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Respect Collaboration Trust

CLAIRE WARD MAYOR OF THE EAST MIDLANDS · EAST MIDLANDS COMBINED COUNTY AUTHORITY

NETS AND ANCHORS / CASE STUDY

Respect Collaboration Trust and the EMCCA Careers Hub

Careers as a trust-wide priority, supported by a regional careers hub



Illustrative image (AI-generated), not this setting.

Respect Collaboration Trust and the EMCCA Careers Hub

At a glance

School group

Respect Collaboration Trust: three schools for young people with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs

Place

Derby, with the EMCCA Careers Hub covering Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Phase

Secondary, specialist (SEMH)

Key partners

EMCCA Careers Hub, employers including Hovis

Contributors

Pete Benyon, Respect; Charlotte Bushell, EMCCA Careers Hub (East Midlands Combined County Authority)

Make careers everyone's business across the trust, and use a regional careers hub to reach the reviews, networks and employers that no single trust could reach alone.

Anchored in place

Understanding the school context. Respect's three schools serve young people with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Post-16 pathways for the young people the schools serve are often limited, by stigma and by funding cuts, and some colleges and employers still form a view from a school's name. The Trust's aim is "equity of experience" with ambitious goals broken down into steps young people can see.

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Working in partnership. The East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) Careers Hub, through adviser Charlotte Bushell, runs termly communities of practice for careers leaders in secondary, special and alternative provision schools, who are often isolated in their role. Teacher Encounters take staff into workplaces such as Amazon to see careers learning first-hand. EMCCA facilitated Respect's Internal Leadership Review, a structured review of careers provision against the Gatsby Benchmarks, which brought the Trust's three schools together to set priorities. It also connected Respect with employers such as Hovis, which can bring a virtual reality lorry simulator into school. Charlotte encourages schools to lead with what a partnership offers the employer. Respect is also connected with Esteem, another Derby trust working on post-16 pathways for young people with SEND (see the Esteem case study) and the cross-trust collaboration offers value in shared learning.

The net: building capacity together

Respect made careers a Trust-level priority. It created a Trust Lead for careers and post-16, a deputy with careers responsibility on every site, and a family support worker alongside them. An all-staff day, "Careers is everyone's business", made careers a golden thread through the curriculum, giving students a reason for their learning. The same thinking runs through the Trust's "Inclusion by Design" approach, in which each school team writes its own measurable action plan, so solutions fit each school's context.

What is in place

A Trust careers lead, site deputies and a family support worker; an Internal Leadership Review with the Careers Hub; termly cross-trust communities of practice; new employer links, including Hovis.

The difference it is making

Careers is now shared across all staff rather than held by one person, and the Internal Leadership Review gave the three schools shared priorities. Whilst acknowledging there is always work to do, there has been a significant positive three-year trend on NEET figures across the three schools.

Respect Collaboration Trust and the EMCCA Careers Hub

Challenges and lessons learned

Parents are the biggest influence on young people's choices, yet many are unaware of post-16 pathways, and some fear losing benefits. Charlotte raised the value of building open and honest relationships with parents. The financial implications for families of young people gaining a work placement can be detrimental. An awareness of this is important when considering barriers to success.

Releasing teachers for employer visits needs cover, which headteachers often find hard to fund. Charlotte also notes that a low NEET figure doesn't show whether each destination is the right one for that young person.

Some workplaces are reluctant to offer placements, but thinking about what the employer gains from the partnership can help build a longer-term relationship, with genuine value in both directions.

How they made it possible

First step: an Internal Leadership Review with the Careers Hub, which brought the three schools together to agree priorities.

Roles and time: a Trust Lead for careers and post-16, a deputy with careers responsibility on every site, and a family support worker as coordinator; an all-staff day to make careers everyone's business.

Funding: the Trust has created dedicated careers roles at Trust and site level; the Careers Hub adds a network, review process and employer links the Trust would otherwise have needed to build itself.

Partners: the EMCCA Careers Hub, employers, and other schools such as Esteem as a fellow Derby trust working with vulnerable young people on post-16 pathways.

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Starting with what you have: connect with your local Careers Hub and join its community of practice for careers leaders; use the Careers & Enterprise Company's Internal Leadership Review to look at your provision; and hold parent events in trusted community spaces, such as community centres and places of worship, rather than only in school.

What we wish we'd known at the start

Bring parents in early: they are the biggest influence on young people's choices.

Respect Schools - Respect Collaboration Trust

In your setting

School context: Do we know whether each young person's destination is the right one for them, not just whether they are in education, employment or training?

Working in partnership: Who connects our careers leaders with others doing the same job, and when we approach employers, do we think about what they gain so that the partnership brings value both ways?

Building capacity together: Who is responsible for careers at school group level and in each school, and do all staff see it as their business?

"Careers is everyone's business."

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