outstanding Contribution Award

These categories reflect the diversity and strength of the sector, honouring everything from technical excellence and sustainability to leadership and inclusion. The Outstanding Contribution Award remains a highlight, celebrating an individual whose impact on the North East automotive industry has been truly exceptional.

The 2026 event will take place on Friday, 27th March, bringing together NEAA members, from multinationals to SMEs and start-ups, for an inspiring evening of recognition and networking. This year's event will not only celebrate achievements but also reinforce the sector's resilience, dedication, and forward-thinking spirit, particularly in championing careers, enhancing industry appeal, and nurturing the next generation of automotive talent.

Beyond recognition, the awards have a powerful purpose: supporting STEM education. Thanks to generous donations from winners and attendees, the NEAA is now close to reaching an incredible £100,000 milestone for STEM school projects. To date, £94,000 has been donated to initiatives that inspire future talent, support local schools, and fund STEM engagement programmes - an outstanding testament to the industry's commitment to education and community impact.

Members are encouraged to submit their entries and join an evening that promises celebration, connection, and inspiration. Hosted by acclaimed journalist and passionate skills advocate Charlie Charlton, it offers the perfect opportunity to showcase your business, reward outstanding employees, and stand out among the competition.

Applications are now open!

Visit the NEAA Awards 2026 web page to download entry information and secure your place. Visit: <https://northeastautomotivealliance.com/events/neaa-annual-awards-2026/>



BUILDING A STRONGER SKILLS BASE FOR UK CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT

By Viki Bell, Chief Executive, CEA
(Construction Equipment Association)

Skills shortages remain one of the most consistent pressures facing UK manufacturing. Across the construction equipment sector, members tell us the same story: it is becoming harder to recruit engineers, technicians and specialist talent, and competition for experienced people is strong. As businesses invest in electrification, digital systems and advanced safety technology, demand for skilled people continues to grow.

At the CEA, our focus is on practical support that members can use immediately. We are building partnerships that strengthen leadership capability, improve recruitment outcomes and support workforce wellbeing — all of which are essential to maintaining a resilient skills pipeline.

A significant part of this work is our long-standing relationship with Cranfield University. Through programmes delivered by Cranfield School of Management, CEA members can develop senior teams equipped to lead in a complex and fast-moving global market. These courses are designed for advanced engineering and manufacturing businesses, giving leaders the tools to plan ahead, manage change and support innovation.

Professional development for engineers remains a priority, too. Our collaboration with the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) helps companies build clear career pathways and recognise technical excellence. Encouraging professional registration not only strengthens internal capability but also supports the retention of highly skilled engineers.

Recruitment continues to pose a challenge for many members, particularly SMEs. Our partnership with the Elite Consultancy Network — a specialist recruiter for the construction equipment sector — provides access to salary benchmarking, talent-pool insights and tailored recruitment advice. This information helps businesses understand market pressures and make informed decisions when planning for growth.

Supporting existing teams is equally important. Through Personal Group, members have access to resources covering mental, physical, social and financial well-being. For many companies, this level of support has become a core part of retention strategy and day-to-day workforce resilience.

To help employers navigate the broader training environment, the CEA has produced **The Education Landscape**, a clear and practical guide to the UK skills system. Members use it to understand how schools, colleges, apprenticeships and professional development routes fit together — and to identify the most effective ways to engage with new and emerging talent.

Our work also extends into national collaboration. As part of the **National Manufacturing Skills Taskforce**, we work alongside more than twenty trade bodies to ensure manufacturing has a coordinated voice on skills, training needs and long-term workforce planning.

Across all of this activity, our aim is straightforward: to help businesses find the people they need, develop the teams they already have, and plan with confidence. Skills shortages will not disappear overnight, but through practical partnerships and shared commitment, the sector can build a stronger, more resilient workforce.



THE NORTH EAST'S JOURNEY FROM AGVS TO AUTONOMOUS FREIGHT

The UK's Connected and Automated Mobility (CAM) sector took a major step forward at the recent CAM Pathfinder Launch Event, hosted by Zenzic at Warwick Manufacturing Group.

The event brought together government, industry, and innovators to unveil new funding streams, share the regulatory roadmap, and showcase projects that will define the next decade of mobility.

For the North East, the event was not only a milestone for the region's projects, but it was also a platform to demonstrate how it has become a national leader in connected and automated logistics (CAL). Representing the NEAA, Chris Appleby, Innovation Manager, presented the journey that began with Nissan's ambition to streamline production and improve efficiencies, which has evolved into a series of pioneering projects.

This journey started in 2007 with AGVs designed and deployed inside Nissan's Sunderland plant, followed by outdoor deployments in 2016. These early steps laid the foundation for a series of technology-led projects, starting with 5GCAL, a £4.9m proof-of-concept delivered between 2020 and 2022. At its conclusion, it showcased fully autonomous delivery of components from the nearside supplier to Nissan as well as the world's first autonomous reverse docking of a yard tractor using 5G connectivity.

Building on that success, V-CAL launched in 2023 to scale operations and explore commercial viability. The project adapted to real-world challenges, introducing pivots such as internal combustion engines running on hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO)

and satellite connectivity via Starlink. These decisions reflect a pragmatic approach; innovation grounded in operational reality.

Next came NICCAL, the National Innovation Centre for CAL, established in 2024 to provide infrastructure, services, and expertise for industry trials. And now, P-CAL is underway, focusing on autonomous container transport at the Port of Tyne. Together, these projects form the backbone of the region's ambition: The Grand Challenge, a fully autonomous delivery route between Nissan and the Port of Tyne by 2030.

The CAM Pathfinder event covered a wide range of topics, from regulatory updates to industry case studies, but at its core was the announcement of four newly opened competitions: Mobilise, Demonstrate, Enable, and Feasibility Studies. Unlike previous funding rounds, these competitions will be refreshed multiple times over the coming years, creating a sustained pipeline of support for innovation and deployment. This approach signals a long-term commitment to helping UK businesses move from concept to commercial reality.

- Mobilise – up to £180k for SMEs developing early-stage solutions.
- Demonstrate – £500k–£2m for strategic products and services.
- Enable – £2m–£4m for live trials and operational models.
- Feasibility Studies – £100k–£250k for business case development.

These opportunities align with NEAA's vision to support members in accessing funding, collaborating on trials, and shaping the future of logistics. With a clear regulatory roadmap, significant funding, and strong collaboration between government and industry, the UK is positioning itself as a global leader in CAM. For the North East, this is an opportunity to build on its proven track record and deliver projects that set the standard for connected and automated logistics.



SENIOR LEADER AT KOMATSU UK JOINS THE NEAA BOARD

The NEAA is delighted to announce that Stuart Reid, Managing Director of Komatsu UK, has joined the NEAA Advisory Board.

Stuart brings a wealth of experience and leadership from one of the region's most respected manufacturing businesses. Having recently stepped into the role of Managing Director, following a successful tenure as Finance Director, Stuart has been a key part of Komatsu UK for over 30 years, working at the Birtley plant and contributing to its continued success.

His appointment strengthens the NEAA board's commitment to driving innovation, collaboration, and sustainable growth across the North East automotive and advanced manufacturing sectors.

Komatsu UK is a founding member of the NEAA and a longstanding supporter of the alliance. Stuart's predecessor, Paul Blanchard, played a pivotal role in transferring best practice and contributing to multiple industry-led working groups, including energy.

Building on this strong foundation, Stuart's involvement will ensure continuity while bringing fresh perspectives to help shape the future of the automotive industry in the region.

Paul Butler, CEO at the NEAA said: "I really pleased Stuart has accepted the invitation to join the NEAA Advisory Board. Komatsu are a valued NEAA member and I know his contributions will be grateful received as we continue to champion and support the automotive and off-highway sectors here in the North East."

Stuart said: "Komatsu has a long-standing association with the NEAA, and it is an honour to be able to continue this.

"I look forward to working with fellow board members in support of the automotive sector, which is key to the North East's future prosperity."

The NEAA Board and team look forward to working closely with Stuart and leveraging his insights to champion operational excellence, strengthen supply chains, and accelerate the transition to a sustainable automotive future.



AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR UNITES TO UNDERSTAND THE FUTURE LANDSCAPE AND AVAILABLE SUPPORT

Weak markets, reduced volumes, increased competition, rising costs, and the transition to electric vehicles have created the perfect storm for the global automotive sector. In the UK, these pressures are amplified by strict ZEV mandates, new taxes on electric vehicle usage and, unlike the EU, the absence of tariffs on Chinese imports.

The UK Government recognise the challenges faced by UK manufacturers and has responded with a comprehensive support package through its Modern Industrial Strategy, the Advanced Manufacturing Sector Plan, the British Industrial Competitiveness Scheme, Drive35, Made Smarter and the EV Cluster pilot.

To help members navigate this complex support landscape, the NEAA has been consulting Tier 1 suppliers to understand the impact of this perfect storm, and the individual approaches that are being taken to mitigate these challenges. Two key strategies were identified:

Improving Manufacturing Competitiveness

The NEAA, supported by MADE NE and Nissan, brought together senior leaders from major automotive manufacturers to share best practices aimed at boosting competitiveness.

Post-meeting, the NEAA and MADE NE are guiding businesses through Government support schemes, aligning with national strategies to unlock opportunities in electrification, automation, and sustainability.

Future initiatives will focus on streamlining processes, accelerating innovation, and optimising cost efficiency, strengthening the UK's global position in automotive manufacturing.

Diversification

With reduced automotive volumes, North East manufacturers - renowned for quality and efficiency - are exploring adjacent sectors where their transferable skills and capability add value.

The NEAA is collaborating with the Welsh Automotive Forum and Northern Automotive Alliance, whose members face similar challenges, to identify diversification opportunities. Collaboration with other sector cluster groups will help companies understand the barriers to entry and the opportunities in new markets.

By leveraging MADE NE's support and fostering cross-sector partnerships, the NEAA aims to future-proof businesses, utilise excess capacity, and maintain the region's status as a global automotive powerhouse. This commitment means driving innovation, supporting supply chain resilience, and fostering collaboration across OEMs, Tier 1 suppliers, SMEs, and technology partners.



CELEBRATING SKILLS: HR FORUM HIGHLIGHTS AND AWARD RECOGNITION

November was a busy month on the skills front, from hosting the NEAA HR Forum at Faltec Europe Limited to celebrating talent at the Dynamites IT & Tech Awards, alongside the ongoing work on the North East Local Skills Improvement Plan (NELSIP) and Training for Growth programme.

The NEAA HR Forum, which meets quarterly, provides a platform for members to share best practice, solve common challenges, network, and hear from expert guest speakers.

This quarter, Ben – the automotive industry charity – joined the discussion to highlight its vital work supporting the lifeblood of the sector: its people. Ben offers lifelong support to anyone working or who has worked in the automotive industry, including their families, focusing on health and wellbeing. Ben's support is national and NEAA members are encouraged to share this service amongst employees, given the alarming increase in mental health cases. Ben can often ensure your staff are seen to and supported ahead of the typical NHS waitlist.

The forum also explored the NEAA's plans to launch a new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Working Group. This industry-led initiative aims to promote inclusive workplaces across

the North East manufacturing sector, ensuring people of all backgrounds, identities, and experiences feel valued and empowered. The group will champion best practice, raise awareness, build EDI champions, and celebrate achievements.

Interested in joining the EDI Working Group?

Contact Mark David, NEAA Skills Manager at: mdavid@northeastautomotivealliance.com

Finally, the NEAA team attended the Dynamites Awards 2025, hosted by Dynamo North East – the region's most prestigious IT and Tech awards. The NEAA was proud to be shortlisted for the Skills Developer Award, which recognises organisations excelling in innovative training and initiatives that strengthen the North East skills pipeline. The NEAA's entry showcased its work on the NELSIP and other employer-led strategies.

The win wasn't to be this time around, but a big congratulations to NEAA member Gateshead College, who took away the trophy. Their entry showcased Digital Up North - the first initiative of its kind to act as a serious connector between education and business, closing regional skills gaps across digital, cyber, AI, healthcare, engineering, and games - with the bonus that it was actually funded through NELSIP.

A huge congratulations to all the winners and thank you to Dynamo North East for an incredible evening celebrating innovation and talent in the region.



FASTENING THE FUTURE: MASFIX'S COMMITMENT TO THE AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR

For over 40 years, Masfix has been a trusted supplier of fasteners, fixings, and industrial consumables across multiple sectors. Today, the company is accelerating its growth in the automotive industry with the opening of a new 5,000 sq. ft facility at Aycliffe Business Park in County Durham - a strategic move designed to strengthen its support for manufacturers and suppliers in one of the region's most critical sectors.

As a proud member of the North East Automotive Alliance (NEAA), Masfix is positioning itself as a key partner in the automotive supply chain, offering tailored solutions that meet the demands of modern manufacturing.

We sat down with Richard Ward, Sales Director at Masfix, to discuss the company's heritage, its latest expansion, and its vision for the future.

Masfix has been serving UK industries since 1982. How has the company evolved from its early days to the present?

Masfix began in 1982 as a small family-run fastener business. Over the years we've steadily expanded our product range, our team, and our capabilities. What started as a specialist fastener supplier is now a broad industrial partner supporting engineering, manufacturing, automotive and construction customers with over 30,000 stocked products.

We've invested in modern facilities, a strong logistics network, digital systems, and service innovations like vendor-managed inventory. The opening of our newest site at Aycliffe Business Park reflects that evolution — from a single-site operation to a multi-location supply partner supporting some of the region's most advanced industries.

What core values have remained constant throughout Masfix's 40+ year journey?

Even as we've grown, the foundations haven't changed. We're still a family business built on reliability, service, and genuine long-term relationships with our customers.

We've always believed in doing things properly — supplying quality products, keeping our promises, and being the kind of partner people can rely on. Innovation has also been a constant. Whether that's introducing new product lines or developing smarter ways to help customers manage their inventory, we're always looking ahead without losing sight of those original values.



Masfix offers over 30,000 products, from fasteners to PPE. Which product categories are seeing the most demand right now?

Our core fasteners and fixings continue to see strong, consistent demand - they're the backbone of many of our customers' operations. Beyond that, tools, engineered consumables, and PPE/workwear have grown significantly, especially within manufacturing and automotive environments where reliability and compliance are critical.

We're also seeing increased activity around engineered parts and custom specification items as customers push for greater efficiency and quality on their production lines.

What role does your vendor-managed inventory (VMI) system play in supporting manufacturing clients?

Our VMI offering is one of the biggest value-adds for manufacturing and automotive customers. By placing vending machines, kanban systems, or RFID-managed stock directly on the customer's site, we take full responsibility for monitoring usage and replenishing stock.

This dramatically reduces downtime, cuts waste, and keeps production flowing without the administrative burden of raising constant purchase orders. It's a smart, data-driven approach that improves efficiency on every level - something our automotive clients especially value.

Masfix has recently opened a new facility at Aycliffe Business Park. What drove this decision, and how does it align with your long-term growth strategy?

Demand from the South Durham and Tees Valley manufacturing clusters has grown rapidly, and it became clear that having a dedicated local facility would allow us to support those customers much more effectively.

Aycliffe Business Park is at the heart of a thriving manufacturing ecosystem, so establishing a base there was a natural step. It aligns perfectly with our long-term strategy of strengthening our regional presence, improving delivery times, and investing in infrastructure that supports sustainable growth across the North East.

What specific capabilities or services will the new site bring to your automotive customers?

The Aycliffe facility significantly increases our local stockholding and enables even faster delivery to automotive customers who operate on tight production schedules.

We've built the site around responsiveness - daily restocking from our main hub, a wide range of fasteners, tools, PPE and engineered parts on hand, and a local account team who understand the sector.

Combined with our VMI and vending solutions, automotive manufacturers can rely on a highly efficient, low-friction supply model that keeps lines running and downtime to a minimum.

The Aycliffe branch has created several new full-time positions. How important is local recruitment to Masfix's strategy?

Local recruitment is absolutely central to how we operate. If we're investing in a new community, we want to invest in its people as well.

Hiring locally gives us teams who understand the area, the customers, and the culture of North East manufacturing. It also strengthens the relationships we build with the businesses we



OUR HISTORY



serve — they know they're dealing with people who are part of the same regional ecosystem.

With increasing pressure on supply chains and sustainability, how is Masfix adapting its product offering and operations to meet these evolving demands?

We've taken a proactive approach. Operationally, we're holding more stock locally and building resilience into our supply network. Our VMI systems help customers reduce waste and operate more efficiently i.e. our kanban solution is environmentally friendly by using recycled boxes and they have no packaging material for customers to dispose of, which plays into both sustainability and cost reduction.

On the product side, we're broadening our sustainable offering, including environmentally responsible PPE solutions. We're committed to helping customers streamline their consumption while meeting their environmental targets.

As an NEAA member, what benefits have you experienced from membership, and how do you leverage the network to strengthen your supply chain partnerships?

Being part of the NEAA puts us right in the centre of the region's automotive community. The network gives us direct access to manufacturers, tier suppliers, and other partners who share challenges and opportunities.

It helps us stay close to sector trends, align our offering to what automotive customers really need, and collaborate to improve

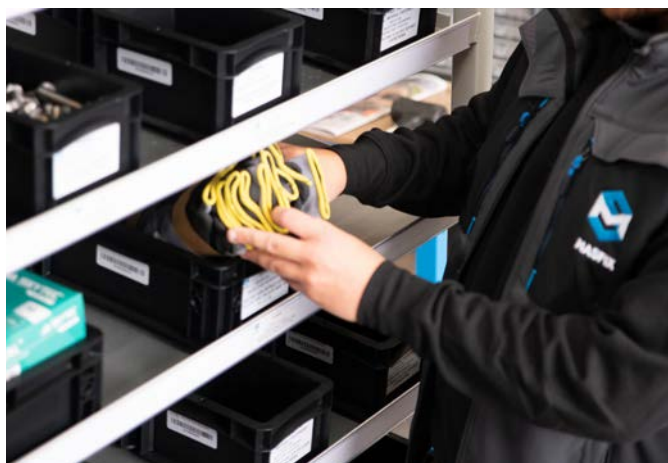
supply chain resilience across the region. The relationships we've built through the NEAA have played a meaningful role in our expansion and service development.

What's next for Masfix in the North East?

We're focused on deepening our presence in the region - expanding the Aycliffe operation, growing our team, and investing in new technology and service models that help customers operate more efficiently.

You can expect to see further development of our VMI solutions, continued growth of our product ranges, and more strategic investment in local infrastructure. The North East has been our home for over 40 years, and we're committed to supporting its manufacturing and industrial future for decades to come.

For further details on Masfix, visit: www.masfix.co.uk





DRIVING PRODUCTION FORWARD: HOW PROSPOT AND UNIPRES BUILT A RAPID-RESPONSE PARTNERSHIP

Prospot's agility and innovation keeps Unipres's dynamic manufacturing environment moving.

Background

Prospot is the UK's leading manufacturer and supplier of resistance welding products. Since its establishment in 1997 as a specialist in cap electrodes, Prospot has grown to serve a diverse customer base across the UK and worldwide. With dedicated manufacturing facilities in the UK and Slovakia, and extensive on-site stocks of standard products and copper alloys, Prospot ensures rapid turnaround for spares, standard parts, and precision-machined components.

Unipres (UK) Limited is a first-tier supplier of steel pressings and sub-assemblies to the automotive sector, delivering high-quality components to support vehicle manufacturing.

Approach and Solution

Following an insightful tour of Unipres's Sunderland manufacturing facility during a NEAA member event, the NEAA team facilitated introductions to Unipres's management and engineering teams, later extending these to the welding and purchasing teams.

Over several months of discussions, it became clear that Prospot's ability to quickly and decisively design and draw both volume and bespoke consumable parts - and deliver often within 24 hours - was an ideal fit for Unipres's dynamic production environment. As supply needs evolved, Prospot stepped up to support Unipres with immediate solutions where timing was critical. By maintaining key materials in stock and utilising their in-house machine shop, they ensured emergency line requirements were met without delay. Prospot's ability to deliver same-day breakdown support and

follow up with essential spares the next day highlighted the strength of this partnership in keeping production moving.

Outcome and Advantage

- Cost down on consumable parts used.
- Fast turnaround on bespoke parts.
- Longer lasting projection welding electrodes.
- Industry leading solid ceramic products.
- Combined weld analyser and weld force gauge for weld inspection.
- Design improvements for electrode holders, which give extended life and less downtime.
- Design service for Unipres standard consumable parts.
- Electrode holder and welding arm refurbishment to extend working life.

Testimonials

"There is a strong, impressive team at Unipres UK. We have worked together at all levels of our businesses over the last 12 months to introduce the Prospot Resistance Welding range of products, driving to ensure that we meet the exacting quality and cost requirements of their company. We are now developing a partnership with a sound base and strong working relationship, which continues to be beneficial to both businesses."

John Harris / Commercial Manager / Prospot

"Unipres UK and Prospot have developed a strong technical relationship based upon a meticulous collaboration to ensure optimal material selection and performance for resistance welding operations. Prospot continues to provide crucial engineering support, offering expert advice and troubleshooting for both general and bespoke one-off welding solutions. This partnership ensures consistency in product quality, improved reliability, and adherence to project timelines at a competitive price."

Rob Potts / Deputy General Manager / Unipres (UK) Limited

NEPS EMBARKS ON A NEW PHASE OF STRATEGIC GROWTH

NEPS has entered a new phase of strategic growth as it closes the doors on its original warehouse at Unit 8, Octavian Way, Team Valley Trading Estate, and moves into a significantly larger, facility at Unit 1.

What began as a sizeable space four years ago has quickly been outgrown, driven by rising demand from the automotive, engineering and manufacturing sectors for reliable storage, fulfilment and time-critical logistics.

The new facility is more than three times the size of the previous site to support NEPS' expanding role within these high-performance industries. With manufacturers operating to strict production schedules, engineering firms dependent on precision supply chains, and automotive customers requiring rapid parts and component deliveries, the need for a larger, more capable hub became essential.

Founded in 2014 and backed by over three decades of sector expertise, NEPS has built a strong reputation for delivering dependable, punctual and cost-effective solutions for business-critical consignments. Today, the company serves a growing portfolio of automotive OEMs, tiered suppliers, engineering firms and manufacturers who rely on fast response, accuracy and full supply-chain visibility.



To support this increasing demand, NEPS has significantly expanded its storage and fulfilment capabilities. The new warehouse offers enhanced capacity, a higher racking footprint and secure 24-hour monitored systems, enabling customers to streamline operations, hold strategic stock and scale effectively as production volumes increase.

This infrastructure is reinforced by NEPS' fleet of more than 50 vehicles from small vans to HGVs dedicated to rapid response and time-critical movements across the UK. Strategically located on Team Valley, Gateshead, the facility provides immediate access to the A1 and A19 corridors, supporting just-in-time deliveries and urgent component movements around the clock.

NEPS extends its thanks to Keith Stewart and Tobias Morrison from Naylor's Gavin Black, and John Morgan from Hay & Kilner – both NEAA member companies – for their invaluable support in making the new facility a reality.

DRIVE35 SUPPORT FROM NEAA MEMBER UNW

The UK Government's recently launched DRIVE35 strategy is a landmark £2.5bn initiative designed to accelerate the transition to zero-emission vehicles and strengthen the UK's position as a global leader in clean automotive technology.

Structured around three strategic pillars – Innovation, Scale-Up, and Transformation – DRIVE35 supports businesses across every stage of development, from early-stage R&D through to major manufacturing investment.

Although a new programme, DRIVE35 builds on a decade of previous automotive funding schemes, such as Automotive Transformation Fund ("ATF"). Its clearer structure and broadened eligibility make it easier than ever for UK-based automotive supply chain businesses to access grant support.

Funding is delivered through six core competitions, each aligned to one of the three pillars. Together, these support everything from collaborative R&D and SME acceleration to large-scale infrastructure projects.

How UNW can help

At UNW, we've worked with more than 35 automotive projects



since 2012, including a number of ATF projects helping clients secure almost £500m in grant funding.

Our dedicated Grant Support Services team provides:

- Expert grant application support
- Due diligence on applications
- Independent Accountant's Reports (IARs) for funding providers

DRIVE35 marks a long-term commitment to the future of the UK automotive industry. If you're planning an investment or just exploring feasibility, our team can help you identify the most suitable opportunities and guide you through the process.

Get in touch with UNW's Grant Support Services team to discuss how DRIVE35 could support your business:

<https://unw.co.uk/specialism/grant-support/>

GROWTH AND INVESTMENT PLANS COME TOGETHER AS OLYMPUS GLOBAL START CONSTRUCTION IN NORTH EAST

European automotive component distributor, Olympus Global, has announced it is soon to break ground on its new multi-million pound distribution facility in the North East of England.

Ambitious growth plans, a significant £2.7m investment, and industrial architectural designs, civil engineering and project management expertise by Building Design Northern (BDN) all come together in October when construction started at the 16,000 sq ft Newton Aycliffe site.

Olympus Global, a UK and European-wide distributor of high-quality engineered components, is building its second UK warehouse distribution facility (the first in the North East) to directly serve industrial, automotive and wider supply chain companies in northern and Scottish regions.

The bespoke build – designed, delivered and project managed collectively by architectural and engineering firm, BDN, will see prime brownfield land at Aycliffe Business Park in County Durham be fully transformed into a fit-for-purpose scheme with dedicated storage space and modern offices.



The site will facilitate existing international customers including Unipres, Thorn Lighting and Gestamp Tallent, and is anticipated to ship more than £7m worth of parts and engineering components in the first year of operations alone. The new facility will create up to 10 new jobs making a significant contribution to the local economy.

Olympus Global – a £38m turnover business – supplies engineering fasteners, precision-turned and machined components, castings, aluminium extrusions and forgings to major organisations within the industrial and automotive sectors. The Newton Aycliffe development will become the company's fifth site.

Keith Rice, Managing Director at Olympus Global, said: "We are delighted to be breaking ground at Newton Aycliffe as it is a key strategic site for the company, and one which marks a new chapter in our 50+ year history. We work very closely with the region's automotive supply chain and the North East is a prime location providing direct access to main transport routes and proximity to the industry's big players and cluster locations."

EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP NORTH EAST APPOINTS TONI RHODES AS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Education Partnership North East (EPNE) has announced the appointment of Toni Rhodes as its new Chief Executive, following a comprehensive national governor-led recruitment process.

Toni succeeds Ellen Thinnesen OBE, who has led EPNE through a remarkable transformation over the past 10 years to become one of the strongest groups in the Further Education sector.

Taking up her new role in January 2026, Toni will lead Sunderland College, Northumberland College and Hartlepool Sixth Form College as the group embarks on the next phase of its changemaking journey and ambitious Strategic Plan for 2025-2030.

On her appointment, Toni said: "I am incredibly proud to be appointed Chief Executive of Education Partnership North East. It is a privilege to lead such an ambitious college group that unlocks potential, creates opportunities and transforms lives through outstanding education, skills and training.

"Our colleges play a vital role at the heart of our communities, and I am looking forward to working with our dedicated and



passionate colleagues and partners to build on our successes and further empower our students to thrive."

With over 15 years' experience of working in education, holding several senior positions at Ofsted Outstanding colleges, Toni joined Sunderland College as Principal in 2021 and was named Deputy CEO of EPNE three years later.

She has played a crucial role in driving the group's success, from being named the region's top performing college for three consecutive years, achieving Ofsted Outstanding in all areas in 2024, and earning national recognition through multiple awards celebrating excellence in teaching, student support, and employer engagement.

AEM DRIVES SUSTAINABLE MOTOR INNOVATION

A Sunderland-based technology company is helping drive the transition to sustainable passenger vehicles.

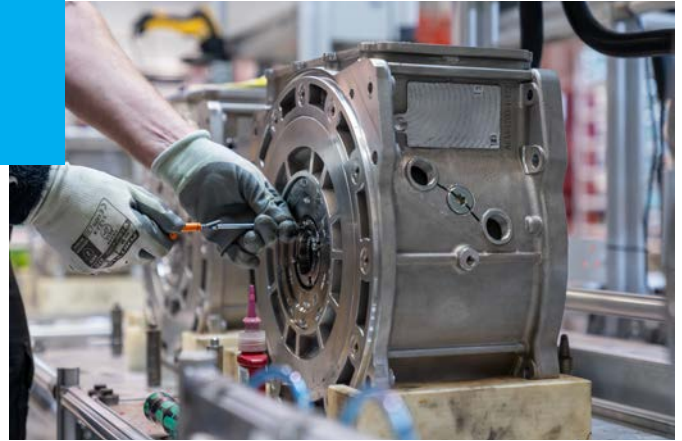
Advanced Electric Machines (AEM) has unveiled its SSRD (Super Speed Reluctance Motor) technology demonstrator for passenger cars, showing that high performance can be achieved using only abundant, widely available materials.

The announcement coincides with the firm securing a major seven-figure contract with a leading global tier one company to develop SSRD motors for high-volume applications.

Global supply chains for rare earth elements such as neodymium and dysprosium are highly concentrated in a small number of countries, leaving manufacturers vulnerable to supply disruptions, price spikes and long-term strategic dependence on limited sources.

AEM's SSRD technology eliminates the need for these critical materials entirely, achieving up to 30,000 rpm performance, excellent results on the WLTP drive cycle and high efficiency in real-world driving conditions, all while relying on fully recyclable and widely available materials.

The motor's simplified design reduces complexity in production, supports cost-effective manufacturing at scale and strengthens supply chain resilience, demonstrating that it is possible to deliver



high-performance electric motors without relying on scarce or geopolitically sensitive minerals.

Dr James Widmer, chief executive and co-founder of Advanced Electric Machines, which was founded in 2017 as a spin-out from Newcastle University, said: "This technology demonstrator proves that British innovation can address one of the automotive industry's key supply chain challenges.

"We're demonstrating a path to enhanced supply chain resilience while delivering superior performance outcomes for our customers. We're proving that supply chain diversification is achievable today.

"This demonstrator shows passenger car manufacturers that they can achieve superior performance while building more resilient and flexible supply chains."

ACCELERATING UK NEXT GENERATION BATTERY INNOVATION THROUGH AI

UK collaboration will advance new battery technology to maximise industry growth and help meet net zero goals.

The Science and Technology Facilities Council's (STFC) Hartree Centre and the Faraday Institution are collaborating to explore how they can accelerate battery innovation in the UK.

This unites the Faraday Institution's excellence in battery research with the Hartree Centre's strengths in high-performance computing and digital innovation.

Under a joint statement of endeavour, they are exploring activities, such as artificial intelligence (AI)-driven battery modelling and simulation techniques, combining UK expertise to maximise industry growth and support net zero goals.

Dr Kate Royse, Director of the STFC Hartree Centre, said: "I'm excited to be working with the Faraday Institution to accelerate battery innovation in the UK.

"By combining the Hartree Centre's leading expertise in AI and



high-performance computing with the Faraday Institution's world-class research in battery technology, we can help industry and scientists develop new solutions faster and more efficiently.

"Together, we're building vital digital skills, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader in battery innovation, and supporting the nation's economic growth and net zero goals."

Located at STFC's Daresbury Laboratory, at Sci-Tech Daresbury in the Liverpool City Region, the Hartree Centre is the UK's leading supercomputing centre dedicated to working with industry and the public sector. It is home to some of the UK's most advanced supercomputing experts and technologies, from AI and high-performance computing to data analytics.

COUNCIL OUTLINES PLAN FOR CITY CENTRE BUSINESSES

A North East city is aiming to expand opportunities through its commercial business centres.

Sunderland City Council has revealed plans to build on the success of its three business hubs: Evolve, Sunderland Software Centre and Washington Business Centre, which opened between 2006 and 2014.

Over the years, these centres have supported a wide range of businesses to launch and grow, contributing to the city's economic activity.

Even during challenging periods, including the pandemic, the centres have maintained an average occupancy rate of 71.7 per cent since 2019.

The council now intends to partner with a managing agent to oversee operations and ensure the centres continue to contribute effectively to the local economy.

Councillor Kevin Johnston, portfolio holder for housing, business and regeneration at Sunderland City Council, said: "We have overseen a number of improvement programmes over recent years to ensure



the centres continue to drive economic growth and meet the needs of tomorrow's businesses and this is the next iteration of that.

"Combined, the three centres have supported the growth of hundreds of businesses over the past two decades and this move will ensure they continue to play a key part helping our city's businesses realise their potential.

"From games developers to engineering firms, software houses, ecommerce specialists, offshore energy businesses and creative agencies, they have supported the creation of hundreds of jobs while providing a launchpad for so many to start up, innovate and grow and this is about putting the relevant measures in place to ensure they continue building on this success long into the future."

GROWTH PROGRAMME BRINGS SWEDISH MANUFACTURING EXPERTISE TO WARWICK

A lean manufacturing specialist who uses technology to improve business performance, originally from Sweden, is aiming to crack the UK market after settling into a new base in Warwick through an initiative to help overseas companies find success in the country.

Virtual Manufacturing UK (VMUK), which helps clients in automotive, aerospace, and more unlock efficiencies in their manufacturing processes, has moved into Warwick Innovation Centre – part of the University of Warwick Science Park – to gain a foothold in the UK's substantial market.

It made the move as part of the Global Growth Programme – a scheme operated by the West Midlands Growth Company – to attract foreign firms to the region with excellent potential.

The programme funds the space needed for companies to establish themselves for up to nine months, and partners with the Science Park to provide that space for eligible businesses as well as providing targeted market entry support.

Since its move in April, VMUK has already seen initial success with meal replacement firm Huel by advising them on the installation of a new manufacturing execution system. Now, VMUK aims to use the expertise it developed in Sweden and Northern Europe to win work with some of the bigger OEMs based within the Midlands, and is



developing its own lean manufacturing software called Gazpacho.

The software aims to help clients track assets by improving visibility, reducing energy costs and carbon emissions, and optimising throughput while finding ways to boost overall efficiency.

Richard Gould, Managing Director of VMUK, said: "After successfully establishing our operations in Sweden, Thailand, and the US, we are now bringing that experience to the UK as we enter an exciting phase of growth with a range of projects.

"Choosing the right location was crucial, and Warwickshire was the obvious choice. The region offers an excellent environment for multiple sectors, particularly automotive and aerospace component manufacturing.

"The UK manufacturing market, especially within automotive and aerospace, is larger than in Scandinavia and Northern Europe, and it had long been a goal to have a presence here."

G&P Quality Management

G&P Quality Management supports industry to strive towards zero defects through best-in-class Quality Management.

G&P is a world-leading quality management services provider, working with manufacturers across the automotive, aerospace, defence and industrial sectors, and their associated supply chains, to transform quality and efficiency levels.

With a global reach and strategic hubs in six countries, we're continuing to experience rapid growth. Alongside developing the breadth and depth of our renowned automotive division, our business has expanded into adjacent services and sectors with a strong emphasis on our value-add technology.

Our philosophy is to provide solutions to manage, control and eliminate disruptions throughout the development, manufacturing, launch and after sales processes to support the drive to zero defects.

Our services:

- **ENGINEERING:** By harnessing our extensive experience, expertise and capabilities, we provide quality management services in three key areas – supply chain, quality management systems and engineering, delivering risk mitigation solutions and supplier development.
- **TECHNICAL:** Our expert technicians provide hands-on support across manufacturing, rework and retrofit projects. Our bespoke approach enhances quality, reduces defects and ensures products meet the highest industry standards – helping businesses



to maximise efficiency and performance.

- **INSPECTION:** Our precise quality control processes detect, contain and resolve defects before they impact wider production. Our inspection services ensure compliance, protect brand reputation, minimise disruption and protect supply chains with real-time reporting and data-driven insights.
- **TALENT:** G&P Talent brings the knowledge and experience of G&P into an expert recruitment solution, connecting businesses with top talent, providing bespoke recruitment solutions for temporary, contract and permanent placements.

For more information please contact:

Email: infor@gpqm.com

Tel: 01922 458 003

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Wearwell Europe

Trusted Industrial Matting & Work Platforms Since 1950

Wearwell has long stood as the trusted innovator in ergonomic and safety flooring solutions, serving a wide range of industries where performance, durability, and worker well-being are top priorities. In the automotive sector - where precision, productivity, and safety intersect - Wearwell's products play a crucial supporting role in shaping efficient and comfortable work environments. From assembly lines to maintenance bays – Wearwell mats, flooring systems, platforms and anti-fatigue solutions are designed to reduce strain, improve traction and enhance overall workplace ergonomics.

In an industry defined by continuous motion and demanding physical labour, automotive professionals rely on flooring that not only withstands the rigors of heavy equipment and high traffic but also safeguards workers from fatigue and injury. Wearwell's advanced materials and engineered designs address these challenges. Wearwell products help minimize slips, trips, and falls while improving comfort during long shifts - a critical factor in maintaining quality and productivity on the factory floor.

Beyond comfort and safety, Wearwell's solutions also reflect the industry's commitment to sustainability and innovation. Wearwell's range incorporates recycled materials and modular designs, offering both environmental benefits and ease of installation. As automotive manufacturing evolves toward greater automation and cleaner technologies, Wearwell's adaptable



flooring systems continue to support these transitions by meeting modern standards for resilience, hygiene, and ergonomic design.

In short, we don't just cover the floor - we elevate the foundation of automotive workspaces, enhancing the performance of both people and production systems across the industry.

For more information, please contact:

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WEARWELL
PREVENT. PERFORM. COMPETE.

WHS Plastics

WHS was established in 1933 and is IATF16949, ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO45001 and ISO50001 certified.

We are an engineering-based business with all capabilities in-house including design, prototyping, tool making, injection moulding, 3D printing, automation and distribution, assembly and painting. We are a full turn-key solution provider and this enables us to react quickly to market requirements and demands.

We can produce simple to complex, small to large, components with sophisticated geometries and using techniques such as twin-shot where we can realise complex products moulded with more than one polymer. Innovative techniques facilitate the manufacture of products with unique finishes if this is required.

Our flexible automated processes allow us to cost effectively produce quality components for highly technical sectors such as automotive or electronics. Assembly of components is a key competence allowing us to deliver highly complex systems to customers.

Having paint lines situated within our manufacturing facilities allows us to consistently produce components to match those that are finished in OEM manufacturing plants.

Services

Research & Development, Component design, 3-D printing, Prototyping, Tool making, Testing (raw material & product), Injection Moulding 20T to 2700T, Twin-shot moulding, Painting, Metal Pressings, Low-level to high-level assembly, Distribution globally.



What sets us apart?

- Largest UK independent company over seven sites.
- Number & range of machines.
- Design & project teams including programme management in-house.
- WHS is a turn-key solution provider.
- Flexibility to work with low or high volumes.
- Agility to respond quickly to our customers requirements.
- Dedicated areas within manufacturing to specific projects, security being of paramount importance.

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Energy Gain UK

Driving Sustainability Through Solar Innovation.

Energy Gain UK helps businesses cut carbon emissions and reduce costs through the design and delivery of large-scale solar energy systems. Based in Manchester, the company has supported more than 2,600 clients across the UK in sectors including automotive, manufacturing, construction, and healthcare, enabling them to make long-term, sustainable energy decisions.

Their services include rooftop and ground-mounted solar PV installations, solar carports, and consultancy supported by advanced modelling tools. By combining practical delivery with data-driven insight, Energy Gain ensures that sustainability is always balanced with profitability, providing organisations with a strong business case for investing in clean energy.

The company is proud to work with some of the UK's leading automotive manufacturers on their sustainability journeys. In 2023, Energy Gain UK delivered a 1.45 MWp solar installation for Kasai UK, part of the Nissan supply chain. The system now reduces the company's reliance on grid electricity by around 15% each year and cuts more than 240 tons of CO2 annually, delivering both environmental and financial benefits.

Most recently, Energy Gain UK delivered a solar installation for



BMW Williams at Trafford Park, helping the company advance its environmental goals as part of a broader ESG strategy. Through tailored renewable energy solutions, Energy Gain UK enables businesses to reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, and strengthen sustainability performance.

Get in touch:

Email: info@energygain.co.uk

Tel: +44 161 330 7739

www.energygain.co.uk



DoubleTree by Hilton

Welcome to the DoubleTree by Hilton Newcastle International Airport.

Conveniently located adjacent to Newcastle International Airport and boasting excellent transport links by road, rail, and air, the DoubleTree by Hilton is the perfect base for exploring Newcastle's vibrant city centre, nearby attractions, and the wider North East region. Whether you're visiting for business or leisure, this modern hotel offers a warm welcome and an ideal blend of comfort, style, and convenience.

This stylish, contemporary hotel features 193 well-appointed bedrooms, designed with comfort in mind. Each room includes free high-speed Wi-Fi, flat-screen TVs, en-suite bathrooms with luxury toiletries, and tea and coffee making facilities. Guests can also take advantage of the fully equipped fitness room to stay active during their stay.

Dining options include Fratello's, the hotel's on-site Italian restaurant, serving delicious seasonal dishes made from fresh, locally sourced ingredients. The Columbus Bar offers a relaxing setting for drinks, light bites, or afternoon tea, with a wide selection of beverages and a welcoming atmosphere.

The DoubleTree by Hilton is also a popular venue for meetings, conferences, private events, and weddings, offering 8 flexible function rooms that can accommodate up to 150 guests. With



dedicated event staff and tailored packages, the hotel is well-equipped to make every occasion a success.

For more information please contact:

Email: sarah.barber@doubletree-newcastle.co.uk

www.doubletree-newcastle.co.uk



3t Training Services

Driving safety and skills in the automotive sector

With over 35 years of experience, 3t Training Services is the UK's leading provider of high-impact safety-critical training.

Our world-class training is available via a range of delivery options. These include on-site training delivered on-demand anywhere in the world by our expert instructors or at one of our training centres located throughout the UK. In the Northeast of England, we operate two dedicated facilities in Newcastle and Middlesbrough, delivering a wide range of safety, technical, and skills-based courses tailored to the automotive sector.

For automotive professionals, we provide a comprehensive suite of compliance and safety training essential for operational excellence. The portfolio includes industry-recognised qualifications such as NEBOSH and IOSH Managing Safely and Working Safely, alongside practical, hands-on courses like IPAF, Forklift Operation, First Aid, Fire Warden, and Spill Kit Training.

To support safe lifting and equipment use, we also deliver LOLER and PUWER training, as well as Manual Handling, COSHH awareness, and Overhead Crane operation.

In response to the rapid growth of electric vehicles, we have launched cutting-edge High Voltage (HV), Low Voltage (LV), and EV Battery Safety Training. This training is vital for any organisation working with EVs, hybrids, or battery technologies. The programmes equip technicians, engineers, and first responders with the skills to



safely handle, diagnose, and maintain electrical systems.

Each course is designed to meet the demanding standards of automotive manufacturing and maintenance environments. Our training ensures that teams are not only safe and compliant, but also equipped with the confidence and capability to perform efficiently under pressure. At 3t Training Services, we're committed to keeping your workforce safe, skilled, and prepared for the future of automotive innovation.

To learn more or book training:

Tel: 0330 202 0569

Email: Pamela.McCormack@3tglobal.com

www.3tglobal.com



AJP Recruitment

AJP is a specialist Engineering recruitment company based in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne and serving the North East region.

We only recruit within the Engineering sector and have 12 years of experience working with Automotive clients in the UK and internationally.

We provide all levels of staffing from shopfloor and skilled trades through to senior, technical and managerial positions.

We also offer a number of additional services such as:

- RPO (Recruitment Process Outsourcing)
- Executive Search and retained
- HR Support
- International candidate acquisition
- Outplacement and redundancy support

We're proud to be members of the NEAA and look forward to meeting fellow members over the next year.



To speak to a member of our team please contact:

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University of Sunderland

The University of Sunderland is a life-changing, student-focused and professions-facing institution.

With around 28,800 learners across campuses in Sunderland, London and Hong Kong, and through global partners in 17 countries., we welcome individuals from all backgrounds and equip them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make a meaningful impact.

We play an active role in driving economic and social progress across the North East and beyond. Our research, innovation and knowledge exchange activities bring together interdisciplinary expertise to address regional, national and global challenges - ranging from advanced manufacturing and materials to digital transformation and health innovation.

Skills, Workforce Development and Industry Partnerships

We work closely with employers across engineering, manufacturing, digital, health, education, public services and the wider economy to support workforce development and address skills needs. Partnering with more than 150 employers, we currently support over 900 apprentices across 30+ apprenticeship pathways, all co-created with industry to address priority skills gaps, enhance professional capability and support meaningful career progression.

While our apprenticeship provision spans a broad range of sectors, some of the apprenticeships that support NEAA members include:

Digital & Technology – Digital Technology Solutions Professional and Data Science pathways, building capability in software engineering, data analytics, cybersecurity and digital transformation.

Engineering – Manufacturing, Electrical and Electronic Engineering apprenticeships aligned to regional industrial needs.



Leadership & Management – Developing resilient, forward-thinking leaders equipped to guide technical and interdisciplinary teams.

We also deliver programmes in Healthcare and Sciences, Social Work, and Education and Youth Work, supporting essential public and private sector skills pipelines.

Driving Innovation and Regional Prosperity

Through research, industry partnerships, and skills development, the University of Sunderland strengthens talent pipelines, upskills the workforce, and drives inclusive growth. From advanced engineering and digital innovation to applied research and training, we are committed to building a future-ready workforce and supporting long-term regional prosperity.

For more information please visit:

sunderland.ac.uk/apprenticeships



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