

THE HIGHER EDUCATION CENTRE
AT CITY COLLEGE NORWICH



Business leaders gathered for the launch of the Norfolk Skills and Careers Festival 2017 at St Andrews House in Norwich.

Picture: MARK NICHOLAS

Firms urged to back youth skills festival

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The 2017 edition of the Norfolk Skills and Careers Festival has been launched, with businesses urged to back the event and feed the future pipeline of the county's talent.

This year's event – the largest of its kind in the county – will see more than 3,000 young people aged 14 to 24, from around 55 schools and colleges, visit the Norfolk Showground for the two-day event.

Some 65 businesses have already signed up for the festival on March 8-9, but festival director Mark Nicholas said the event was just over halfway towards its funding target of £15,000, and needed further support from companies in the county.

"It's all about inspiring the next generation of Norfolk's workers and leaders," he added. "There's so much to aspire to if you look at what's happening in the county, especially long-term development, but none of that will happen unless we invest in

'PRIVILEGED POSITION TO HELP'

Hoseasons managing director Simon Altham urged businesses to seize the opportunity to invest in their future.

Speaking at the launch, he said taking part made business sense – whether from a commercial or altruistic point of view.

"As business leaders we are in a privileged position to give young people a opportunities

and a solid start to their adult working lives," he said. That was reflected in the average age of Hoseasons' 283-strong workforce being 29, he added.

The company has also focused on apprenticeships to develop its own talent. "The ultimate proof of this success is that so many have gone to full-time employment in our business."

young people, and that starts now."

The launch, held at City College Norwich's St Andrews House, saw business leaders from across the county gather to hear about the developments for 2017.

This year's event – just the second time the event has been held in its new format – will include an "advice lounge" where young people can get careers advice, and there will be a greater emphasis on developing life skills

and leadership opportunities.

Organising partners include Norfolk County Council, Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association, Archant, City College Norwich, Easton and Otley College, Edge Careers, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and Norwich School.

For more on taking part, see www.norfolkskills.co.uk



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