

APPRENTICE NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025

Welcome to our monthly newsletter for apprentices
and apprentice line managers.

Spring Forward into April

Welcome to the April edition of our apprentice newsletter! The clocks have now sprung forward, giving us longer daylight hours – a brilliant time to reflect, re-energise and move forward with fresh purpose.

Whether you're approaching the End-Point Assessment or just settling into a new project phase, now's the moment to build good habits, break your work into manageable steps, and feel the momentum. This month, we're shining a light on wellbeing, celebrating learner stories, and launching a new Spring Clean Challenge – read on.



Learner Achievements - March 2025

Improvement Practitioner Level 4

Alvaro Gracia - David Hill - Distinction - Arla
Steven Woodcock - David Hill - Distinction - Arla
Graeme Bowling - Wyn Griffiths - Distinction - Johnson Matthey
Callum Campbell - Wyn Griffiths - Distinction - Johnson Matthey
Philip Marr - Richard Edwards - Distinction - GXO
Damian Drumm - Alan Clark - Distinction - Oxfordshire County Council

Lean Management Operative Level 2

Christopher Nairne - Ian Hayhurst - Distinction - Tate & Lyle
Nathan Dalley - Ian Hayhurst - Distinction - Tate & Lyle
Paulina Staskowski - Ian Hayhurst - Distinction - Tate & Lyle
Sean Mooney - Ian Hayhurst - Distinction - Tate & Lyle

Team Leader Level 3

Hubert Sliwinska - Debby Mack - Pass - PDM
Ivo Alves - Debby Mack - Distinction - Pladis

Well done to all achievers in March, up from February, with a number of EPA's and with Learners awaiting results - to be published next month, so check back then!

Did you know that there are support measures in place for various circumstances, some of the allowances are significant and if you feel you may be entitled to additional time in the exams for example then there will be a new assessment in Aptem soon to support identification of these needs and allow support measures such as extra time in the EPA. This may be especially relevant for those that do not recognise a need for support currently or be shy of raising awareness of this.

We also encourage you to complete our [Exit Feedback Form](#) to share your journey with us, including any promotions or new opportunities that have come your way as a result of your work. This feedback helps us understand your success and continually improve our programmes.

Thank you to everyone for your dedication, and congratulations on your incredible achievements!



Stress Awareness Month: Finding Your Flow and Fighting the Fog

April is Stress Awareness Month, a chance to reflect on how stress affects our minds, our bodies, and our ability to learn and grow. We all experience pressure – from deadlines, new tasks, assessments, or even just trying to balance work and life. But how we respond to that pressure makes all the difference.

One of the most powerful ways to manage stress is by learning to work in flow – that focused state where time flies and you're absorbed in what you're doing. To get there, try:

- * Chunking tasks into smaller parts
- * Taking short breaks after focused sessions
- * Reducing distractions – even 20 minutes of pure focus can have huge benefits

Struggling to concentrate? Start with the first two minutes. Often, the hardest part is beginning – once you do, momentum builds. And don't forget your environment – a tidy space often helps create a tidy mind (see our Spring Clean Challenge!).

If you're up for a game-changing study method, check out Marty Lobdell's YouTube talk "Study Less, Study Smart". It's an hour that might transform how you approach learning: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIU-zDU6aQ0>

And most importantly – don't underestimate sleep. Lack of sleep can lead to memory fog, poor decision-making, and higher stress levels. Sleep is the ultimate reset button.

Feeling overwhelmed is natural. It doesn't mean you're failing – it means you're human. Talk to someone, take a walk, or simply breathe. You're not alone.

Health and Wellbeing: Small Changes, Big Gains

This month, we've focused a lot on stress awareness – but let's also highlight practical ways to support your body and mind day-to-day.

Top tip: don't underestimate the power of good sleep. Try to aim for 7–8 hours per night, with a regular bedtime. A healthy wind-down routine – like no screens 30 minutes before bed – can make a big difference. Eating well matters too, especially during busy learning periods. Balance is key – think whole grains, proteins, and hydration. If you're curious about what's in your food, try the Yuka app to scan labels and make informed choices. It's a real eye-opener! Remember, even small changes – like going for a short walk or drinking more water – can improve energy and focus. Self-care isn't selfish; it's essential for learning and growing.

Learner Spotlight: Darren McMullen and the OAL Awards

We're delighted to shine this month's spotlight on Darren McMullen, one of our outstanding apprentices, who recently represented CQM and his employer at the Arla Apprentice Graduation Celebration and Awards hosted at Arla Foods in Aylesbury on 5th March.

Darren, completed his Improvement Practitioner Level 4 qualification, achieving distinction in all three areas. Darren was nominated in recognition of his commitment to continuous improvement.

The event was a fantastic opportunity to showcase real learner journeys and celebrate the impact apprentices are making across the Arla site and including several training providers and apprenticeships.

The visit to Arla's flagship site was an inspiring experience, not just for Darren but for all in attendance.

Darren received 'Apprentice of the Year' for Arla, green belt completions which numbers over fifty apprentices.

We're proud to have Darren in the CQM learning community as he is now enrolled and commenced the open commercial black belt course.



View the full LinkedIn Post [here](#).

CQM Coaches Hit the Heights in Matlock Bath

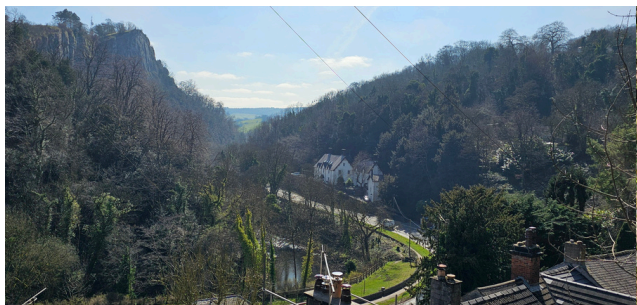
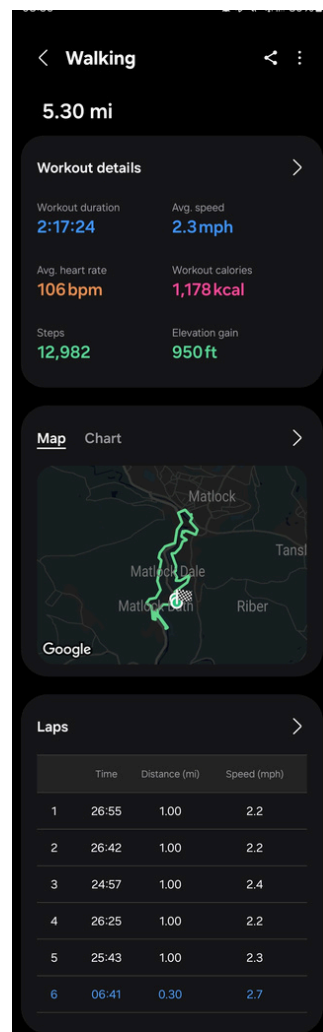
On the 26th March, a group of CQM coaches swapped laptops for walking boots and headed to the Peaks above Matlock Bath for a social hike and catch-up.

The route took them through some stunning scenery, with views across limestone cliffs, winding trails and the dramatic valleys of Derbyshire. It wasn't just about steps and stats – although 12,982 steps, 950ft elevation gain and over 1,100 kcal burned is pretty impressive – it was also a chance to reconnect, reflect, and enjoy time together away from the screen.

Whether talking projects, sharing coaching tips, or just soaking up the early spring sunshine, the walk was a perfect reminder that wellbeing, connection and fresh air are just as important as process maps and metrics.

Thanks to everyone who joined – here's to more miles, memories and meaningful conversations.

Can you see Alan Clark being the resident Chris Packham talking to a Robin, if you can see it? Or is he just a lamp post lover? Hmm...



Message from Alan Clark – Development Coach at CQM Training & Consultancy

On 5th October this year, I will be running the Cardiff Half Marathon alongside my sons Aaron and Lewis, and my daughters-in-law Rachel and Kathryn. We will be running in support Sarcoidosis UK, and to raise awareness and support for my wife Jayne and her five-year battle against Neurosarcoidosis. An exceedingly rare form of Sarcoidosis which effects only 5% of the population.



This life-changing condition has caused irreversible damage to Jayne's central nervous system, including an inoperable lesion in her brain stem. The damage caused has severely affected her balance, mobility, vision, breathing, and overall independence. She requires daily medication and ongoing hospital treatments to suppress the lesion and manage its effects. It has also meant facing the immense challenge of learning to speak again. Despite these hardships, Jayne continues to persevere with extraordinary strength and grace, showing a resilience that leaves me and our family in awe every single day.

Jayne is truly an exceptional woman, a devoted wife, a loving mother, a doting grandma, and the heart of our family. Her courage in the face of adversity inspires everyone around her and reminds us of about the true meaning of strength. Even on days when she cannot walk or enjoy the things she once did, Jayne never ceases to try to live life to the fullest. Her determination and spirit light up the lives of those who love her, and her example has been the driving motivation that pushed us to undertake this run as a way of giving back.

As a family, we are running for Jayne, not only to raise awareness and funds for Neurosarcoidosis, but also to remind her that she is never alone in this fight. This half marathon is our way of standing united for Jayne, of giving back for all the love and strength she has shared with us over the years, and of supporting others who are battling this challenging condition.

Any support you can provide in the form of donations would mean the world to us. If you would like to donate, then you can do so via the JustGiving link [here](#). Every contribution no matter how big or small will make a difference, not only for Jayne but for the wider community of people affected by Sarcoidosis.

Thank you for helping us celebrate Jayne's bravery and for standing by our family in this journey.

Join the Apprentice Community – First Friday of the Month

Our next Apprentice Community session will be held on Friday 5th April at 09:00 – and no, it's not an April Fool!

This monthly session is a space to share wins, swap ideas, and support each other. It's a great way to stay connected and pick up new insights. If you'd like a calendar invite, just email David Hill (david.hill@cqmltd.co.uk) and we'll make sure you're on the list.

Need a calendar invite? Email David Hill and we'll get you on the list, we will be looking into Ikigai as part of the catch up, a big thank you to Debby Mack for this idea!

This takes place on the first Friday of the month, Friday 4th April, 9:00, Friday 2nd May, you get the idea. Join our next session on Friday 4th [here](#).



As a tempter, Ikigai isn't a destination – it's a path. And perhaps this April, that path can lead to less stress and more clarity.

Finding Calm Through
Purpose: Discovering Your
Ikigai

Religious Event of the Month: Eid Mubarak

As the holy month of Ramadan comes to an end, we would like to wish all our apprentices, colleagues, and their families Eid Mubarak! Eid al-Fitr will be celebrated on Thursday, 10th April 2025, marking a time of joy, community, and reflection. It's a wonderful opportunity to come together in celebration and recognise the rich cultural diversity within our apprenticeship programmes and workplaces.

Whether you're observing Eid or supporting colleagues who are, it's a chance to embrace understanding and inclusivity. In this edition, we celebrate the spirit of Eid and share useful tips for building a more culturally inclusive workplace:

- Be curious and respectful – Take time to learn about different cultural celebrations and practices.
- Acknowledge and celebrate – A simple "Eid Mubarak" greeting or recognising religious holidays in the workplace goes a long way.
- Offer flexibility – Where possible, allow colleagues time off or flexible working during religious holidays.
- Create space for conversation – Encourage open dialogue where everyone feels comfortable sharing their traditions and beliefs.
- Be mindful of food and drink – Especially during Ramadan, consider alternatives in meetings and social gatherings.

Let's continue to support one another, learn from each other, and celebrate what makes our community so vibrant and unique.



Diversity and Inclusion: Spotlight on Vaisakhi – A Festival of Faith, Community and Courage

While Easter takes the spotlight for many in April, it's also the time of Vaisakhi – a hugely important celebration in Sikh and Punjabi communities around the world.

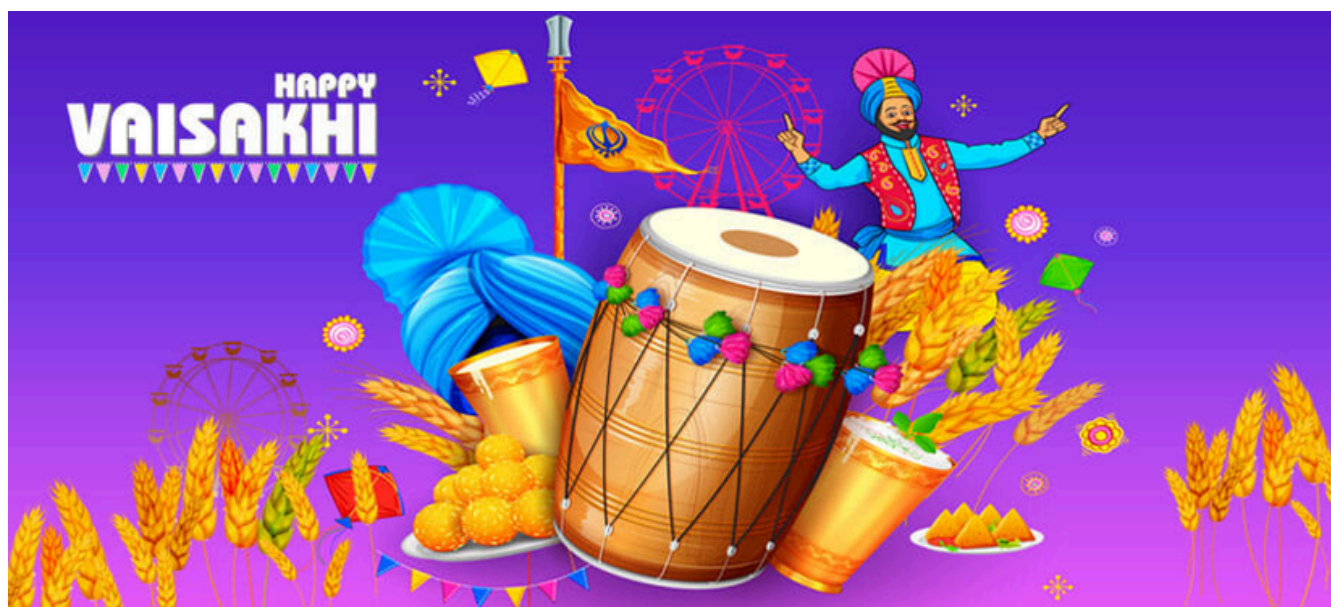
Vaisakhi (also spelt Baisakhi) is celebrated on or around 13th April each year and marks the birth of the Khalsa in 1699 – a community of committed Sikhs founded by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. It is also linked to the harvest season, especially in Punjab, making it a time of both spiritual reflection and joyful celebration.

It's a festival rich in colour, energy and meaning – often marked with:

- * Community prayers and processions (called Nagar Kirtans)
- * Acts of seva (selfless service), such as giving free food (langar)
- * Music, dancing and sharing stories of faith and bravery

Vaisakhi is also a time to reflect on equality, justice, and identity – core values that resonate beyond religion. For apprentices, it's a great reminder of the power of standing by your principles, lifting others up, and finding strength in shared values.

If you're curious, why not look up a Vaisakhi event near you, or ask a colleague about how they celebrate? Learning about different festivals helps create a workplace where everyone feels seen and valued – and that's something we all benefit from.



Religious Event of the Month: Easter

Easter is one of the most widely celebrated holidays in the UK, observed by many Christians as the time to remember the resurrection of Jesus. But even beyond its religious roots, Easter has become a season of reflection, fresh starts and – yes – chocolate eggs!

The symbols we often associate with Easter, like eggs and bunnies, have origins in older traditions that celebrate new life and springtime renewal. Eggs represent rebirth, while rabbits – known for their prolific nature – symbolise new beginnings. Over time, these symbols merged with Easter celebrations, bringing us the much-loved Easter Egg Hunt.

Why not set up a small treasure hunt at home or work? You could hide positive quotes, mini goals, or small treats to spark a little joy – it's a light-hearted way to recognise progress and surprise others with kindness.

And let's not forget the bank holidays – in the UK, we usually get Good Friday and Easter Monday off. These days were historically set aside for religious observance and have continued as public holidays, giving many a well-deserved long weekend. Whether you spend it resting, exploring, or catching up with loved ones, it's a moment to pause, reset and maybe enjoy an extra hot cross bun.

However you mark the season, Easter is a perfect time to reflect on where you are, where you're heading, and what 'renewal' might look like for you – whether it's in learning, life or even just clearing out the to-do list.



Diversity and Inclusion: Easter – New Beginnings and a Deeper Meaning

Easter is often seen as a time for chocolate eggs, bunnies and springtime fun – but at its heart, it holds deep significance for many people. In Christian tradition, Easter Sunday marks the resurrection of Jesus Christ, three days after his crucifixion on Good Friday. It is a symbol of hope, renewal, and new life, which is why we often talk about fresh starts at this time of year.

The Easter story is about overcoming hardship, emerging stronger, and the promise of better days ahead – themes that resonate with all of us, regardless of faith. For learners facing challenges or working toward big goals, it's a reminder that growth often comes after difficulty, and every step forward counts.

The more playful symbols – like eggs and bunnies – are rooted in ancient traditions that celebrate fertility and the arrival of spring. These were later blended with Christian Easter customs, giving us the mix of reflection and celebration we know today. Whether you enjoy an Easter egg hunt, spend time with family, or take a moment to pause and reflect, it's a season that encourages kindness, gratitude, and a fresh perspective.

We also enjoy bank holidays on Good Friday and Easter Monday in the UK. Originally for religious observance, they now offer a chance to rest, reset, and recharge – something we all need now and then.



Just for Fun: Puzzles

Word Ladder

Make your way from FIRE to HEAT by changing one letter on each step to make a new word!



Word Wheel

The goal of a word wheel puzzle is to create as many words possible with the letters in the word wheel. You can only use each letter once and every word must have the letter in the center of the wheel.

Can you find the 7 letter word?



EASTER See it, SAY IT!

1

Mon	Dislike
Tues	Dislike
Weds	Dislike
Thurs	Dislike
Fri	Like
Sat	Dislike
Sun	Dislike

2



3

EGHUNTGS

4

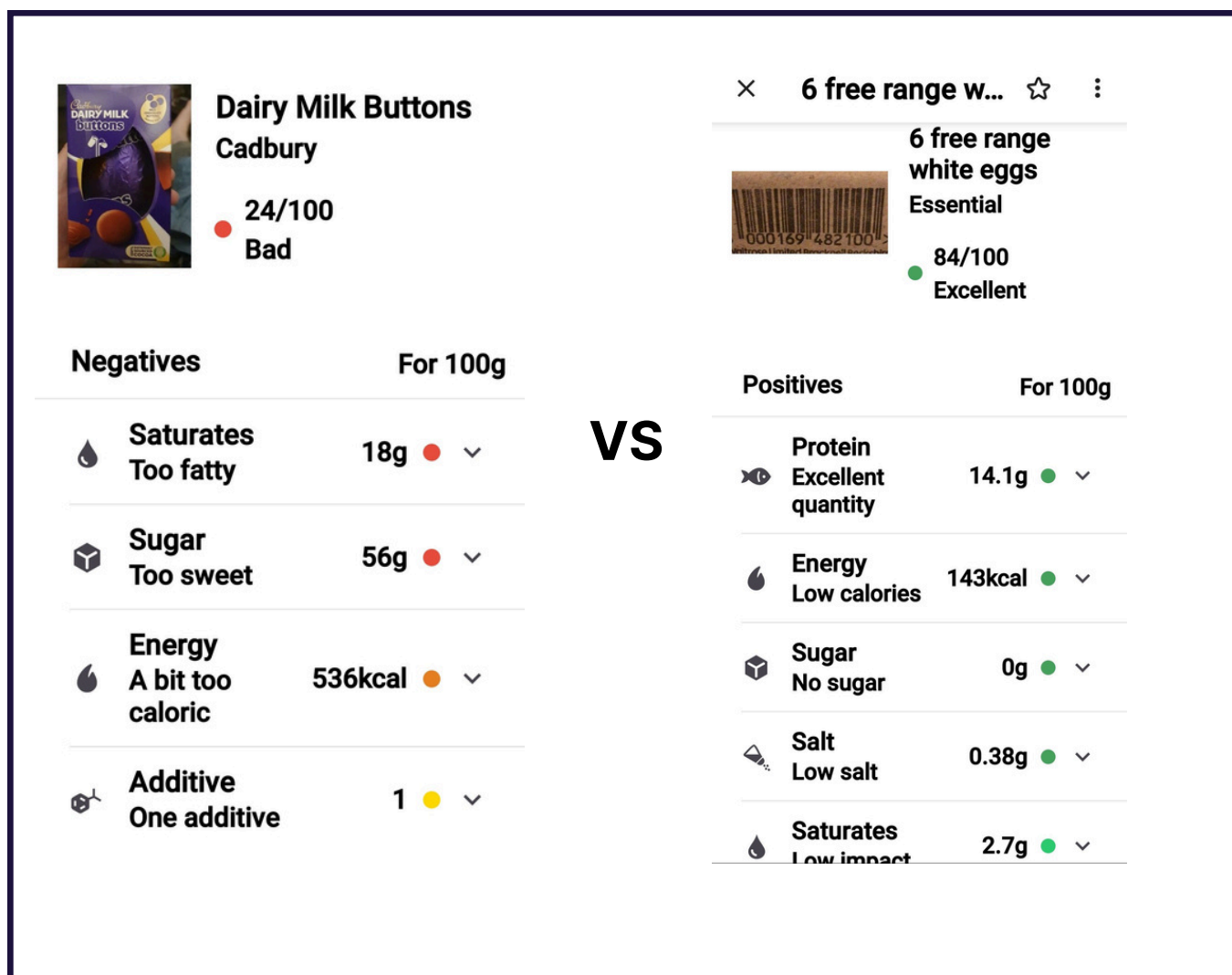


Just for Fun: Spring Clean Your Space and Snack Smarter!

Let's have a little fun this month! We're launching two mini challenges – and we'd love to hear from you:

- 1. Spring Clean Your Desk** – Tidy workspace, tidy mind. Share a before-and-after photo or top tip for keeping your workspace fresh and focused.
- 2. Easter Egg Showdown** – Hen's Egg vs Chocolate Egg! Use the [Yuka app](#) to scan and compare your treats. Which wins for nutrition? Which one's worth the indulgence?

Email david.hill@cqmmtd.co.uk with your entries – we'll feature our favourites in the May edition (and maybe send out a cheeky prize).





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