

Meet our Board: **Mike Garnock-Jones, Hepp Director**



Board member Mike Garnock-Jones is Director of the Higher Education Progression Partnership (Hepp) and Lead for the National Collaborative Outreach Programme in South Yorkshire (HeppSY).

Appointed in post in 2017, Mike is a highly experienced educator and strategic programme leader. We caught up with Mike to find out about his role as Hepp Director and his priorities for the coming period.

As Hepp Director, your role is to manage both Hepp and its sister programme HeppSY. What is the difference between these two programmes?

The Higher Education Progression Partnership, or Hepp for short, is a long-established partnership of the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University who jointly fund an impartial advice and support service for our children, young people and adults across Sheffield City Region to consider higher education opportunities.

Hepp South Yorkshire – HeppSY – is a sister programme funded by the government's Office for Students as part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). As one of 29 NCOPs, HeppSY's role is to target particular wards in South Yorkshire where evidence shows that young people with potential to go on to higher education are most at risk of missing out.

Both programmes have different but complementary offers. Hepp typically provides a broader, inclusive offer to schools, working with Year 7s through to Year 11s, whereas HeppSY works intensively with targeted Year 9s and above.



A partnership of
**Sheffield Hallam University
and The University of Sheffield**

www.hepp.ac.uk

Both provide a sustained programme so that students can make an informed choice about what they want to do post 16 and post 18. In fact, a school might be engaged with both programmes, with Hepp delivering for the Year 7s and 8s and then HeppSY working with the Y9s and above.

Why do we need initiatives like Hepp?

It's true that there's a lot of information out there about higher education opportunities but it is mainly provided by individual institutions who have a vested interest in recruiting students. Also, it can be difficult for individuals – whether teachers, young people or parents – to find the information that they specifically need.

Hepp is an impartial, local service. Our offer is there to support schools in giving young people and parents across South Yorkshire the best possible view of the range of opportunities open to them – be that a higher education course in a college, a higher or degree apprenticeship, or a university course in a local university or further afield. We also help schools meet the Gatsby Benchmark 7 requirement (further and higher education encounters) which is part of the government's careers strategy.

Hepp had a recent review and refresh in 2018, how has it changed?

When I came on board, Hepp was known and well used by certain schools, but I recognised the need to move to a more targeted approach to offering Hepp support to schools right across the region, based on criteria such as percentage of free school meals. We now have a coherent offer for different categories of schools and a clear focus on evidencing impact. We also recognised the need to make more support available online to be able to reach a wider audience, so we have set up a one-stop-shop for schools to access online resources to help them deliver their own sessions to students.

We are currently in the first phase of implementing the new strategy and great progress has been achieved by the whole team. There is further work to be done in

engaging with adult learners and vulnerable groups – also target audiences for the Hepp service – but good collaborative progress is being made so that we can direct our resources to the right areas.

How does the Hepp Board help?

The Hepp Board is the accountable body for Hepp so it is first and foremost the place where we report to representatives of the two universities that fund us. It is also a tangible mechanism for supporting the collaboration between the two universities. There are senior representatives of both universities on the Hepp Board and every time we meet we celebrate the value of this shared, impartial programme.

It's also been great to see representatives join the Board from the Local Enterprise Partnership, the employer base and the schools sector, which really has enhanced the debates, discussions and decisions that have been made. It's also helped to make sure that Hepp's work is aligned with other strategic initiatives in the region.

What are your priorities for the next phase of Hepp delivery?

In terms of going forward, the government has recently stated its aspiration for each area in the country to have a widening participation outreach hub. The idea is a hub that provides information and signposting to young people and parents directly, as well as supporting schools and colleges. We are very well placed locally in that we have got an existing framework for an outreach hub in the form of Hepp.

I am currently focused on ensuring that the HeppSY programme moves successfully into Phase 2 development which includes developing this new outreach hub with Hepp. When the next phase of NCOP concludes in 2021, I want to ensure that there is a strong legacy, not only in terms of impact but also a proven legacy of resources. We are fortunate that HeppSY is one of the most successful NCOP programmes in the country, thanks to our approach and the staff team, and I intend to build on that success.



A partnership of
Sheffield Hallam University
and **The University of Sheffield**

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**



The
University
Of
Sheffield.