The Common Ground Shadow Board

The sectors we work in continue to face significant challenges around diversity, representation and social mobility. Too many talented young people still face barriers to accessing careers in property, construction, infrastructure and the wider built environment.

Many organisations seek young people's views, but too often these opportunities are accessed by those who are already confident, connected and familiar with professional environments.

The purpose of the Common Ground Shadow Board is to ensure that the voices shaping our future include those who have experienced the very barriers that our organisation exists to address.

When it comes to recruitment, it is easy to inadvertently deselect the very people we are trying to support so on that basis we won't be using:

- CVs
- Cover letters
- "Tell us why you'd be brilliant" type questions
- Any competency-based interviews
- Any questions that require governance experience or knowledge – it's fine/preferred if members have never sat on a committee before.

We are recruiting through trusted partners, as well as open advertising:

- MATs, schools, colleges and sixth forms across the regions
- care leaver services & charities

- local authority contacts
- youth charities
- disability and neurodiversity organisations
- youth housing providers

If you are interested in becoming part of this, please respond to these four questions:

- Why does Common Ground matter to you?
- What barriers have you seen or experienced?
- What would you change about the property and built environment industries?
- What perspective do you think is missing from boardrooms and senior leadership in these industries?

Responses can be provided in any format:

- Written form/email
- Voice note
- Video
- Via phone conversation

Please send your responses/requests for a phone conversation to:
Info@commongroundcic.org.uk

The criteria for selection will be based on candidates:

1. Having lived experience or personal understanding of barriers to entering the property and built environment sectors
2. Connection to our purpose – why the Common Ground mission matters
3. Demonstrating commitment to Common Ground's rules: ***Take the opportunity, value the support, become the support***

4. Showing curiosity, commitment, insight and a willingness to contribute

Final (balancing) selection will also consider the overall make-up of the Shadow Board. We aim to create a group with a broad balance of backgrounds, experiences, ages, routes into work, regions and perspectives.

What we will **NOT** assess:

- Previous work experience
- Academic grades
- Grammar, spelling or writing style
- Confidence in interactions we have
- Previous governance, committee or board experience
- Knowledge of the property or built environment sectors
- Whether candidates already have professional networks or contacts

We want participation to be possible regardless of financial circumstances as nothing excludes low-income young people faster than unpaid roles.

We will pay:

- a meeting attendance fee (you can also join online if necessary)
- travel and subsistence

And we can provide equipment support if needed

We will actively seek a balance of:

- lived experience of disadvantage
- different age groups (from aged 16–25)
- those with different potential or actual routes into work (still at school, apprenticeship, university, unemployed)

- those from different parts of the country
- different protected and unprotected characteristics

Many young people will have enormous insight but little governance experience so we will provide:

- a proper induction
- governance training
- pre-meeting briefings
- plain-English papers always
- post-meeting debriefs

The Shadow Board will be supported by one of three Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) who will be appointed on this basis and who will come from an education, destinations, careers and/or outreach background. The application process for this role is also now open.

There will be 10 members for a two-year term. We will appoint 6 to 8 to start with and then the further 2 to 4 after around one year to ensure a staggered end of term. The chair will be selected by the members, the identified NED (mentioned above) attends all meetings. The Shadow Board meetings mirror the main Board meetings with formal papers from every shadow board meeting sent to the main board and a standing agenda item at every main board meeting that covers the Shadow Board recommendations – and Shadow Board members may attend the main Board from time to time as needed. There will also be an annual joint strategy session between both boards.

We look forward to seeing your submission (please send before the end of September). Contact: lara.newman@commongroundcic.org.uk if you have any questions!