

Spotlight

Chair of the Cornerstone Employer Group
Heart of South West Careers Hub



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What is the value you get from being part of the HotSW Careers Hub Cornerstone Employer Group?

My organisation signed up to be part of the Cornerstone Employer Group because we're a growing business across the UK and we recognise the importance of careers information in developing the future of our talent pipeline. As a business we want to ensure school leavers are aware of the careers they could have in our sector (Highways and Infrastructure) and how we've evolved as a sector from the stereotypical ways we have been perceived in the past. As a responsible employer we also want to contribute to the communities we serve. This can be through careers information, mock interviews, work experience etc. and we needed a seamless way to be able to do that and have a positive impact. The group has had the added benefit of sharing best practice and lessons learnt, which continues to be hugely valuable.

What are the main benefits from becoming an Employer Chair?

Personally, the role of chair was one I was hesitant about. I feared I would not have the time for the commitment or I wouldn't be able to make an impact, particularly because, comparatively, we're not as experienced in this space as some of the other companies in the group. However, the group have been so welcoming and the careers hub team are extremely supportive. The key to our success so far as a Cornerstone group has been open communication. We all expressed that we joined the group to make a difference and add value for young people. We just needed a structured way to do that. We reminded ourselves of our purpose and the time commitment we made when we joined the group. We then built a strategy based on the career hub's strategic aims, with clear deliverables and metrics, so our day jobs met with our work as a Cornerstone group (we were back in our professional comfort zone). The value for me is now being able to see that we can make an impact and that will only grow with time. My business benefits from being involved in measurable social value activity within the local communities we serve, with clear case studies that we are able to share.



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What are the main benefits from being a member of the national community of practice for Employer Chairs?

I have only attended one national meeting to date but I found the openness and spirit of sharing to be very encouraging.

What are the main learnings so far from your collaboration with CEC?

I have learnt so much about the opportunities for employers to engage with schools through the Enterprise Advisor programme or local careers hub initiatives. I have also been reassured that issues I assumed affected only the sector I work in affect other employers in very different sectors. We have been able to discuss common challenges and share our experiences as peers which is powerful and makes a positive impact in our organisations.



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