

Compass' Xcelerate hub welcomes Skills Minister alongside Mayors of the West Midlands and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

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[Compass Group UK & Ireland](#) has welcomed the Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith of Malvern, Skills Minister; Richard Parker, Mayor of the West Midlands and Dr Nik Johnson, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, to its regional community skills and learning hub – Xcelerate with Edgbaston.

The visit saw officials meet with over 30 young people who were taking part in Skills Booster “Have a Go” sessions including Barista, culinary, bar and front of house training. They were doing activities such as making coffee art, creating mocktails and a culinary master class – sessions were delivered with partners including Change Please, Life Time Training and Murdo Macleod. Those taking part were able to talk about their journey into training or employment.

Xcelerate with Edgbaston is a multi-million-pound training facility, launched last year in partnership with Edgbaston. It aligns with Compass Group UK & Ireland’s dedication to creating learning and development opportunities, through its Our Social Promise – a commitment to positively impact one million lives by 2030. Working with people from within and outside Compass, it aims to enhance people’s opportunities and change their lives through job creation, education, training, community and charitable engagement.

Since launch just over one year ago, Xcelerate has enabled the training of around 3,500 people, through hosting events and educational and employment programmes. These include Sector Work Based Academies, Path 2 Apprenticeships and Skills Boot camps, which are supported by different funding

streams including from the West Midlands Combined Authority.

Jonathan Foot, Director of Skills and Early Careers, Compass Group UK & Ireland, said: *"We are very proud of the impact Xcelerate with Edgbaston has on the local community and that it is enabling opportunities for people in the area and for our industry. It was great to welcome the Skills Minister and mayors to Xcelerate to showcase our programmes and the value these initiatives can bring. We remain committed to offering opportunities to develop and progress, regardless of people's background and qualifications."*

Last year, Kundai Nazare took part in the Path 2 Apprenticeships programme, at Xcelerate. The programme is designed to support people in the West Midlands area into work – he has now secured a role within Compass and has taken on a Commis Chef apprenticeship.

Richard Parker, Mayor of the West Midlands, said: *"Through the West Midlands Combined Authority successful Path 2 Apprenticeships programme, Kundai has paved his way to a career in hospitality. He is an inspiration to all young people in the region who aspire to land the job of their dreams. I am committed to tackling unemployment in the region, especially for young people and it's why I pledged to create 20,000 work placements for young people with our local businesses. The Xcelerate hub is a fantastic example of how we can enable young people to access meaningful training and jobs, and set themselves on a path to a better future."*

Kundai Nazare, Apprentice Commis Chef, Compass Group UK & Ireland, added: *"The day was a great showcase of Compass and the Xcelerate facility. Most importantly it was an opportunity to tell the story of how to get into work and progress. I came through a Path 2 Apprenticeship programme and am now training to be a chef, it's so important that people know what options and help is available to them. Compass has supported me into work and I'm pleased to be able to share my experience."*

This visit follows the recent announcement that Compass has partnered with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to create "Xcelerate with Edgbaston Hospitality Hub", in partnership with Birmingham Central Jobcentre.