

KIER, SUFFOLK

MEMBERS OF SUFFOLK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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## CHAMBER BUSINESS AWARDS

### CELEBRATING BUSINESSES

#### ONE STORY AT A TIME

Kier, members of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce is a leading provider of infrastructure services.

Making Ground is Kier's prison engagement and employment programme. It supports serving prisoners and prison leavers into sustainable employment by offering different routes into Kier and the wider industry.

Many prison leavers experience challenges finding meaningful employment on release, yet actively hiring prison leavers has been proven to reduce reoffending. Last year, only 19.4% were employed within six weeks from their release, rising to only 30.4% within six months of release. Kier's programme aims to provide opportunities which aid in rehabilitation and lessen the likelihood of reoffending.

Kier partnered with HMP Hollesley, to offer this often under-utilised or excluded talent pool, a supported pathway into the industry. By providing opportunities to these individuals, they demonstrate their commitment to inclusive employment, support their rehabilitation, and combat the industry's skills shortage.

Led by General Manager, Peter Ingram, Kier met over 140 serving prisoners assessing who best displayed the Kier values of collaborative, trusted and focused. They interviewed potential candidates and offered placements to five prisoners on Release on Temporary License (ROTL).

To provide support to the candidate, and for Kier's current employees, they also worked with a dedicated team to create the programme that supported long-term and sustainable employment, setting targets and sharing them with the Cabinet Office. The team comprised of representatives from their inclusive recruitment department, Futures Network, Inside Connections and the Ministry of Justice.

Kier's five candidates have helped to pioneer this scheme and have now become firm advocates. They presented the local social and economic benefits to Keir's client, Suffolk County Council. They also presented at the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, hosted webinars, and held talks with senior stakeholders to demonstrate the programme's positive community impact. They agreed to feature in a Making Ground film, which is now used by all partners to promote the programme.

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Two of Kier's candidates are still working with them and thriving. The other three have completed their sentences, been released from prison and settled into life in other parts of the country. Kier has also arranged for supply chain partner, Marlborough, to offer a full-time position to a prisoner who is soon to be released.

The team has also supported People Plus to develop the Streetworks accreditation course - providing prisons with suitable skills to be employable to Kier, supply chain partners and the wider industry. This will create a rippling, positive impact across the wider industry.

Kier led the way with this programme in Suffolk. It has now been adopted on contracts they operate in other parts of the county. Furthermore, the success of Making Ground in Suffolk was instrumental in helping them to achieve a change in the law allowing those on ROTL to access apprenticeships.

So far, Making Ground has generated over £1million in social value across the UK. More than £112,000 of that value was directly created by offering placements to our five candidates. “This job has turned my life around and it’s saved my life,” Making Ground participant.

