

Young Professionals Group Report – South Yorkshire branch - 2017

At present, there are over 20,000 members in the Young Professionals Group of the BCS both in the UK and worldwide.

We have had a new committee member for the South Yorkshire BCS branch, named Kai Bentley, who had also become involved with the Young Professionals Group community. She is a fantastic addition to the committee and has come up with some really good ideas to develop the Young Professionals Group community, as well as Eva Barabas who worked really hard to organise and run a networking coding competition back in June 2017.

There was a successful networking event for Young Professionals in South Yorkshire organised by Eva Barabas and Andrew Shaw in February 2017, where a series of lightning talks were presented by professionals who had developed careers in IT, to inspire students and Young Professionals to develop their careers. The event was well received and another specialist BCS branch, the Learning and Development BCS specialist branch were interested in running a similar event to the event that was delivered.

Eva, Kai and Andrew have also continued to develop links with the recently established BCS Student Chapters in the universities of Sheffield, Bradford, Open University and Leeds-Beckett university, and are regularly in contact with them.

We have been involved with the student community at Sheffield Hallam, where again we supported “Tech for Troops”, encouraging ex-forces personnel to develop careers in IT and Cyber Security. We donated Raspberry Pis as prizes, had a stall at the event which Kai and Andrew attended and promoted the BCS to ex-forces professionals. Andrew delivered a talk about some of the possibilities that ex-forces personnel could explore to develop their careers in IT and Cyber Security.

We have kept in touch with the Women in IT at Sheffield Hallam University society, by meeting with the women from the society and mentoring them and giving advice about how they can develop their careers. We have also introduced them to many professionals, widening their network.

Eva was part of a team that put on the 10th edition of Startup Weekend Sheffield (<http://communities.techstars.com/uk/sheffield/startup-weekend/10694>) that brought together people who had tech, creating and entrepreneurial skills with the purpose of helping them create a business in 54 hours.

There are YPG representatives in Nottingham & Derby, Chester and North Wales and North Staffordshire BCS branches so maybe we could organise Young Professionals activities and develop the Young Professionals Group and student communities with them. This also provides opportunities to develop both the YPG and student communities in these areas.

Some more great news with the Young Professionals Group community is that a new committee was elected last year and the community has been revived, with more YPG events taking place recently, with more to follow. Haiyan Wu, the Chair of the

Young Professionals Group, has worked with ourselves and the other Young Professionals Group community to develop opportunities for Young Professionals to network and build relations between universities. We regularly attend the YPG meetings via conference call and raise any issues that young professionals and students may be encountering.

Eva's event was supported by BCS South Yorkshire, the BCS YPG community as well as other tech communities in Sheffield as a good way to bridge the Enterprise and Startup IT sectors, as well as making ourselves visible to a whole new untapped market of potential new members. IT entrepreneurs are not usually the target audience for BCS events and this was our opportunity to change that, to put ourselves out there and support the small IT enterprise and bring them with us.

Some of the BCS members got involved within the organisation and volunteering. Some have been coaches in the past. This was also a good opportunity for YPG to act as role models and inspire some of the attendees to develop careers within the YPG community and the BCS. Our members were also able to offer advice from a different perspective to people who are just starting out or had a different experience to their own.

For funding for YPG events, for this academic year, we will investigate how much funding is available for this academic year for YPG related activities. Funding for events can be obtained from the finance committee and we can suggest events, where feasible, to be run in South Yorkshire and the surrounding areas.

The contact list for the Young Professionals Group section of the BCS has been updated, and we will communicate the development of the Young Professionals Group and student community with the other YPG Officers and the YPG Committee. Anyone who has any suggestions on how to develop the YPG and student communities is welcome to get involved. Please contact us if you have any issues/concerns, and if you have any ideas for events, and to have a chat.

Although we are really pleased with the progress we have made so far, we would also like to develop the student and YPG communities within Yorkshire and beyond even further this academic year and hopefully establish a BCS Student Chapter at Sheffield Hallam University. We would like to thank Laura Bartle (the Student Engagement Co-ordinator of the BCS) for her tremendous help, guidance and support in establishing and maintaining the links with the BCS Student Chapters. Laura also helped us to get in contact with speakers for our YPG event in February 2017.

Finally, the YPG community is open to all professionals between the ages of 18 to 35, whether or not they have been to university. The YPG community has many events organised, as well as YPG representatives in different areas in the UK, and anyone who wishes to be involved is encouraged to do so.

Eva Barabas, Kai Bentley and Andy Shaw