

Celebration  
of **Success**

CHEMICAL  
INDUSTRY  
*Awards*

**2025 Chemical Industry Awards**  
Showcasing winning examples of good practice



CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION



## About the Awards

Once again this year's Awards were made by Year 10 students at Bridgewater High School, Warrington as part of their GCSE Design course. This was made possible through the generous sponsorship of Solvay.

The Chemical Industry Awards are the premier accolades for the UK chemical industry. This year we held the event at the Kimpton Clocktower Hotel in Manchester with over 300 nominees and guests present.

The case studies contained within this "Celebration of Success" brochure are all from winning entries and showcase excellent examples of good practice from the UK chemical and pharmaceutical industry, across a wide range of areas.

Photographs used in this booklet are for illustrative purposes only and may not relate to the winning entry or sponsor.



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## Celebrating the best of UK Chemical and Pharmaceutical Businesses

Over the past year, UK chemical businesses have continued to demonstrate resilience and strength in the face of testing conditions. Despite ongoing geopolitical tensions, the introduction of tariffs, crippling energy costs and a sustained reduction in demand, the resilience demonstrated by chemical companies and their people is remarkable, continuing to deliver an essential contribution to the economy, securing our national infrastructure and underpinning the UK's wider manufacturing capability and net zero transition.

This year's Awards held particular significance as the Association marked its 60th anniversary. For six decades the CIA has represented, advised and supported the UK's chemical industry, championing its role in driving economic growth, innovation and national resilience. The celebrations at the Queens Hotel in Leeds not only honoured today's achievements but also reflected on the enduring legacy of a sector that has continued to adapt, evolve and excel for more than 150 years.

The 2025 Awards once again saw a record number of entries, with sustainability, innovation and service provider among the most popular categories. Reflecting this trend, the Sustainability Award underwent a significant overhaul and attracted high-quality submissions showing how sustainability is now embedded in company strategies, reinforced by engagement with external organisations and supported by practical, real-world examples. A strong theme of innovation for sustainability ran throughout the entries, highlighting the deepening connection between sustainability, innovation and people as a core element of business success and working life.

Many other entries also reflected how companies are embedding long-term resilience into their strategies. These examples show an industry not only navigating today's difficulties but actively laying the foundations for a competitive and inclusive future. They demonstrate that the talent of individual employees, collective workforces and business leadership in the UK stands comparison with the very best globally.

My thanks go to every company and employee who entered this year, to all of our sponsors and to our judges who have given their time and expertise to ensure the competition remains fair and challenging. I would also like to congratulate the Year 10 students from Bridgewater High School, Warrington, who have once again designed our trophies, sponsored by Solvay.

Steve Elliott | Chief Executive, CIA

Reception sponsored by







## Sustainability Award

**Winner:** GSK Irvine  
**Sponsor:** On-Site Energy

This Award is for the company or operating unit that can demonstrate excellence in sustainability, through its policies, products, manufacturing processes, and supply chain.



The Irvine site has been a leader within the GSK network, focusing on energy reductions since 2008. Over the years, the site has achieved a >70% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through energy efficiency improvements and the installation of renewable energy generation, including wind turbines, solar power, and energy from anaerobic digestion of waste.

Solvent usage is the biggest contributor to waste and energy consumption at the GSK Irvine site. Distillation processing is required to treat the different solvents used within the manufacturing process, demanding significant volumes of steam generated from gas-fired boilers, which produce CO<sub>2</sub>. Mapping of site waste highlighted that more than 60% of the annual waste was excess solvent accumulated through the use of fresh solvent. Work was carried out to assess the risk to product quality and to challenge why fresh solvent had to be used instead of recovered solvent. A programme of trials verified that the volume of fresh solvent could be reduced and the deficit replaced with recovered solvent, without impacting product quality. A first phase of this reduction was implemented in 2024, which reduced waste surplus solvent by 208 Te. An extension of this work is scheduled for implementation in 2025 and will deliver a further 110 Te reduction in solvent leaving the site as waste.

This change, driven by the site's sustainability ambition, also reduces the number of solvent tankers required for transporting fresh and waste solvent and provides a financial benefit through reduced purchasing of fresh solvent. The reduction in solvent waste has also enabled the site to achieve its waste reduction target four years ahead of the corporate goal.

To improve biodiversity, a 5 m<sup>2</sup> area within the site boundary has been designated for biodiversity uplift. This area was planted with a single tree species in 2010 after a production building was demolished. The single tree species has since been thinned out and replaced with local species to improve diversity. Habitat piles, bird boxes, and bat boxes have also been installed to encourage wildlife. The site has engaged with the Scottish Wildlife Trust as a neighbour to identify actions that could help established habitats and support wider improvement initiatives in the Ayrshire area.

In addition to corporate targets, the site has developed a strong sustainability culture within its workforce. In 2023, an employee group named EarthKind was established by a team of graduates. This group promotes and drives small-scale changes with environmental benefits. One example was the introduction of a "plastic container" scheme for the site canteen. Using a model similar to the "bag for life" initiative, employees were encouraged to bring their own containers to the canteen when purchasing food to take away. After an initial trial period, a small charge was introduced for takeaway containers. This has reduced the amount of single-use container waste being generated, with the proceeds donated to an environmental charity.



On-Site Energy Ltd is an independent energy solutions provider working exclusively with industrial manufacturing companies to design, fund, deliver, and maintain energy efficiency and onsite generation assets. Our core purpose is to help customers become more competitive on both cost and carbon. In our first four years of operation, we have invested £40 million of our own capital into projects that support this, with an additional £120 million in development.



## Innovation Award

**Winner:** Exergy3  
**Sponsor:** GSK

This Award is for the company or operating unit which can provide the most successful examples of innovation.

### Exergy3 Electro-Thermal Energy Storage (ETES): Industrial Decarbonisation

The Exergy3 Electro-Thermal Energy Storage (ETES) system has been over 12 years in development, originating from research at the University of Edinburgh and culminating in the spin-out of Exergy3 in 2021. Based in Edinburgh, the company is now delivering cutting-edge energy storage technology tailored to industrial users.

In 2025, Exergy3 successfully manufactured its first demonstration units, each capable of storing up to 10.3 MWh of thermal energy. These units underwent off-site testing, demonstrating efficient steam production, and have now commenced site installation at a distillery in Scotland. The ETES system is capable of delivering heat between 80°C and 1,000°C, enabling industrial sites to switch from fossil fuels to a low-carbon, on-demand alternative.

The ETES system is charged using renewable electricity, either from the grid or directly from renewable sources, and stores the energy as heat at temperatures up to 1,300°C. It can

discharge as either hot air or steam and is also compatible with heat recovery systems. This flexibility makes it suitable for a broad range of industrial applications.

A key advantage of the technology is its performance and efficiency. The system loses less than 1% of heat per day and is capable of simultaneous charging and discharging. It is designed with sub-second response times, which facilitates participation in the electricity flexibility markets - helping to address the UK's £4 billion annual challenge in curtailment and constraint costs.

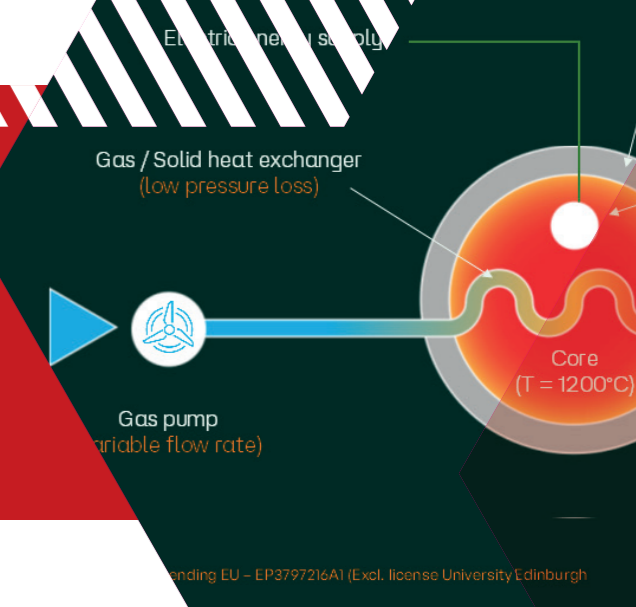
The system is modular and compact, with a footprint smaller than a standard 20ft ISO container (4.4m x 2.6m x 2.6m), and can be easily integrated into existing industrial setups. It also offers the potential to co-fire with natural gas, allowing phased decarbonisation for sites not yet able to make a full transition.

Beyond individual site benefits, ETES contributes to broader system stability. By storing surplus renewable electricity during low demand periods and releasing it during peak demand, the system reduces energy waste and helps balance supply and demand on the grid.

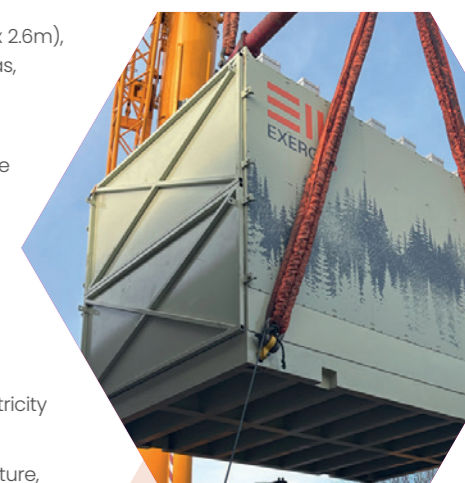
The innovation offers industrial users a practical and cost-effective path to decarbonisation, without major operational changes or capital disruption. ETES helps reduce operational costs while also cutting emissions, providing reliable access to low-carbon energy in a form that supports competitiveness.

Exergy3's progress - supported by a grant from DESNZ and private venture capital - has outpaced other TES developers. As affiliate members of the CIA, Exergy3 has remained closely aligned with industry needs, regularly engaging with CIA working groups on topics such as climate change levies and electricity market reform.

This innovation, underpinned by strong intellectual property, addresses a clear market need for high-temperature, flexible, and efficient thermal storage. Exergy3 is proud to offer a proven, scalable solution that supports both industrial competitiveness and the UK's net-zero ambitions.



Grant funding EU - EP3797216A1 (Excl. license University Edinburgh)



GSK is a global biopharma company with a purpose to unite science, technology and talent to get ahead of disease together. We aim to positively impact the health of 2.5 billion people by the end of 2030. Our bold ambitions for patients are reflected in new commitments to growth and a step-change in performance. We are a company where outstanding people can thrive.





## Responsible Care Award

**Winner:** Lubrizol  
**Sponsor:** INEOS Inovyn

This Award is for the site which has excelled at delivering the CIA Responsible Care Guiding Principles by demonstrating leadership, Innovation and Continuous Improvement.

Lubrizol's science-based innovations and sustainable solutions advance mobility, improve wellbeing and enhance modern life. Lubrizol's chemistries are used in everything from healthcare to electronics, beauty, footwear, transportation and more. The company is focused on developing breakthrough solutions and expanding into new and existing markets including advanced computing, agriculture and biotechnology.

The Huddersfield team contributes to this global vision by manufacturing products that bring value to customers in the performance coatings industry. Lubrizol recognizes that investing in its people, providing a safe workplace, and minimizing its impact on the local community and environment is crucial to future success.

Guided by the Responsible Care principles, Lubrizol Huddersfield reviews and adapts its management systems, which are ISO14001 accredited, and the site is now working towards ISO 45001 accreditation. The success of maintaining these systems depends on the involvement of all personnel and the commitment of the Site Management Team. All employees share ownership of the systems and are involved in continuously improving them, using the internal audit programme to identify unsafe situations and implement effective solutions.

Lubrizol Huddersfield developed a weekly safety culture tour conducted by all site personnel. This initiative is continually evolving to include the latest safety topics and global corporate initiatives. Outputs from these tours and audits are communicated at daily toolbox talks, monthly safety team meetings and site-scheduled training days known as Partnership Days. These days, which include everyone on site, are a source of pride. They involve thorough preparation, allowing personnel to plan and deliver effective, engaging inputs. The format varies, combining classroom and in-field training, with opportunities for employees to develop sessions and topics. Examples include a production apprentice organizing a session on Men's Mental Health (from #Andy's Man Club), a chemical process operator developing a training package on managing spills, inputs from first aiders, and process safety sessions delivered by technical personnel.

The site's health, safety, and environmental plan is vital for continuous improvement, with new objectives added each year as previous ones are completed. This plan, reviewed monthly, addresses potential implementation issues and includes sustainability objectives to minimize environmental impacts, reduce energy consumption and reduce waste generated.

Improving lives in communities where employees live and work has been a core value of Lubrizol since its founding more than 95 years ago. The Huddersfield team has an active volunteering committee that organizes numerous activities throughout the year, from removing invasive plants from local waterways to wrapping Christmas boxes for teenagers living with cancer.

The Responsible Care principles are integral to Lubrizol Huddersfield's operations, and employee engagement and involvement are key to continuous improvement. Those performing tasks are best positioned to identify issues and propose solutions, and Lubrizol ensures they have the support needed to realize these solutions. This creates a safer workplace through empowered people, while enriching the community and advancing Lubrizol's vision.



INEOS Inovyn, a subsidiary of INEOS, is Europe's largest chlorovinyls producer and global leader in specialty PVC. With €3.2 billion in annual sales and 4,200 employees across 8 European countries, it supplies essential products for sectors including construction, healthcare, and energy. Committed to Net Zero, INEOS Inovyn offers low-emission solutions. Its diverse portfolio includes General Purpose and Specialty vinyls, organic chlorine derivatives, chlor-alkali, hydrogen and performance chemicals.



## ED&I Award

**Winner:** DSV Air & Sea Ltd  
**Sponsor:** Dow

This award is for the company or operating unit that can best demonstrate that it embraces the principles of diversity and inclusivity in all aspects of its business.

DSV Air & Sea Ltd, Chemicals Liverpool provides comprehensive logistics solutions for the chemical industry. As part of the global DSV network, the company combines local expertise with international capabilities, delivering sustainable supply chain solutions across all transport modes.

DSV's ED&I journey represents an ongoing commitment rather than a destination. The specialized nature of its operations requires careful consideration of how inclusive practices can be implemented while maintaining high safety and compliance standards. This approach drives the company to create practical solutions that provide genuine psychological safety for employees.

The company has transformed its physical workspace through innovative design that recognizes diverse employee needs, creating a dedicated wellbeing room – a multi-purpose space serving nursing mothers, supporting private mental health consultations, and offering a quiet retreat for employees needing calm moments. Workplace benefits have been democratized by providing adjustable standing desks to all employees, rather than limiting them to senior management, sending the message that workplace equality covers all levels.

Mental health support forms the cornerstone of DSV's approach. The company's expansive Mental Health First Aider program covers over 60 trained professionals across UK sites, ensuring accessible support when needed. Digital platforms including We-Care and MyStrength provide 24/7 resources, inclusive of support for immediate family members, acknowledging that colleagues have full lives beyond the office.

The Staff Recognition Scheme plays a crucial role in maintaining engagement and celebrating the diverse workforce. Rather than treating diversity as isolated awareness days, DSV has created systematic year-round engagement through its Wellbeing and Inclusion Calendar. The scheme funds staff morale-boosting events from charity raffles to cultural celebrations including Chinese New Year, National Curry Week, International Women's Day activities, and Halloween events. These programs acknowledge diverse contributions while fostering an inclusive culture, bringing employees together across different backgrounds and interests.

DSV's Pride Month rainbow lanyards continue year-round through employee choice, with celebrations across multiple sites including varied activities that reflect genuine workforce engagement. The company has also participated in The Big Logistics Diversity Challenge for consecutive years, with corporate encouragement and sponsorship, demonstrating long-term commitment to industry-wide change. The benefits have been measurable and significant. Female leadership development initiatives achieved industry recognition with wins at the EveryWoman in Transport & Logistics Awards in 2024 and 2025—particularly meaningful achievements in a traditionally male-dominated industry. These successes provide visible role models for other women in the organization, creating representation in leadership and aspirational pathways.

Annual anonymous staff surveys include specific ED&I questions measuring belonging and inclusion, with senior management implementing actionable changes based on employee feedback. Participation rates in diversity initiatives are tracked to monitor genuine engagement levels and ensure that programs resonate with staff. External recognition through multiple industry awards provides third-party validation, demonstrating that DSV's approach goes beyond policy documents and creates tangible impacts in workplace experience, employee support, and organizational culture.

Judges have commented that the company demonstrated "beyond any doubt – that absolutely everyone is involved and absolutely everyone matters." This recognition reflects DSV's comprehensive approach, where ED&I is embedded into both physical infrastructure and everyday operations. The overarching goal is to nurture an inclusive culture where every employee can thrive.



In the United Kingdom, we share Dow's global ambition to become the most innovative, customer centric, inclusive and sustainable materials science company. Our portfolio of plastics, industrial intermediates, coatings and silicones businesses delivers a broad range of differentiated, science-based products and solutions for its customers in high-growth market segments, such as packaging, infrastructure, mobility and consumer applications from our sites in Barry and Manchester.





## Manufacturing and Resource Efficiency Award

**Winner:** Sepan UK Ltd  
**Sponsor:** Hyynamics

The Award is to recognise the company or individual operating unit that can demonstrate world-class manufacturing performance or the most successful improvement to its manufacturing performance involving demonstrable excellence and/or significant improvements to resource efficiency (raw materials, energy, water, utilities etc) within the manufacturing process.

### Stepan UK Ltd – A Story of Transformation and Excellence

Stepan's Stalybridge site in Greater Manchester has undergone a remarkable transformation, evolving from the most operationally unreliable plant in the company's global network to its most reliable and forward-thinking facility. This journey exemplifies the power of strategic investment, cultural change, and relentless pursuit of excellence in manufacturing and resource efficiency.

In 2020, Stalybridge faced significant challenges: over 5,600 hours of unplanned downtime, 80% reactive maintenance, and a high rate of off-quality production. These issues impacted safety, morale, customer satisfaction, and growth potential. Recognising the urgency, the team launched a bold reliability improvement programme, setting a clear ambition—to become Stepan's most reliable site within a decade.

The results have been extraordinary. By 2024, unplanned downtime had fallen by 85%, reactive maintenance dropped to just 12%, and customer complaints were reduced by 45%. Quality improved dramatically, with a 41% reduction in off-spec material. These achievements were underpinned by a £350k investment in asset performance monitoring, including the pioneering use of RONDS wireless technology—making Stalybridge the first Stepan site to adopt this innovation.

The programme wasn't just about technology—it was about people. A dedicated Reliability Manager led the charge, supported by a restructured team and a culture of continuous improvement. Kaizen initiatives flourished, with 60 ideas generated in just two months. One such idea—reedbed wastewater treatment—will save £120,000 annually and eliminate 100 road tanker visits, significantly reducing the site's carbon footprint.

Energy efficiency also saw major gains. By optimising reactor agitator operations and rebalancing production across the manufacturing lines, the site cut electricity use by 11.7% and gas consumption by 25%. These changes were driven by a mindset shift: every maintenance task became an opportunity to improve efficiency.

Raw material usage was optimised through rigorous stock checks, recipe reviews, and variance analysis. Nightly inventory checks across 110 tanks ensured tight control and rapid response to discrepancies, further enhancing operational performance.

The impact extended beyond the site. Learnings from Stalybridge are now being shared across Stepan's European operations. The Reliability Manager's role has become a model for other locations, and the RONDS system has helped prevent major failures—such as the notorious Esterquat Hot Oil Pump—before they occurred.

Staff development has been central to the success. Mechanical fitters were trained in electrical work, outsourced services were brought in-house, and new apprenticeships were created. Operators now take ownership of asset care, building skills and engagement across the team.

Stepan Stalybridge's transformation is a testament to what's possible when data, innovation, and people come together with purpose. From a site once defined by firefighting and failure, it has become a beacon of reliability, efficiency, and sustainability. It now stands proudly as Stepan's most reliable plant—and a shining example of manufacturing excellence for the UK chemical industry.



Hyynamics (as subsidiary of EDF Group) is dedicated to the production and distribution of low carbon hydrogen, supporting decarbonisation in the sectors of industry, heavy mobility and eFuels production. Hyynamics develops, finances, builds and operates production and distribution of hydrogen plants to support the UK's net zero ambitions.



## Skills Award

**Winner:** GSK, Zinnat Supply Chain  
**Sponsor:** Cogent Skills

This award is open to companies working in the science industry sector. Its purpose is to recognise the employer who has done the most to contribute to the acquisition of skills by the company's workforce through an active skills development work programme.

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is a global biopharmaceutical company dedicated to improving health and transforming lives through innovative medicines and vaccines. Within GSK, the Zinnat Supply Chain (ZSC) has been a cornerstone of operations for 78 years, manufacturing antibiotics that serve more than 30 million patients annually. As the ZSC facilities prepare to exit the company at the end of 2025, the organisation remains committed to supporting the 350 employees who have contributed to this remarkable legacy.

The Leave No One Behind skills retraining programme was developed to ensure that ZSC employees are equipped with the skills and confidence to transition successfully into new opportunities. This initiative reflects GSK's commitment to its workforce, the STEM industry, and the wider community.

With over £1 million invested in retraining and upskilling, the programme has approved more than 200 employee applications for diverse science industry-related training. Courses include Aseptic & Sterile Manufacturing Techniques, Digital Strategy and Leadership, Six Sigma Training, Bioprocessing for Manufacturing, Programming & Coding, NEBOSH Certification, and Sustainable Energy Sector Training.

The programme incorporates innovative approaches to competence development. Collaborative careers fairs with leading companies such as BAE, CPI, MMC, Fujifilm, and Kendal Nutricare provided employees with direct access to potential employers. Guest speakers, including Sarah Davies from Dragons' Den, inspired entrepreneurial thinking, while other partnerships supported new business start-ups. Virtual reality (VR) technology was employed to simulate interview and public speaking scenarios, boosting employee confidence and readiness for real-world challenges.

The programme's success is evident: all leavers to date have transitioned into new employment, underscoring its effectiveness. Beyond job placements, the initiative has enhanced employee morale, productivity, and qualifications, while positively impacting staff retention during the site's final operational year. By prioritising continuous learning and development, GSK has ensured that 350 skilled workers remain within the UK's STEM-based industries, contributing to the sector's growth and innovation.

### Key Takeaways for Others

1. Collaborative Careers Fairs – Partnering with leading companies to host careers fairs creates direct networking opportunities and increases the likelihood of successful job placements.
2. Inspirational Guest Speakers – Engaging high-profile speakers motivates employees to explore new career paths and entrepreneurial ventures.
3. Virtual Reality Training – Using VR technology to simulate real-world scenarios enhances confidence and competence in interviews and public speaking.

The Leave No One Behind programme exemplifies GSK's dedication to its people and the community. It serves as a model for other organisations navigating similar transitions, demonstrating how strategic investment in employee development can yield tangible benefits for individuals, businesses, and industries alike.

This award-winning programme highlights the power of innovation, collaboration, and investment in people, ensuring no one is left behind during times of change.



Cogent Skills is a charitable organisation with a family of commercially focused companies, re-investing our surplus to promote training and education for the science industries. We offer a diverse range of market-leading skills services including process safety and competency solutions in high-hazard industries, to end-to-end apprenticeship and graduate services for some of the world's leading science companies.







## Special Responsible Care Award for Process Safety Leadership

**Winner:** Victrex  
**Sponsor:** AXIOM

Improving Process Safety is key to protecting our people, hardware and the environment, enhancing our businesses and the reputation and sustainability of our industry. The Award is given to the company or site that can demonstrate Excellence in Process Safety Leadership which has directly led to enhanced process safety performance.

Victrex has demonstrated excellence in process safety leadership through a business-wide transformation that has reshaped how process safety is understood and managed across its operations. Since 2022, the company has embedded a new culture of responsibility and accountability, ensuring that process safety is no longer viewed as the domain of engineers alone but as a shared value across the organisation. Central to this transformation has been the close alignment of Process Safety Management (PSM) with Asset Integrity Management (AIM), creating a unified approach under the clear guiding message, 'keep it in the pipes'. This integration has strengthened the connection between risk management and asset reliability, improving protection for people, the environment and the community while enhancing operational performance.

The combined PSM and AIM team has led the rollout of the Energy Institute (EI) Process Safety Management Framework, embedding its principles into every level of the organisation. Dedicated process safety roles have been created at high hazard sites, and process safety champions are being trained at lower hazard locations. Measuring performance has been essential to this improvement, particularly in reducing losses of containment (LoC). Using a dedicated API 754-aligned reporting tool, shift teams record, classify and trend any release, giving immediate visibility and enabling targeted action.

Analysis of LoC data by fluid type, equipment type and cause identified open ends as a key source of releases. Victrex responded by developing and implementing an open ends register to eliminate or control these risks through inherent safety measures. The company also launched a rolling programme to refresh all hazard studies, supported by the creation of a Risk Stewardship Form (RSF) process. This system ensures any intolerable risks are reviewed and signed off at director level, reinforcing leadership engagement and accountability.

PSM and AIM performance is now managed through robust governance. Steering committees, attended by plant managers and manufacturing directors, review Process Safety Performance Indicators (PSPis) that are shared with the executive team and the board. This transparency ensures continual improvement and alignment across the organisation. A third party maturity assessment, based on the EI framework, has confirmed tangible progress, showing a clear increase in process safety maturity. Measurable results include a significant reduction in losses of containment within steam, condensate and thermal oil systems, achieved through improved design standards, optimised inspection management, defined operating windows and long term asset life planning. Other improvements include tracking of safety system overrides, rationalisation of alarms to EEMUA 191 standards and strengthened management of overdue Management of Change forms.

Competence development has advanced through organisation wide process safety introductions, technical training and initiatives such as SHE days and learning from incidents. Work with a third party training provider will further enhance capability through tiered training programmes.

At the heart of Victrex's achievement is a cultural shift in understanding that process safety and asset integrity are everyone's responsibility. Supported by strong leadership and visible governance, this approach has delivered measurable improvements in performance, awareness and accountability. By integrating process safety and asset integrity management and embedding a culture of shared ownership, Victrex has shown leadership, innovation and commitment to continuous improvement, fully reflecting the principles of Responsible Care and setting a benchmark for excellence in process safety performance.



AXIOM is an award-winning, multi-disciplined engineering consultancy delivering value-adding asset management solutions to sectors including: energy, pharmaceutical, chemical, oil & gas, bulk storage and food industries. Supporting our clients across the UK and globally, we operate from our regional offices in the major process hubs of Teesside, the Humber, the North West and Grangemouth. With the integration of Materials, Mechanical, Inspection, Process Engineering and Process Safety Consultancy Services, AXIOM is uniquely positioned to identify and mitigate key through-life risks across the asset life cycle. [www.axiom-ltd.com](http://www.axiom-ltd.com)



## Best Workplace Health Initiative Award

**Winner:** Sabic  
**Sponsor:** Grain LNG

This award is for recognition of the company or site that has presented the best workplace health initiative. Applicants should be seeking excellence in their workplace health and wellbeing programme to protect their workforce and promote safe and sustainable practices.

SABIC Teesside has delivered an outstanding transformation in workplace health and wellbeing, demonstrating true leadership in protecting and supporting its people during a challenging period of business change. Over the last four years, the site has undergone a major transformation programme while one of its main operating plants was offline for a significant improvement project. This period involved both uncertainty and job losses, making employee health and wellbeing a top priority.

To support employees through this period, SABIC created a Health and Wellbeing (H&WB) Focus Group made up of volunteers from all areas of the business. The group used both internal data and external benchmarking to identify key areas of concern and develop initiatives that were relevant and effective. Their commitment, retraining and new skills have been instrumental in delivering meaningful change. The programme has been fully supported by the Site Director and Senior Leadership Team, who have led by example by participating in events and promoting wellbeing within their areas.

Initially formed to address the impact of Covid-19 on mental and physical health, the focus group quickly expanded its remit. The team developed an engaging employee programme that included a full Health and Wellbeing Engagement Day. Over 95% of employees attended sessions covering sleep, stress, meditation, yoga, musculoskeletal health and mindfulness activities such as jigsaws and drawing. Building on this success, the group partnered with a local company to train as Health and Wellbeing Champions and developed SABIC's first H&WB Strategy and Charter, both of which were adopted by the site. The group then became Menopause Ambassadors, creating and launching a menopause policy and delivering awareness sessions across the workforce. A new H&WB Allowance was also introduced, enabling all employees to invest in activities or hobbies that support their wellbeing.

More than 92% of employees have used the allowance for activities ranging from sports club memberships and fitness apps to fishing equipment and woodworking tools. A recent employee survey showed 100% awareness of the H&WB programme, with 80% of respondents saying they had benefitted from it. The programme has achieved measurable impact. Long-term sickness absence related to musculoskeletal issues, mental health and operations prompted the introduction of bi-monthly workplace-based physiotherapy sessions, which are fully booked across shifts. Short-term sickness has remained below 1% throughout 2024.

Mental health support has been strengthened through partnerships with Andy's Man Club and Time To Talk sessions, encouraging open conversation about wellbeing. The site has also promoted healthier eating by introducing air fryers in plant kitchens, providing seasonal fruit boxes and running healthy eating workshops for shift workers. Inclusive activities such as taster sessions for golf and fishing, charity walks, football tournaments and cycling events have further encouraged participation and social connection. The programme recognises that wellbeing is personal and supports employees with varied interests and confidence levels.

SABIC Teesside's commitment to health and wellbeing has been recognised through Ambassador Status in the Better Health at Work Award for its outstanding practice and continuous improvement. The programme has been praised by both regional and global leadership as an example of best practice. By embedding wellbeing into its culture, involving employees at all levels and maintaining consistent leadership support, SABIC Teesside has created a sustainable, inclusive and results-driven programme that protects its workforce and promotes a healthier, more connected workplace community.



Grain LNG is crucial to the UK's energy infrastructure and supply security. As Europe's largest terminal and the eighth largest globally by tank capacity, our facility spans over 600 acres. Grain LNG aims to be the top LNG importation terminal worldwide, prioritising safety, reliability, and efficiency for our customers and communities.







## Chemical Industry Service Provider of the Year Award

**Winner:** CATCH UK  
**Sponsor:** SLR Consulting

The purpose of this Award is to recognise the contribution of Service Providers make to the success of the UK chemical industry. The award will recognise innovation and outstanding delivery of services for example, engineering, IT, legal, training to the chemical or pharmaceutical sectors.

### Shaping the Future of Industrial Skills for the Chemical Sector

Located in the heart of the UK's Energy Estuary, CATCH is an industry-led partnership uniquely positioned within the UK's largest industrial cluster and highest CO<sub>2</sub> emitting region. From this base in the Humber, CATCH delivers world-class training, competency development, and strategic support to the chemical, energy, and process sectors.

Driven by industry needs and underpinned by collaboration, CATCH operates a state-of-the-art training campus offering apprenticeship programmes, adult skills training, and bespoke solutions for member businesses. Its facilities are designed by industry, for industry – ensuring learners gain practical, hands-on experience in environments that reflect real-world challenges. This includes the launch of the England's largest Welding and Pipefitting Hub in 2024.

CATCH's contribution to decarbonisation and skills policy has become increasingly visible on a national level. As a strategic partner in the Humber Industrial Cluster Plan and a key voice within the Humber Freeport skills strategy, CATCH plays an influential role in shaping the UK's future workforce. The organisation is an active participant in roundtables, parliamentary events, and national skills panels – ensuring that the skills needs of the chemical sector are well represented at policy level.

Its membership model, including networks dedicated to decarbonisation, equality, diversity & inclusion (EDIB), and cyber security, ensures that CATCH remains agile and responsive to emerging challenges. These networks provide a collaborative platform for sharing best practice and addressing sector-wide concerns.

Alongside this, CATCH operates a comprehensive outreach and engagement programme to build the talent pipeline. Working with local schools, colleges, and organisations, it delivers STEM careers events and targeted guidance to encourage young people to consider careers in the chemical and process industries. This long-term commitment to inspiring the next generation directly supports employer recruitment and succession planning.

CATCH's growing apprenticeship provision is a key measure of its success, with the organisation on track to train 1,000 apprentices per year by 2030. The gender diversity of applications continues to improve, with over 25% of 2025 candidates identifying as female – a significant step forward in addressing underrepresentation in the sector.

What sets CATCH apart is its collaborative, industry-first approach. Through strategic public and private investment, it has created a training ecosystem tailored to the needs of the sector's transition to net zero. Its partnerships with organisations such as the Humber Freeport, Future Humber, CCSA, and CBI ensure CATCH remains central to economic growth and workforce resilience.

In a rapidly changing industrial landscape, CATCH continues to provide the skills, strategy, and support that the chemical industry needs.



SLR are global leaders in full-spectrum sustainability solutions: providing clients with strategic advice and on the ground support, partnering with them in Making Sustainability Happen.



## Future Leader Award

**Winner:** Elish Chambers, GSK  
**Sponsor:** The Salters' Company

This Award is to recognise an outstanding young person demonstrating communication skills and leadership associated with the chemical industry and contributing to its success.

Elish Chambers is a recent Chemical Engineering graduate and part of GSK's Chemical Engineering Future Leader Programme. Currently based at Barnard Castle, she works as an Engineering First Line Leader, leading a team of engineering technicians, ensuring safety, operational efficiency, and continuous improvement across liquid inhalations manufacturing, filling and packaging. In her role, Elish has successfully driven improvements in line reliability, led root cause analyses to resolve complex equipment issues, and implemented corrective actions that have enhanced operational performance. Her leadership has also focused on developing her team, fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous learning while ensuring high standards of compliance and safety.

During her previous rotational roles, she supported the qualification of new equipment, taking ownership of engineering workstreams and validation protocols to ensure seamless integration into manufacturing. She led the engineering redesign of a cleaning process, improving safety and efficiency, and collaborated across functions to reduce risks and enhance operational reliability. Her ability to deliver measurable improvements and drive change has established her as a proactive and results-oriented young engineer.

A passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion, Elish champions initiatives to make STEM and the chemical industry more accessible to underrepresented groups. During her time at university, she founded a "Women in Engineering" society to create a supportive network for female students, providing opportunities for networking, study support, and career development. She also mentored students from underrepresented backgrounds, helping them navigate applications to STEM courses at university. Since joining GSK, Elish has continued to drive change, leading the site's first-ever "Women in Engineering Insight Day," an event designed to inspire young women to consider careers in engineering through hands-on activities, Q&A panels, and demonstrations. She has also contributed to broader inclusion efforts, such as advocating for gender-neutral signage in procedures.

She is currently working towards IChemE chartership to further her professional development. Looking ahead, Elish is excited to lead ChemTalent where she hopes she can continue advocating for inclusivity, driving sustainability initiatives, and inspiring the next generation of STEM talent. She hopes to position the chemical industry as a global leader in addressing societal challenges, from clean energy solutions to environmental stewardship, and to ensure that it remains competitive, innovative, and welcoming to all.



The Salters' Company, one of the City of London's Great Livery Companies, has championed education and chemistry since its medieval roots in the salt trade. Today, through its scholarships, fellowships, and the outreach work of its charity the Salters' Institute of Industrial Chemistry, it promotes chemistry education and inspires young people to explore careers in chemistry and chemical engineering.





## Nick Sturgeon Unsung Hero Award

**Winner:** Martin England, Victrex plc  
**Sponsor:** Chemical Industries Association

This Award is in remembrance of CIA's Nick Sturgeon and is designed to honour an Unsung Hero who works or is closely connected to the chemical industry. The award will be given to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the industry over a number years.

Every organisation has someone who works quietly behind the scenes, rarely seeking the spotlight, yet holding the very foundations together. At Victrex plc, that person is Martin England — a well-respected, widely known, and deeply valued colleague whose selfless dedication over the years made him a natural choice for the CIA Unsung Hero Award 2025.

Martin has spent 11 years supporting the successful operation of the Victrex manufacturing site in Lancashire, not through a senior title or formal leadership role, but through consistent, hands-on, practical support that makes a real difference to people and operations alike. On site, Martin's presence is felt — he is the friendly face offering a helping hand, the first to spot and solve a problem, and the last to seek praise.

His approach is driven by one simple principle: care for people. Whether arriving at dawn during icy weather to grit the paths and keep colleagues safe, staying late to help resolve issues, or quietly fixing facilities before an important customer visit, Martin acts without prompting or fuss. One memorable example was the day the ladies' toilet block flooded hours before a VIP visit. Before anyone could react, Martin had rolled up his sleeves — literally — and dealt with the issue without hesitation or complaint.

What makes Martin's recognition all the more powerful is the way it came together. Four colleagues — from the Sustainability, Admin, IT, and Engineering Stores teams — jointly nominated him for this award, united in their belief that his contribution over the years deserved national recognition. Each of them shared stories highlighting his character: supporting team members through difficult situations, solving problems quietly in the background, and always lifting morale with a smile and good humour. These testimonials formed the heart of the nomination and spoke volumes about the kind of person Martin is — reliable, generous, and universally admired.

Recognising Martin has had a significant ripple effect. The award not only celebrated Martin's exceptional contribution, but it also shone a light on the essential, yet often unseen work done across the chemical sector every day. It reminded teams at Victrex, and across the wider industry, that true leadership comes in many forms, and that the values of commitment, humility, and compassion should be recognised just as much as commercial or technical success.

Martin's win has sparked conversations about peer recognition, teamwork, and the importance of nurturing inclusive cultures where everyone, regardless of title, feels valued and seen. His story encourages other organisations to take a closer look at the people who go the extra mile without being asked — and celebrate the quiet heroes who keep the industry moving forward every single day.



The Chemical Industries Association (CIA) is the organisation that represents chemical and pharmaceutical businesses throughout the UK. Our activities are split between lobbying and provision of advice and services. Our policy agenda stretches across the economy and competitiveness; our products and the way we work; health, safety & environment and employment issues.



## Company of the Year Award

**Winner:** Victrex  
**Sponsor:** Chemical Industries Association

The Company of the Year Award recognises the most outstanding CIA member company, demonstrating both business growth and a sustained contribution to the UK economy.

Victrex, headquartered in Thornton-Cleveleys, was greatly honoured to receive this recognition from peers across the UK chemical industry. Achieving multiple awards, including Company of the Year, reflects the company's innovative culture, long term value proposition and products that help enable environmental and societal benefits. From supporting CO<sub>2</sub> reduction in aerospace and automotive applications to bringing clinical benefits in medical devices, Victrex continues to demonstrate resilience and impact across industries.

Despite significant challenges faced by both Victrex and the wider chemical sector, 2024 marked the successful conclusion of a major investment phase to underpin future growth. The company has strengthened its foundations through investment in people, assets and capability:

- Capital expenditure of two-thirds of revenue over the past five years, including:
  - Over £15 million invested in upgrading UK polymer facilities, gaining additional manufacturing capacity.
  - A new £5 million fine powder milling facility, creating new jobs.
  - More than £10 million invested in UK monomer facilities at Rotherham.
  - Over £70 million invested in manufacturing and compounding facilities in China.
- In the medical sector, investment in the Leeds-based Medical New Product Development Centre is helping support scale-up for trauma and knee programmes, creating approximately 30 new roles.
- In 2024, Victrex began to see a recovery in their volumes, though this was partly offset by industry destocking within medical devices. Overall, sales volumes increased by 4%, and the company continues to be a significant UK exporter, with 98% of sales generated outside the UK.
- Progress in "mega-programmes" included a regulatory submission for the first-ever PEEK polymer knee replacement in India. Following year-end, TechnipFMC secured a technological order from Petrobras in Brazil for developing thermoplastic composite pipe, highlighting the global potential of this innovation as a metal replacement.

Victrex's sustainability agenda remains central to its strategy, reflected in an A rating from MSCI, sourcing 100% of its electricity from renewables and maintaining a clear decarbonisation commitment through SBTi. The company's focus on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion embedded in their culture, has also been recognised, with acknowledgement from FTSE Women Leaders for its progress and a stated goal of 40% female representation in leadership roles by 2030, compared to 25% today.

Victrex continues to demonstrate resilience and long-term potential, underpinned by differentiated products, an innovative culture, strong customer relationships, and a commitment to sustainable growth.

"The whole Chemical industry has faced many challenges in recent years. To get strong recognition for our innovative culture, long-term value proposition and products that help enable environmental and societal benefits for our customers is a real achievement. This award is a true testament to our global Victrex team, particularly reflecting Safety as our highest priority and the progress made in this area, and serves as a motivation to do even better every day in all areas of the business".



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