

## Tees Valley Mayor visits firm launching world-first academy of workplace substance management

3 years ago



Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen has visited a growing company that has established the world's first accredited Academy of Workplace Substance Management.

Billingham-based TOX247 provides bespoke training, investigation, testing, analytical and expert witness services in workplace substance management issues, including drugs and alcohol. The company is dedicated to supporting and educating businesses of all sizes and their employees on workplace substance management across any sector.

Originally based in Sunderland, the firm was helped to relocate to the Tees Valley with a £19,600 grant from the Tees Valley Mayor and Combined Authority via the Tees Valley Business service set up by the Mayor. This allowed it to establish a new office and training facility in Billingham's Belasis Hall Technology Park.

The Mayor visited the firm to learn about its development and new facility, which offers online and in-person courses to businesses and individuals. It offers globally recognised Levels 4, 5, 6 & 7 Higher Education accreditations and a license to practice each, related to workplace substance management. This helps businesses legally protect themselves and their employees, including in respect of toxicological evidence and an employee's legal duty to be fit for work.

The firm currently employs ten people, including directors Trevor Hall, Gordon Angus and Jayne Hepple, and is aiming to expand further with more tutors and analysts as well as starting a new apprenticeship

programme.

Mayor Houchen said: “Yet again a business on Teesside is thinking outside of the box and pioneering another world-first right here, this time helping to tackle the serious issue of substance use and misuse. TOX247 has a wealth of experience on the subject, which was plain to see when I toured its Billingham site – a site which was brought about in part thanks to our funding and support.

“Not only is TOX247 adding its expertise to businesses, it’s supporting local firms and organisations too, such as One Awards, which is providing quality assurance for the courses, and Calm Digital, which has developed its new website and digital marketing strategy. This is keeping our cash in the area and supporting local jobs.

“I wish the firm and its academy all the best for the future, as it grows, provides more good-quality, well-paid jobs for local people and plays its part in supporting the region’s all-important apprentices.”

Trevor Hall, group executive chairman, said: “We’re incredibly proud to become the first Academy in the world to offer these resources and it was great to see the Tees Valley Mayor, Ben Houchen, at our TOX247 Ltd HQ in Billingham. There he was also able to meet two of our Teesside based business partners, One Awards and Calm Digital.

“Ben is clearly passionate about the area, his role within it, but most of all the future of Teesside. Myself and my business partners express our profound thanks to Ben for taking time to visit with us. We all share and are active in his vision for business growth in the North East.”

*Image Credit: Tees Valley Combined Authority*