

Zara Flannigan

Highly Commended - Advanced Apprentice of the Year 2026



Zara's Story

The Advanced Apprentice of the Year category celebrates apprentices who have demonstrated exceptional progress, dedication and achievement throughout their apprenticeship journey. Zara was recognised as Highly Commended for her remarkable personal and professional development, building confidence, skills and resilience while pursuing a career supporting young children. Passionate about making a positive difference in children's lives, she has embraced every opportunity to learn and grow, while making a valuable contribution to their workplace. We'll hear more about her inspiring apprenticeship journey below.



Rochdale
Training


Channings Childcare
35+ Years of Quality Childcare

**What made you want
a career in childcare?**

"I have always wanted to work with children having a big extended family I grew up babysitting a lot of children and found it rewarding when I learnt them something new. I liked how every time was different and how much children grow and learn so quick. As I got older and had personal issues like my mum was poorly from me being around 4 and sadly passed away when I was 11 and I didn't feel like the teachers ect helped and I have had a few issues with other members of different teaching groups and it really made me determined to want to work with children to help guide them and not only teach them but be someone that they can trust and rely on and feel safe with all while having fun."

"The skills I have learnt are truly valuable to me as an individual as I have spent most of my life looking after family members who have all sadly passed away due to the amount of caring I did I developed social anxiety and couldn't speak to people not even people I have known for years I kept in my little bubble with just me and my children until one day I pushed myself to go for the interview to do the apprenticeship to show my children that you can do anything if you just push yourself enough and it's been a struggle at first but I feel like I have gained so much confidence and skills i didn't even know I needed and not only can I speak to people better now but I have more confidence in my work and my own abilities all thanks to the apprenticeship."

**What skills have
you developed
during your
apprenticeship?**

**How have Rochdale
Training and Channings
Childcare supported
your progress?**

"I couldn't thank Channings enough they have been there every step of the way helping with any issues that have cropped up and being friendly and supportive during my apprenticeship I have never felt alone and know I can ask for any help I need. My tutor is always on hand for when I need some support when my head can't work out how to answer a question or if I struggle with anything they are always there to give me a pep talk and keep pushing me."

"I would love to stay working with children and expand to doing a course for working with children with additional needs as I have looked after a couple of children with additional needs including family and it's so rewarding to watch them grow and develop and i feel like that's my calling."

**What are your
aspirations for
the future?**

