



**Case study:** retaining talent

## ***STEM Returners Programme: placements for targeting talent***

In September 2020 SSE launched their pilot Returners Programme in partnership with STEM Returners. Designed to target a new talent pool of highly qualified and experienced candidates who had taken an extended career break or those wishing to transfer their skills to a new industry, the Programme offered 12 week paid placements with the opportunity to gain a permanent position with SSE at the end of the placement.

SSE believe innovative solutions to climate change requires diverse perspectives, different experiences and new skills to help us reach net zero and with SSE's Renewables and Transmission businesses participating in the pilot the Programme enabled SSE to achieve greater gender diversity as **all five placements were offered to women, all of whom went on to join the Businesses in permanent roles.**

The STEM Returners programme has numerous benefits for SSE and for the returners alike. SSE aspires to grow its businesses both in the UK and Ireland but also into new geographical areas across the world. To compete in these new, challenging and increasingly crowded markets, SSE knows that further innovation and diversity of thought is required to ensure they remain competitive and attract the best talent and that the principles of equality, fairness, inclusion and diversity must be at the heart of everything we do.

For the returners, their reasons for applying were many – from the opportunity to return after an extended career break, or a personal ambition to work with a values-based organisation focused on the clean energy agenda, SSE was able to offer opportunities that met the returners personal and professional needs.

The pilot proved such a success that **this year the Programme has been extended across the wider SSE Group** with 16 placements available in total, the current COVID pandemic has allowed SSE to see the benefits of flexibility across locations and working patterns and is encouraging this more and more across the Group.



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*“As part of SSE’s commitment to delivering a portfolio of low carbon projects on our*

*journey to net-zero, we need the best talent from a range of backgrounds to deliver on some pretty spectacular projects. Working with STEM Returners has enabled SSE to meet and recruit a range of talented and diverse candidates into some exciting roles. The success of the pilot programme in 2020 gave us the confidence to offer even more places across a broader range of roles and specialisms across the SSE Group in 2021.”*

**John Downes,**  
Director of Engineering  
& Innovation

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*“I had always hoped to take some time out when the children were young, and had stopped enjoying Oil and Gas as, fundamentally it didn’t fit in with my values. After*

*four years out I considered a range of things, but ultimately I knew I wanted to get into clean energy. The STEM Returners journey I have been on has been amazing, I honestly couldn’t have asked for a more fulfilling return to work.”*

**Amanda Harvey,**  
STEM Returner

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Programme expanded to **16**  
**PLACEMENTS**