

# Employers pledge to help young people in the Black Country prepare for world of work



29 May 2019

Employers have signed up to help young people in the Black Country prepare for the fast changing world of work.

Accord Housing Association, A.F. Blakemore & Son, KPMG and Shaylor Group have partnered with The Careers & Enterprise Company and Black Country Consortium Ltd to each become a "Cornerstone Employer" in the Black Country Careers Hub. They will invest time and resources to support local schools and colleges with their careers education and with inspiring young people.

Young people who have regular, meaningful interactions with employers while at school are less likely to be NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) when they leave school.

The employers will work closely with The Careers & Enterprise Company, The Black Country Consortium Ltd and the Black Country Enterprise Adviser Network, a network of volunteers from the world of business who are each matched to a local school to support their careers activity.

Together they will ensure that all young people across the region have access to regular, meaningful engagement with employers and gain the vital experiences of the workplace they need to help them make informed choices about their futures.

Cornerstone Employers act as champions to encourage new businesses in the area to get involved in supporting schools and colleges, as well as encouraging their own staff to become volunteer "Enterprise Advisers".

Liz Blakemore, Community Affairs Officer at A.F. Blakemore & Son said: "As a long-standing family-run business within the Black Country with extensive experience and knowledge of working within education, we have seen first-hand the difference business engagement with young people can make.

"There is a huge way to go in getting young people ready for the world of work within the Black Country. By

becoming a Cornerstone Employer we aim to engage, inspire and support more businesses to work with young people and bridge the gap between education and employment.â

Chris Pole, Partner and Birmingham Corporate Responsibility Lead said: "Through KPMGâs Corporate Responsibility strategy we aim to target our support in the areas where we believe we can make the biggest difference. We are delighted to be working collaboratively with the Careers and Enterprise Company in the Black Country, in order to allow young people in the area the opportunity to develop the key skills required in the world of work and make informed choices about their future."

Olivia OâSullivan, HR Adviser at Shaylor Group said: âAt Shaylor Group we not only look to develop our own employees, but also the residents of our surrounding communities. We are proud to continually build strong relationships with local education establishments to help prepare young people for the world of work and enhance their life skills. Becoming a Cornerstone Employer and providing knowledge, work experience and training opportunities will positively impact the local economy and tackle unemployment in the region.â

Sally Brown, Head of HR at Accord said:â Accord is proud to support this initiative, which will help young people prepare for the world of work by working with local schools. We are excited to be working with our fellow Cornerstone Employers to help young people find work within the Black Country.â

Colin Parker, Skills Director at the Black Country Consortium Ltd said:â Employers have a crucial role to play in raising the aspirations of our young people and we are grateful to our Cornerstone Employers who are ready to step up and support schools to engage with businesses and the world of work.â

Stewart Towe, Chair of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership said:ââThe Black Country LEP are excited to lend support to the Careers Hub by encouraging and enabling small and medium businesses to connect with their local school. Small and medium businesses have a vital role to play in helping to build a future talent pipeline by providing young people with a better understanding of local industry. By giving time to their local school, through their local Enterprise Coordinators, small and medium businesses can really make a difference and help influence our future workforce.ââ

Angela Moore, Black Country Careers Hub Manager said:â It is important that we recognise the incredible support that our employers offer to schools locally and the subsequent impact that has on the lives of young people and the choices they go on to make at the end of year 11 and 13. We are excited to be working more closely with our Cornerstone employers to help shape the offer to schools from businesses locally.â

Claudia Harris, CEO at The Careers & Enterprise Company, said:â We are delighted to have these employers committing to helping schools and colleges in the Black Country. All young people deserve great careers education, to inspire them, support their aspirations and prepare them for the fast-changing world of work.

âEmployers need to be at heart of that, so young people can learn firsthand about the careers and industries that are open to them. We are very grateful to all the employers for their ongoing support and commitment to helping the young people in the area prepare for their future careers.â

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