



*Making the Difference*

**AWARDS**



2023

#VertasGroupAwards23

## *Running Order*

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**6:30pm**

Arrival, welcome drinks and canapés

Music from Scintillo Quartet

**7:00pm**

Guests seated

**7:30pm**

Dinner served

**8:45pm**

Welcome from our host Stephen Foster, experienced broadcaster invites...  
Ian Surtees, Vertas Group Chief Executive Officer and Duncan Johnson, Vertas Group Non-Executive Director,  
to open the awards

**9:00pm**

Commencement of awards ceremony

**A thank you from Suffolk County Council**

Louise Aynsley, Chief Finance Officer Suffolk County Council

**Cheque presentation to Charity of the Year - Cancer Research UK**

By Karen Burrowes, Vertas Operations Director and  
Selena Ayling Opus People Solutions, Associate Director, Managed Services

**Awards continue**

**9:55pm**

Mat Self, Concertus Managing Director and Brad Sinclair, Opus People Solutions Managing Director to close the Awards

**10:00pm**

Auction and Raffle hosted by Karen Burrowes, Vertas Operations Director and  
Susan Mahoney, Vertas Catering Customer & Quality Manager

**10:20pm**

Disco - DJ LeeJ

**12:00am**

Carriages!

# Welcome from Ian Surtees

*Welcome to the Vertas Group  
Making the Difference Awards*

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**It is my utmost pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all of you at our annual 'Making the Difference Awards'. Tonight is dedicated to honouring and celebrating the hard work and dedication of our esteemed colleagues.**

This event is a testament to our unwavering commitment to recognising the valuable contributions of our colleagues.

Every year, the Vertas Directors and I are proud of the remarkable quantity and quality of nominations we receive from every corner of our organisation. Thank you to everyone who took the time to submit a nomination. To those who were nominated but didn't quite make the shortlist, your efforts are truly appreciated, and we hope the commendations from your peers have served as inspiration.

A resounding congratulations to all the finalists present here tonight. Making it to this stage is an outstanding accomplishment in itself. I also want to express my gratitude to our generous sponsors and supply chain partners, particularly our headline supporters, McCain Foodservice Solutions. Their unwavering support has made this awards event possible.

This year has been filled with remarkable achievements, including our recent recognition for 'Best Customer-Centric Culture – B2B' at the Customer Experience Awards 2023, as well as being selected as a finalist in two other categories. Additionally, our dedication to excellence has been acknowledged by RoSPA, where we were proudly awarded the RoSPA Gold Medal Award, for receiving five consecutive Gold Awards. Across the Concertus and Opus businesses, we have been honoured with various awards and commendations, a testament to the collective effort of our exceptional teams.

Lastly, I would like to extend a special note of gratitude to Paul Milsom and his team for providing this stunning venue once again. I hope you all have a fantastic evening, and my best wishes to all our deserving finalists.



*Ian Surtees MBA FloD*

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**Group Chief Executive Officer, Vertas Group**

*A message from Cancer Research UK*

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# Charity of the Year 2022/23

*Cancer Research UK is incredibly grateful for Vertas Group's continued support and partnership with us, and we cannot thank the team enough for their loyalty and amazing work.*

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As of September 2023, Vertas Group has raised an amazing £65,743 for Cancer Research UK to date.

The Covid pandemic and the current cost of living crisis has dramatically affected our ability to fund research. As such, the support that we have received from the Vertas Group has never been more needed or valued.

We have loved the creativity involved in this year's fundraising, including a dog walking month in August, a golf day and two second-hand days in September, a bake sale in October and the highly regarded Making the Difference Awards now in November.

Although Vertas Group have put the "fun" in fundraising, there are grave reasons as to why their support is so vital for us – to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer.

**Every two minutes, someone in the UK is diagnosed with cancer, and 1 in 2 of us will get cancer in our lifetime.**

In East Anglia, we are currently making breakthroughs in the early detection of cancer through Cambridge's Early Detection Programme.

Co-led by Professor Rebecca Fitzgerald and Dr Sarah Bohndiek, the programme supports research teams working on a diverse set of challenges. These range from understanding the origins of cancer, to developing



**CANCER  
RESEARCH  
UK**

inexpensive and non-invasive tools to help doctors identify the early signs of the disease.

The programme's research focuses on oesophageal, prostate and blood cancers, which claim the lives of thousands of people each year in the UK. Meanwhile, the programme's social science researchers are exploring the broader psychological, legal and economic implications of early detection strategies on individuals and on society.

Thank you once again to Vertas Group! Together we are beating cancer.

**Scan the barcode with your phone camera to make a donation to Vertas Group's Cancer Research UK giving page.**



 [www.cruk.org.uk](http://www.cruk.org.uk)

 [@CR\\_UK](https://twitter.com/CR_UK)

## Raffle/Auction

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*This year's Making the Difference Awards will feature an auction, a fun and exciting way to support Vertas Group's charity of the year, Cancer Research UK, whilst also giving you the chance to walk away with a great prize.*

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### Raffle

- LED 4K Ultra HD Smart TV - **Vertas**
- Pressure Washer - **Candor**
- Salthouse Voucher £80 Dinner for Two - **Salthouse**
- Skip Hire - **Sackers**
- £100 One4all Voucher - **Bidfood**
- iPad - **Geen Pea**
- Kitchen Aid - **Alliance**
- 2 Tickets for Go-Ape Treetop Challenge - **Go-Ape**
- £100 John Lewis Vouchers - **Barnes Construction**
- Samsung A8 Tablet 10.5 64gb - **360 Comms**
- Samsung A33 Phone 128gb - **360 Comms**
- £200 Love2Shop Voucher - **BritVic**
- £30 Amazon Voucher - **Quorn**
- Winter Coat - **Peter Drew Workwear**
- Hotel Chocolat Chocolates - **Fuelogic**
- £50 Love2Shop Voucher - **Commercial**
- Family Size AirFryer - **RK Styles**
- Hotel Chocolat Velvetiser & 2 x Podcups - **Vertas**
- £50 One4all Voucher
- £50 One4all Voucher

### Auction

- Brighton signed football shirt - **Barclays**
- Two tickets to the Newcastle vs Bournemouth game - 17th February 3pm - **Sage**
- One night stay at Milsoms, dinner, bed, breakfast @ Milsoms Kesgrave Hall, Milsoms Dedham or The Pier - **Milsoms**
- Mamma Mia! theatre tickets and three course meal with wine at Brasserie Blanc for two - **HFP Foods**

*Thank you...*

*...to all the businesses  
who have donated  
raffle/auction prizes.*

Categories

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*Inspiring  
Leader*

GOING THE  
EXTRA MILE

SUSTAINABILITY  
AND  
INNOVATION



Customer  
1st

Client  
RECOGNITION

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

☆☆☆  
Specialist  
of the Year

COLLEAGUES  
CHAMPION

TEAM  
of the Year

COLLEAGUE  
of the year

*Nominees*

*The finalists for the*

*Making the Difference*

**AWARDS**

2023 are...

## Inspiring Leader Award

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Sponsored by



**Ceetech are a mechanical, electrical and maintenance services company operating across East Anglia, the Home Counties and Greater London area.**

Our many years in the industry allows us to deliver unsurpassed levels of workmanship and our expertise enables us to achieve the best possible outcomes in our client projects.



We have established ourselves as one of the leading building services contractors and our complete service includes the integration of not just mechanical and electrical installations, but those that make use of renewable energy sources. Focusing on major developments and Corporate Social Responsibility projects, our team possesses decades of combined experience.

 [www.ceetech.co.uk](http://www.ceetech.co.uk)

 01473 830095



*This award recognises our Inspiring Leaders who develop and motivate their teams to deliver service excellence, in their chosen speciality.*

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*Dan Lewis*

**ATG National Account Manager, Vertas**

Dan demonstrates several key qualities of an inspirational leader. His team consistently receives praise for their excellent work, reflecting their commitment to delivering high-quality service. Dan ensures his team is recognised for their efforts, highlighting their achievements and fostering a motivational work environment. His team consistently achieves excellent results, evidenced by the high scores in joint cleaning audits and meeting KPIs set by Vertas. Dan's ability to lead and maintain a positive focus, despite the challenges, highlights his resilience. Dan's leadership style embodies the qualities of an inspirational leader who delivers exceptional service, motivates his team, and builds strong customer relationships.

“ Dan's approach to leadership serves as an example for others in the industry. ”

*Julia Dolan,*

Head of Client Relationships Vertas



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*Jo Spencer*

**Head of Schools' Choice**

Jo demonstrates excellent leadership and a strong commitment to colleagues across all teams. She works tirelessly to ensure the success of the business whilst supporting her colleagues. Her passion, drive, and enthusiasm to look to the future and build the business is evident to all. Jo's most recent success has been negotiating a large contract where we will be participating in a new partnership programme, opening up opportunities across the service. Leading by example, Jo empowers the teams to be bold when thinking of the future, and with sustainability a key feature for Vertas, she is always looking for ways we can make positive changes to our service delivery.

“ Not only a great line manager, Jo is a fantastic mentor, challenging us all to step out of our comfort zone to develop ourselves and our service areas. ”

*Julie Dorling,*

Core Finance Team Manager,  
Schools' Choice



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*Ruksana Begum*

**Operations Manager,  
Opus People Solutions**

Ruksana embodies the Vertas family values, delivering excellence, achieving ambition, and supporting her team. Her work is underpinned by compassion and effective leadership, and she is highly professional but never forgets the importance of fun. Her commitment to going above and beyond is what makes the difference. An example of Ruksana's hard work is leading the project for the Greater Southeast Net Zero Hub, the high-level service would not be possible without her. Ruksana actively supports colleagues to achieve their potential and is dedicated to making the lives of her team easier.

“ Her attention to detail and focus on efficiency combined with a sense of ownership create the consummate professional. ”

*Charlotte Meara,*

Recruitment Consultant,  
Opus People Solutions

## Going the Extra Mile Award

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Sponsored by



**Founded in 1980, DCS commenced its journey as a provider of Disposables and Catering Supplies, guided by a commitment to delivering excellence in both products and services.**

Presenting a diverse array of catering and hygiene solutions, we have earned the trust of leading enterprises throughout the United Kingdom. Our dedication lies in furnishing innovative and environmentally-conscious options, striving to empower every institution we collaborate with to not only enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness but also prioritise sustainability.

 [www.dcs.supplies](http://www.dcs.supplies)

 01245 320 839

 @DCSLtdCo



As the UK's most rapidly advancing independent supplier of non-food consumables, we maintain an active presence within the communities we serve. Our ethos revolves around perpetual learning and growth, driven by the belief that tomorrow can indeed be better than today, particularly in terms of sustainable practices and environmental responsibility.

*This award recognises an individual or team who has gone above and beyond in the course of their work to provide service excellence or support to colleagues.*

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*Alex Bersey*

**Site Supervisor, Vertas**

Alex is nominated for the Going the Extra Mile award. He set himself out to learn the sites and the workings of Kingsmoor Academy. Alex is always solution-focused and nothing is too much trouble. He is not only loved by all the staff and pupils but adored by parents too. Recently, Alex took time on his day off to attend a summer fayre, offering assistance to the Parent Teacher Association and joining in.

**“ If Alex cannot fix it he will find a solution to get the problem sorted – he is a truly valued team member. ”**

*Natasha Winter,*

Client at ATT



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*Charlotte Baldwin*

**Trainee Development Manager, Concertus**

Charlotte is nominated for her commitment to going above and beyond during her time in the Development team. When looking at additional hours worked across the year, she is in the top 20 per cent of Concertus employees. Stepping in to support the Central Bedfordshire Council Framework Management demonstrates Charlotte's willingness to learn and flexible attitude. Subsequently, she progressed to lead the pipeline management process and report within the Framework meetings. As a junior team member, her ability to lead discussions with a large group of experienced construction professionals is impressive.

**“ Charlotte is consistently seeking feedback on performance and looking for ways to improve to better support her team evidencing her incredible work ethic. ”**

*Natalie Finnigan,*

Associate Director, Cost Consultancy, Concertus



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*Scott Gair*

**Regional Cleaning Manager, Vertas Derbyshire**

Scott hit the ground running when appointed as Area Cleaning Manager, immersing himself into the role and demonstrating his commitment. He was soon promoted and it became clear one of Scott's strengths was his willingness to support colleagues. Scott believes that nothing is ever too much trouble and is always available for his team. Scott strives to improve our service delivery and build positive relationships across his work, as reflected in client feedback. Recently, Scott has been overseeing a much larger work area due to a vacancy. By taking on this challenge he has demonstrated his dedication to the success of Vertas.

**“ Scott has a positive outlook and is always willing to assist. ”**

*Jean Thompson,*

Cleaning Lead Operations Manager, Vertas Derbyshire

## *Sustainability and Innovation Award*

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Sponsored by

**SYMETRI**  
ADDNODE GROUP

**Symetri creates and provides technology solutions and services for design, engineering, construction and manufacturing businesses.**

We empower people to work smarter for a better future by ensuring they have access to the expertise and technology they need to improve their performance and sustainability. We build long-term relationships with our customers and save their business resources by making technology easier to implement and use.

Our services include the provision of software, consulting, training and support, and we offer a comprehensive range of IT and document management solutions.

 [www.symetri.co.uk](http://www.symetri.co.uk)

 0345 370 1444

 @SymetriUK



*This award highlights a colleague or team who exceptionally demonstrate two of our company values, sustainability and innovation.*

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*Ebony Lynton*

**Systems and HR Transactions Manager, Schools' Choice**

Ebony continues to be the heart of Schools' Choice. Ebony's analytical skillset allows her to review a current process or relationship, identify the challenges, and create resolutions. Her ability to collaborate with key stakeholders creates an effective method of working. Ebony has been the project manager, coacher, and trainer for many systems including, 365 Dynamics and iTrent. She also provides training to equip the team with the tools to support customers directly. Ebony develops meaningful relationships, ensuring customers have a smooth experience, and provides high support to manage these relationships.

“ **Ebony works collaboratively with each department, providing confidence to the customers that expectations will be met.** ”

*Charlotte Lemon-Hughes,*

HR Transactional Team Leader,  
Schools' Choice



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*Karen Settle*

**Associate Building Services, Concertus**

Karen consistently demonstrates her commitment to sustainability and innovation within the business and her personal life. Her skill, talent, and experience in decarbonisation innovation and sustainability have been exceptional. Karen's work demonstrates her expertise, providing business plans to upskill our teams in building energy measurement techniques, providing technical oversight for the engineers, and leading the Suffolk County Council decarbonisation programme of works. Recently, SALIX has recognised Karen and her team as 'Best Practice' for funding applications for the central government decarbonisation fund with examples of her work being published.

“ **Always leading by example, Karen's passion for sustainability spills out into her personal life, and uses sustainably sourced everything!** ”

*Kirk Schartau,*

Operations Director, Concertus



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*Lee Howes*

**Head of Fleet Services**

Lee has successfully rolled out Trackm8 software on 85 per cent, and soon to be 100 per cent, of our vehicles. The software shows how our vehicles are performing in terms of 'eco-friendly driving'. Lee is able to target those who require training on how to drive in a more 'green' way and see when the cars need servicing to improve their performance, reducing environmental impact. When vehicles come up for renewal Lee presents the information for an electric alternative so all options can be considered, a process that has been a crucial part of our ISO 50001 audit process as it demonstrates great progress in tackling the largest contributor to our footprint.

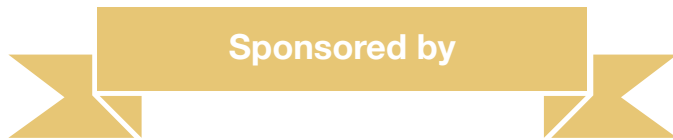
“ **Lee's incredible efforts in regard to Fleet Services and our sustainability aspirations have not gone unnoticed.** ”

*Sarah Layton,*

Group Head of Quality and Sustainability,  
Vertas Group

## Customer 1st Award

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**Accent Fresh Ltd is a family run, regional food service business based in Downham Market, West Norfolk.**

Established in 1996 we are a truly regional business specialising in the supply of fruits, vegetables, dairy produce and other chilled foods and ingredients with a particular emphasis on sourcing the best that East Anglia has to offer whether that is local fruits, salads and vegetables or cheeses or other locally produced foods and ingredients.

 [www.accentfresh.co.uk](http://www.accentfresh.co.uk)

 01366 386633

 @accentfresh



*This award recognises a colleague or team who go beyond normal expectations to 'make the difference' for customers and clients, embedding the Vertas Group company values.*

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### *Amanda Vineall*

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#### **Café Assistant Manager, Churchill Catering**

Amanda continuously utilises her knowledge to lead the team at High Lodge, she has expertise in every field you would want for an assistant manager. She assists with margin control management, continuously updating it to ensure we can maximise profit. Amanda has also helped create a sales culture, training the team on upselling. If there is a gap in the sales market, Amanda will ensure we get that product on the shelves whether it is coal for the BBQ or an ice cream 'puppachino'. Amanda has helped to achieve a 5\* Food Standards Agency rating, a Vertas health and safety check of above 90 per cent, and a Visit England report of 94 per cent.

**“ High Lodge would not be exceeding expectations if it wasn't for Amanda's dedication to the role, she is a real asset to the team. ”**

*Hazel Shepherd,*

Café Catering Manager, Churchill Catering



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### *Interior Architecture Team*

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#### **Concertus**

Kelly and Bryony work exceptionally well under pressure and to a great level of quality and consistency. The team not only listens to the client, understanding their needs but utilises previous experience to guide projects. The team is unafraid to challenge their design teams or contractors to get the best results. Recently they were part of the team who re-designed the Vertas Group Head Quarters. The project had a tight turnaround to meet the evolving needs of the group. However, they were able to work well under pressure and re-develop the office, creating a great space for the different companies to co-inhabit and work alongside each other.

**“ The Interior Architecture Team is always looking for the best ways to meet the needs of their clients whilst striving for the best quality design. ”**

*Laura Morris De'ath,*

Associate Architecture, Concertus



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### *Suffolk Police FM Team*

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#### **Vertas**

Suffolk Police Facilities Management Team is nominated for the outstanding service provided to Suffolk Police. From the initial booking to explaining how the course was going to run and the tight timelines successfully adhered to, the team went above and beyond to ensure the course was a success. The team assisted the customers in sourcing additional rooms and equipment such as flipcharts, and extension leads, and greeted guest speakers, bringing them directly to the training room.

**“ The team also gave continuous updates on room cancellations and availability and remained happy and cheerful, regularly checking on the progress of the course. ”**

*Natasha Bailey,*

Client at Suffolk Police

## Client Recognition Award

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**JoinedUp by Beeline is a cutting-edge technology that empowers businesses to effortlessly manage shift workers, alleviating stress, especially in high-volume environments.**

Trusted by over 200 brands, JoinedUp effectively handles a substantial £4.5 billion in temporary labour expenditure. Tailored for the ever-changing landscape of shift-based staffing, our platform ensures seamless real-time experiences, boosting productivity and engagement, resulting in quicker shift fulfilment. With our innovative solution, employers can efficiently optimise workforce management, leading to increased operational efficiency and a more satisfied workforce. JoinedUp is the ultimate tool for modern businesses seeking streamlined and efficient shift workforce management.

 [www.joinedup.com](http://www.joinedup.com)

 07950 192 991

 @JoinedUp\_



*Clients are invited to nominate Vertas Group individuals or teams to recognise the exceptional service they provide.*

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### *Anglia Ruskin University Security Team*

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#### **Oakpark Security**

Oakpark Security officers work in the libraries at Anglia Ruskin University. In the evenings and at weekends the officers are the go-to staff for any help and assistance with library queries. Both teams are highly valued, particularly by the library team and customers as they show diligence in reporting customer queries via their reporting system so issues can be resolved the following day. Both have reported back issues with printers not working for students which meant support from the out-of-hours IT Services could be actioned to ensure a more satisfactory customer experience for library users.

“ All of the staff have worked on University open days and have given visitors a warm welcome at the library reception desks at both campuses. ”

*Rachel Geeson,*

Client at Anglia Ruskin University

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### *Northamptonshire Children's Trust Recruitment Team*

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#### **Opus People Solutions**

Canev, Kristen and Selena are nominated for the exceptional service they provide to support recruitment. Both strategically and operationally, the team ensures they thoroughly understand all business needs. Canev shows a huge amount of tenacity in following up with potential candidates as well as the hiring managers to make the process as smooth and quick as possible. Kristen and Canev meet with key people in the organisation when there are specific recruitment needs to understand the issues and pull together a plan of action.

“ The team is able to develop strategic plans in line with business priorities constantly keeping customers updated to provide an outstanding service. ”

*Rachael Tootell,*

Client at Northamptonshire Childrens Trust

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### *Emma Mark*

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#### **Area Manager, Cleaning**

Emma joined the cleaning team at Eastbrook House at a difficult time due to recruiting difficulties experienced in the Cambridge area and dedicated herself to recruiting the team and spending a large amount of time on site to deliver the required standards. Emma has worked extremely well with the Honeywell team, developing an excellent working relationship with the Facilities Supervisor on site. Emma continues to go above and beyond, dedicating herself to the site and that is reflected in the audit scores and the delivery of the service on site. Emma strives to deliver a best-in-class service in a professional manner.

“ In summary, Emma's application of work has been to the benefit of Honeywell and our clients here at Eastbrook House. ”

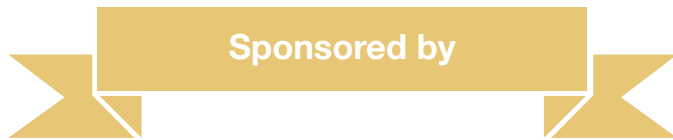
*Phil Hemmans,*

Client at Honeywell

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## *Lifetime Achievement Award*

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# **S R Calver** **(Building Contractors) Ltd.**

**S R Calver Building Contractors Ltd is a small building fabric company who have grown gradually over the years.**

They provide all building fabric services including extensions, maintenance and repairs across Suffolk and surrounding areas, with Vertas being one of their main Contracts. They work closely alongside suppliers, subcontractors and customers to provide a professional and honest service to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction.



 [office@calverbuilder.co.uk](mailto:office@calverbuilder.co.uk)

 01473 462007

*This accolade recognises a member of our team who has consistently developed their service area, team and added value, year in, year out.*

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*Debbie Stranix*

**Head Cook, Vertas**

Debbie is nominated for going above and beyond in her day-to-day role during her 36 years' worth of service across the Suffolk County Council Corporate Estate. Debbie never complains and supports every department, ensuring each request is met to a high standard. Debbie remains calm and organised despite supporting several services and an increased workload. A recent request from the education catering department required additional meals for the Ipswich Campus, something Debbie has taken in her stride, ensuring local children receive a nutritious meal. Debbie is professional, always supporting the business with a 'can do' approach to ensure we deliver a service.

**“ Debbie has a fantastic way with our customers, her ongoing passion and commitment make her a true asset. ”**

*Lee Johns,*  
Head of FM, Vertas



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*Peter Sutton*

**Head of Oakpark Security**

Peter has been an integral part of the organisation since joining Oakpark Security in 2005. He was instrumental in leading the relocation of the head office, and despite the complexities, Peter demonstrated exceptional leadership, ensuring a seamless transition. This accomplishment evidences his ability to navigate change, inspire teams, and effectively manage projects of significant magnitude. Peter has also consistently shown empathy towards his colleagues when facing challenging times. His compassion and genuine care for his team are truly remarkable. His exemplary leadership, unwavering dedication, and consideration for the organisation and its employees are unmatched.

**“ Peter serves as an inspiration to current and future employees. ”**

*Daniel Fletcher,*  
Operations Manager, Oakpark Security



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*Jillian Brown*

**Area Supervisor, Verse**

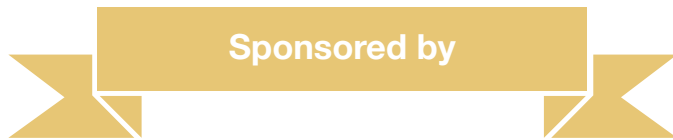
Jill has been the cleaning supervisor of Jubilee Walk Public Conveniences for 31 years and is instrumental in how effectively the sites run. She has an amazing relationship with the Council who consult Jill on any changes or improvements. Jill's site is kept so clean it even won 'Toilet of the Year' in 2017 and was mentioned on BBC Look East by a member of the public who stated the toilets were so clean 'you could eat your dinner in there!'. The dedication Jill has shown has no end, even going so far as buying a house opposite the toilets to keep an eye on them.

**“ Jill truly demonstrates all the qualities of Vertas, she is a valued team member and really 'makes the difference'. ”**

*Sarah Hunt,*  
Operations Manager, Verse

## *Specialist of the Year Award*

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### **BCN is a leading MSP and Digital Transformation specialist.**

We deliver exceptional services through transparent communication, teamwork and efficiency, in relationships that are built to last.

A Solutions Partner for Microsoft Cloud, we create, manage and support business critical technology solutions across IT & cloud infrastructure, cyber security, modern workplace, business applications, and data and analytics.

We enable organisations to operate without limits, accelerate innovation and drive long-term success.

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 0345 095 7000

 @BCN\_Group

*This award seeks to reward and recognise our service specialists who innovate and develop their area of expertise for the benefit of Vertas Group, its clients and customers.*

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*Daniel Baggott*

**Operations Accountant, Vertas**

Dan recently took on the role of Operations Accountant for Vertas Derbyshire and fearlessly embraced the monumental challenge. He immersed himself in the complexities of the role, developing an understanding in record time. He has suggested numerous improvements that have streamlined the process. After starting as an Accounting Apprentice, he quickly progressed to Management Accountant for many substantial services. His knowledge, skills, and genuine care for those he represents shine through to deliver an excellent service. Dan's support, response time, and availability are always reassuring. His can-do attitude is infectious, and he is a valued member of the Vertas Derbyshire team.

“ Dan's dedication and passion for delivering exceptional service makes him a true asset. ”

*Rachel Shaw,*

Head of VDL Services

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*Jess Burton*

**Payroll and Pensions Advisor,  
Vertas Group**

Exceedingly organised, Jess has assisted in establishing best practices to manage payroll responsibilities. She has committed to her role as Payroll and Pensions Advisor with poise and assurance. Jess is a huge support across teams, managing the pensions portfolio with several providers and local authorities. She recently took the initiative to put together a detailed pension scheme with minimal guidance, and the outcome exceeded expectations. Jess brings true professional attributes to Vertas Group and genuinely cares about delivering work. A level of commitment she recently brought to calculating strategic business figures for the Group when faced with potential amendments to key legislation.

“ Jess's dedication and hard work have positively impacted her award-winning payroll team and the wider business. ”

*Louise Enoch,*

Legal Audit and Risk Advisor, Vertas Group

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*Sarah Beeston*

**Safeguarding Training Manager,  
Schools' Choice**

Sarah's passion for keeping children safe in education is evident in her work. The reputation of Schools' Choice is often linked to the high-profile work of Sarah and her team, with customers relying on them to share best practices, understand risk, and manage issues. Sarah is also a consultant to the HR team with specific cases requiring safeguarding support. Sarah's understanding of the subject is unmatched, and her critical approach to situations enables her to provide careful and considerate advice in the most delicate cases.

“ Sarah advises and contributes to government consultations in the sector and is always relied on to be the most up-to-date with safeguarding legislation and practices. ”

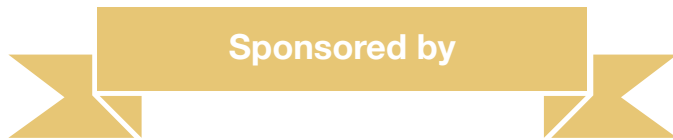
*Jo Spencer,*

Head of Schools' Choice

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## Colleagues' Champion Award

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**As one of the UK's leading foodservice providers, we share our customers' passion for great food.**

But our passion doesn't stop there. We're 100% dedicated to delivering service excellence, making life easier and helping our customers grow. Our 13,000 strong product range includes the best of both own brand and leading foodservice brands. Our 26 UK depots offer a truly local service – the majority are no more than 80 miles from their customers. We offer comprehensive range of carefully selected wines, as well as beers, ciders and spirits. We also provide quality catering equipment, everything from cutlery to cookware, cleaning and disposables.

 [www.bidfood.co.uk](http://www.bidfood.co.uk)

 0370 3663 100

 @BidfoodUK

*This award recognises an individual who works in partnership with others, has supported their colleagues and is always there to help team mates achieve success.*

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*Amber Welham*

**Bid Writer, Concertus**

When Amber started at Concertus as a Business Assistant, there was no doubt she would swiftly progress within the company. An inspiring colleague, Amber is hugely passionate and remains open to opportunities whilst being a consistent and dedicated team member. Working as a mentor, Amber has supported colleagues in several areas of the business. She has an unmatched ability to be flexible at work due to her high levels of emotional intelligence and readiness to work collaboratively. She is also able to teach others in a patient and professional manner. Amber has gone above and beyond to learn every aspect of her role as Bid Writer, in addition to supporting others.

**“ Amber is a super colleague who is always willing to help, working with an ‘above and beyond’ attitude. ”**

*Anya Hill,*

Executive Personal Assistant



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*Kelly Pearson*

**Area Catering Manager, Vertas**

Kelly has been an exceptional asset to the education catering team, and her contributions have significantly impacted the organisation. Kelly's role in training staff has been vital and her efforts have been instrumental in improving services. Her dedication to the onboarding process has resulted in a remarkable 100 per cent retention rate for new colleagues. Her willingness to assist and extensive knowledge make her a valuable resource. Kelly's dedication goes beyond her core responsibilities, supporting events like the Suffolk Show and assisting with holiday club feeding, further demonstrating her commitment to the team's success.

**“ Kelly's efforts have undoubtedly contributed to the overall success of Vertas in the education catering sector. ”**

*Sue Mahoney,*

Catering Customer and Quality Manager,  
Vertas



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*Zara Zurowski*

**Lead Partner of People Services,  
Vertas Group**

Recently, Zara has assisted with creating a people business strategy focusing on culture, engagement, well-being, recruitment, and continuous improvement. She is passionate about developing the Vertas Derbyshire Limited team and embedding a culture that is inclusive, positive, and fair. Zara consistently promotes an environment where colleagues feel engaged and valued. She regularly makes the journey from Suffolk to Derbyshire to train the team, offering valuable support. She has conducted training on various people strategies, providing the team with experience and aiding their development.

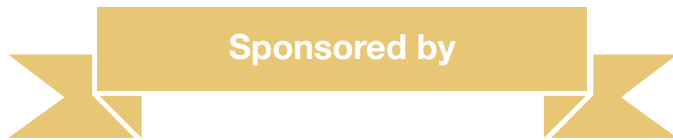
**“ Zara is committed and consistently demonstrates the company's values making her a pivotal member of the Vertas Derbyshire team. ”**

*Rachel Shaw,*

Head of VDL Services

## Team of the Year Award

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### *Calderglen Café Team*

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#### **Churchill Catering**

The Courtyard Cafe group has demonstrated remarkable teamwork, unparalleled dedication, and outstanding achievements. Their ability to collaborate and leverage each team member's strengths has propelled them to new heights of success. One of the team's most impressive attributes is their exceptional communication. They have fostered an environment of open dialogue where every team member feels heard and valued. This has created a strong sense of unity and trust, allowing them to overcome challenges and make informed decisions collectively. Their ability to share knowledge and offer constructive feedback has been instrumental in their achievements.

**“ The team is exemplary and has set a benchmark for excellence, they are an inspiration to others. ”**

*Victoria Jardine,*

Café Manager, Churchill Catering

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### *Saputo Kirkby Catering Team*

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#### **Churchill Catering**

The Churchill Catering team is a supportive one that continuously goes above and beyond for the client. Jackie and her team have had a tough year with illness and bereavement but have all pulled together to provide a wonderful ongoing service to their colleagues. The team is respected by all which can be seen by the interactions during service. They take great pride in their work and the teams are always willing to work collaboratively when either department is short-staffed. Saputo loves to get involved with public holidays and social awareness events and the team is always ready to support them. The client recently praised the team for the wonderful food they produced for the King's Coronation and Pride month.

**“ Nothing is too much trouble for Jackie and her team. ”**

*Rachel Nellist,*

Operations Manager, Churchill Catering

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### *Sunderland Empire Theatre Cleaning Team*

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#### **Vertas**

The Sunderland Empire Theatre cleaning team is nominated for their continued contribution to maintaining the high expectations of the Ambassador Theatre Group portfolio. Working tirelessly to ensure the Theatre is in pristine condition, the newly founded team has not only had to get to know the extensive venue and each other but also work at an extremely fast and demanding pace. The team goes above and beyond, continually pulling together to support one another, professionally and personally.

**“ The Ambassador Theatre Group is incredibly proud of the Vertas team and considers them very much an integral part of the Theatre family. ”**

*Vicki Medhurst,*

Client at Sunderland Empire Theatre

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## Colleague of the Year Award

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*Our colleagues are truly known for 'making the difference'. This award recognises the significant contribution that an individual has made to the Vertas group, our clients, and customers.*

---



*Ben Cresswell*

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**Transactional Finance and Credit Manager, Vertas**

Ben is an outstanding team member, known for his professional attitude, approachability, and positive manner. He has become the go-to person in the finance department due to his willingness to offer assistance. Ben recently took on the management of the transactional team, and the impact was immediate. The team was previously struggling to maintain contact with suppliers, customers, and colleagues. However, within a few weeks, dropped calls were reduced from 15 per cent to 0 per cent, and the average wait time was reduced to just 21 seconds. These improvements demonstrate Ben's exceptional leadership and problem-solving abilities, he is willing to go above and beyond to enhance customer experience.

**“ With Ben leading the team, the future looks bright for continued customer satisfaction. ”**

*Julia Dolan,*

Head of Customer Relationships, Vertas



*David Hunter*

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**Coach Driver, Vertas**

David is an absolute star and is always willing to help to ensure the job is done to a high standard. David recently offered his assistance when asked to ensure that some new premises were safe. Despite being outside of working hours, David attended without hesitation in an extremely professional manner. David works with Special Educational Needs students with a very diverse set of complex needs and is keen to identify issues to ensure his students receive the best possible care. David is extremely caring, excelling when it comes to looking after both his students and co-workers and creating a pleasant work environment.

**“ David is a beacon of professionalism with care towards our students, exemplary co-worker, a wonderful support worker, and a true company person. ”**

*Stephen Roscoe,*

Transport Manager, Vertas



*Deborah Fellows*

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**Cleaning Supervisor, Vertas**

The academy would not exist without Deborah. She is instrumental in its functioning and continuously goes the extra mile. She has been an advocate for staff when things have been challenging and has a tight bond with each of them. For many, she is the first person and last person they see and the person they call for help around the site. Deborah goes out of her way to ensure the academy can do things such as run plays, hold concerts, and look great for open evenings. She is relentless in her push to keep the site clean and safe, setting high standards.

**“ Leading by example, Deborah monitors the tasks and repairs that need to be done and has a deep knowledge of the site overall - she keeps the academy ticking over. ”**

*Andrew Lawrence,*

Principal at Pool Hayes Academy



*Thank you...*

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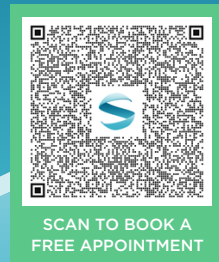
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**Ian Surtees, MBA**

*Group Chief Executive Officer*

*The board of directors at Vertas Group extend their sincere gratitude to our esteemed sponsors for their invaluable support in funding our eighth annual awards. Additionally, they extend their congratulations to all the finalists and winners of this evening's awards.*

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**Keith Buet**

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