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## SPOTLIGHTING GOOD PRACTICE

### Returning to a career in energy

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For a long time, I believed a career break had closed the door on any future career in STEM. The STEM Returners programme has shown that assumption to be wrong.

When I stepped away from industry, I wasn't sure how or even if I could step back into a STEM position. Like many skilled professionals, I knew I had the experience, but I worried about the gap on my CV and whether I would get the chance to prove myself again.

That opportunity came through EDF's STEM Returners programme. In 2024, EDF partnered with STEM Returners to launch a dedicated scheme for people like me – experienced professionals who had taken time away and wanted to return. The programme offered six-month fixed-term contracts across Hinkley Point C (HPC) and Nuclear Services, with a tailored interview process designed to recognise potential as well as past experience.

The scheme attracted more than 400 applications, and 9 of us joined EDF – 7 in HPC and 2 in Nuclear Services. Importantly, 71% of us were women, compared with the industry average of just 10.9%. That in itself felt like a powerful statement – not only was EDF creating opportunities for returners, but it was also actively improving gender representation in an industry that needs diverse talent to thrive.

For me personally, the programme changed everything. It gave me the chance to demonstrate my skills and rebuild my confidence in a supportive environment. After six months, my contract was made permanent. Today, as a Completions Coordinator, I feel a renewed sense of purpose and direction in my career.

I truly believe programmes like STEM Returners play a vital role in helping skilled professionals find their footing again after a break. They unlock potential, bring in diverse perspectives, and remind us that careers can be reignited at any stage of life.

