

# TESS Group shortlisted for two British Training Awards 2026 as AI apprenticeship demand surges

Sunday 7 June, 2026

National apprenticeship and training provider [TESS Group](#) has been named a finalist in two categories at the **British Training Awards 2026**, one of the UK's most competitive celebrations of workplace learning and development.

The Ofsted 'Good'-rated provider has been shortlisted for **Retraining/Upskilling Initiative of the Year** and **AI in Learning Initiative of the Year**, the latter sponsored by Multiverse. Both nominations recognise the company's flagship [AI and Automation Level 4 Apprenticeship](#), a fully levy-funded programme designed to turn working professionals into confident, productive users of artificial intelligence and automation.

The double shortlisting comes in a record-breaking year for the awards, which received **423 entries** from organisations across the UK — the highest in the programme's history. Winners will be announced on **Wednesday 15 July 2026** at the Grand Hall of the Grand Connaught Rooms in Covent Garden, London.

## Recognition for a standout AI apprenticeship

TESS Group's place on the **AI in Learning Initiative of the Year** shortlist puts the independent training provider alongside finalists including Samsung Electronics UK, HSBC and the Government Communication Service; a measure of how quickly its AI and Automation Level 4 Apprenticeship has established itself since launch. TESS are also one of the first to deliver AI Units in [AI Strategy](#), [AI Adoption](#) and [AI Transformation](#).

The programme sits at the centre of TESS Group's response to one of the defining workforce challenges of 2026: helping employers retrain and upskill existing staff for an economy being reshaped by AI. Delivered UK-wide through live online sessions, it requires no coding background and is fully funded through the Apprenticeship Levy, making it accessible to levy-paying employers at no additional training cost.

That same retraining mission underpins the company's second nomination. In the **Retraining/Upskilling Initiative of the Year** category, TESS Group appears alongside organisations including Nationwide Building Society, Kier Construction and DS Smith — finalists recognised for equipping existing employees with the skills their organisations will need next.

## Results that outpace the national average

TESS Group specialises in AI, automation, digital skills and [AI leadership apprenticeships](#) from Level 3 to Level 6, delivering nationally to employers ranging from SMEs to FTSE-listed companies, Premier League clubs and the NHS.

The provider's results help explain the judges' interest. Learners on TESS Group programmes achieve **distinction rates of 72%**, against a UK average of around 33% — evidence, the company says, that its model of practical, workplace-applied learning delivers measurable business impact rather than certificates alone.

Rated 'Good' by Ofsted following its June 2025 inspection, TESS Group was also among the first approved providers for the new wave of [AI apprenticeships](#) and [AI Leadership units](#) introduced by the Department for Education.

## “Investment in learning and development is non-negotiable”

**Nate Harwood, Founder of New Possible and the British Training Awards**, said: “Investment in learning and development is non-negotiable for organisations to succeed in 2026. As we navigate a profound industrial shift, those equipping their people with new skills are actively building tomorrow's economy. The British Training Awards celebrate the visionary teams and individuals driving this transformation. Congratulations to all our Finalists.”

**Rod Doyle, Director and Co-owner of TESS Group**, said: “Being shortlisted in two categories, and for

### Media:



### Related Sectors:

Business & Finance :: Education & Human Resources ::

### Related Keywords:

TESS Group :: British Training Awards 2026 :: AI Apprenticeships :: AI And Automation Level 4 Apprenticeship :: AI In Learning Initiative :: AI Leadership Units ::

### Scan Me:



AI in Learning in particular, is a proud moment for our whole team. Employers tell us the same thing every week: they know AI matters, but they need a practical route to build real capability & AI adoption in the people they already have. The AI and Automation Level 4 Apprenticeship was built to answer exactly that, and this recognition belongs to every learner and employer who has trusted us with it."

**Lisa O'Reilly, Director and Co-owner of TESS Group**, added: "What makes this special is that the results are real, learners applying AI to live business problems from week one, and employers seeing productivity gains they can measure. We are finding AI Literacy is increasing in the businesses we work with and learners are genuinely finding a return on investment within 1 to 2 months of being on the programme. This is something we are so proud of! To be named a finalist alongside some of the biggest names in British business shows what a specialist, ambitious AI learning provider can achieve."

## Looking ahead to 15 July

The British Training Awards, powered by employee insight platform New Possible, celebrate the teams and individuals using learning and development to build thriving workforces from start-ups to global enterprises.

For TESS Group, the double nomination caps a year of rapid growth in AI apprenticeship enrolments, as employers across the UK move to deploy levy funds ahead of tighter spending deadlines introduced in April 2026.

The winners will be revealed at the celebration event on 15 July 2026 at the Grand Connaught Rooms, London. Whatever the result on the night, TESS Group says its mission remains unchanged: helping UK employers turn their teams into confident, productive AI users and proving that world-class retraining and upskilling doesn't have to come at the cost of quality.

*Employers interested in the AI and Automation Level 4 Apprenticeship can find programme details and start dates at [tessgroup.co.uk](https://tessgroup.co.uk). The full British Training Awards 2026 finalist list is available at [newpossible.io](https://newpossible.io).*

## Company Contact:

—

### TESS Group

T. 01604 210 500

E. [rod.doyle@thetessgroup.com](mailto:rod.doyle@thetessgroup.com)

W. <https://www.thetessgroup.com>

## Additional Contact(s):

General enquiries: [info@thetessgroup.com](mailto:info@thetessgroup.com) | Tel: 01604 210 500

[View Online](#)

## Additional Assets:

**Newsroom:** Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:

<https://www.tess-group.pressat.co.uk>