

Ambition 2030

Opportunity unlocked; futures secured





**It was so helpful and really
pushed me to solidify my
career choice.**

**I'm not so stressed about what
I want to do now.**

**I learned what my core values
are and what strengths I
possess.**

Student

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Executive summary

Ambition 2030 is our bold new strategy for the next five years.

Too many of life's opportunities for young people are still shaped by factors outside of their control. Where they were born, their family's income, their school and where they live dictate the educational and career paths open to them.

At The Talent Foundry, we believe this must change.

Our vision is to **spark ambition and unlock opportunity** so that every young person can succeed and thrive as part of a fairer society. We want young people to be celebrated for their potential, not defined by their postcode.

The effect of the pandemic continues to disrupt education and social mobility. The long shadow of that period and the crises that followed has reduced young people's confidence, aspirations and belief in what is possible.

At the same time financial pressures on schools and families creates fewer chances to build the skills, networks and social capital that opens doors.

Employers also tell us there is an **ongoing disconnect** between education and the workplace - and young people agree. They say they don't know what skills they need to succeed, how to develop them, and crucially, where to start.

For those from under-served communities the prospect of doing well - of being socially mobile - is slipping out of reach.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

We believe every young person has incredible skills and talents. And when given the tools to spark their aspirations - opportunities, role models and space to develop - those talents can be unlocked.

The world of work is evolving fast. For young people to thrive in the shifting economy, employers must be part of the solution.

By **understanding the experiences of young people** and removing the systemic barriers to entry, together we can create genuine pathways into exciting and diverse careers.

At the same time, supporting young people's ambitions has an economic benefit. According to The Sutton Trust closing the social mobility gap could boost the UK's GDP by 9%.

Yet opportunities are unevenly distributed across the country and nearly 1m young people are out of work, or not in education or training (NEET).

We believe **earlier intervention** is key to solving the NEET crisis. This means delivering opportunities to practise and apply skills in real-world contexts. Providing meaningful encounters with a wide range of industries and professionals. And meeting young people where they are to build their confidence.

We see incredible young people every day and we are not giving up on them.

Through partnership and collaboration - with schools and business - we can remove barriers, unlock opportunity and secure a future where every young person has the confidence to choose the right career pathway for them.

Jenni Anderson
Chief Executive



Our strategic ambition

Ambition is one of our values, driving us to set bold goals for the future.

Our new vision for the next stage of our growth is to:

Spark ambition and unlock opportunity so that every young person can succeed and thrive as part of a fairer society.

Priorities

- Prepare young people for a future they choose
- Be a trusted connector between education and employment
- Scale our impact through sustainable growth



The interventions from The Talent Foundry have significantly enhanced the overall classroom atmosphere.

Students are more engaged, cooperative and respectful to one another. They have become more empowered and accountable as a result. They have learnt to take ownership of their behaviour and make positive choices inside and outside the classroom.

The sessions have given the students a purpose to be at school and focus on their studies.

Head of Year, Macmillan Academy



About The Talent Foundry

The Talent Foundry (TTF) is a charity that increases social mobility for young people aged 7 – 18 from under-served backgrounds.

Our purpose is to support

- **young people** from under-served backgrounds to discover their amazing talents, think big about their future and build their skills and confidence to take their next step into higher education or the world of work.
- **employers** to value young people's talents (not their background) and connect them to exciting career pathways.

Our values

Ambitious

We aim high for young people, our partners and ourselves.

Inquisitive

We are curious, we explore, ask questions and keep learning.

Do the right thing

We act with integrity, are inclusive and stand up for what matters.

Embrace change

We are adaptable, flexible and open to ideas.

We have a proven track record in delivering high-impact employability programmes in schools and have supported nearly 700,000 young people since 2009.

We are dedicated to helping under-served students develop the skills, confidence, and connections needed to succeed and thrive in the workplace.

From 2022-2025 we supported over **170,000 young people**, made possible by the investment of £5m from our partners and funders into our programmes.

Through bespoke partnerships with industry, we deliver free, high-quality and in-person programmes tailored to young people's needs, which are curriculum and Gatsby Benchmark-linked in over 600 UK schools.

Our inspiring facilitators and 1000s of industry volunteers equip students with essential workplace skills, financial confidence, technical expertise, big idea creation and bring industry-specific, real-world knowledge into the classroom to enhance their futures.

We are proud of our long-term relationships with nationwide employers including Barclays LifeSkills (12 years), Dell Technologies (12 years), M&G plc (11 years), KPMG (7 years), Network Rail (5 years), ICAEW (4 years) and the NHS (4 years) - amongst many others.



Watch our showreel

The reality of social mobility in the UK

Why we exist

- The number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) is at an 11-year high of nearly one million. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds are twice as likely as their better-off peers to be neither earning nor learning [Impetus, Youth Jobs Gap, 2025]
- Young people have less access to careers education in secondary schools, with a considerable decrease in labour market or enterprise activities [Youth Census, Youth Employment UK, 2024]
- Adults with lower working-class parents are about three times as likely to remain in similar occupations [Social Mobility Commission, 2023]
- Only 49% of respondents eligible for free school meals felt confident that they will be able to progress into a good job [Youth Census, Youth Employment UK, 2024]
- Free-school-meals (FSM) pupils from East Ham are over three times more likely to have a degree by age 22, at 35%, compared to those in Newcastle upon Tyne Central and West, at 10% [The Sutton Trust, Opportunity Index, 2025]
- 42 of the top constituencies for opportunity in the country are in London, with just eight out of the top 50 being outside of the capital [Opportunity Index, The Sutton Trust, 2025]
- People aged 28 were around 60% less likely to be employed when persistently absent (missed more than 10% of school every year) [UK Gov, 2025]
- 63% of young people from a lower socioeconomic background worry that not having the right connections will negatively impact job opportunities [Unheard Voices, Social Mobility Foundation 2023]



When I think of a successful business owner, I used to think it meant they came from a good background.

Some of the things the volunteers overcame and where they came from... made me think you can do anything if they can.

I learnt how you could come from the worst beginnings and still make a good life.

Student



Our theory of change

Outcomes

For young people

- Greater awareness of their skills and career development
- Increased interest in industry careers
- Boosted confidence in essential and employability skills
- Enhanced knowledge of skills required for industry progression
- Stronger connections with local employers
- Improved confidence in the apprenticeship/job application process



72% of young people are more aware of how to apply their skills and talents



82% had a better idea of the careers available to them



Top skills students felt more confident in: Teamwork, aiming high, creativity and problem-solving

For educators

- Educators recognise diverse employment pathways
- They feel more prepared to connect students with employers
- Schools can better demonstrate compliance with education and careers frameworks



97% of educators felt the programme added value to their careers education offer to students



84% were more equipped to connect students to meaningful employer/higher education encounters

For volunteers

- Volunteers find their participation rewarding and valuable
- They gain a better understanding of the barriers young people face today



98% of volunteers agreed it was a rewarding experience



98% agreed the skills developed by young people were relevant to their industry

For employers

- CSR/ESG and social value fulfilment
- Staff development and engagement
- Diversified talent pipeline
- Brand awareness



84% agreed they had increased their understanding of the barriers facing young people

TTF survey feedback 2024-25

Read more about how we support the Gatsby Benchmarks



Our strategic priorities

2025 - 2030





Prepare young people for a future they choose

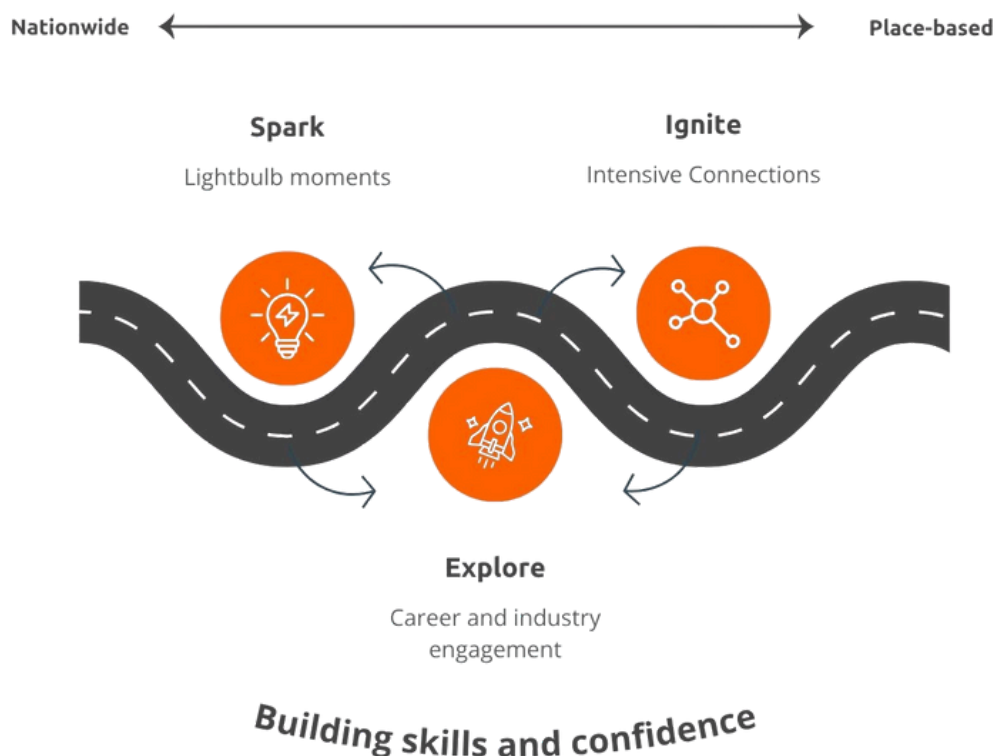
Young people have access to the knowledge, confidence and experiences they need to succeed in school and beyond

We will:

- Design and deliver engaging, **career-boosting programmes** that ignite skills and fuel aspirations
- Increase our **place-based programmes** in under-served communities, reflecting local contexts, focused on the young people most at risk of missing out on the long-term benefits of school
- Integrate **youth voice** across all aspects of our work
- Champion our distinctive, **facilitated in-person** approach to support meaningful engagements for young people
- Further develop our **bespoke programmes** around three thematic pillars for impact - Spark, Explore and Ignite

In the next five years we will unlock opportunity for over 1 million young people since we were founded.

Our programme framework



2

Be a trusted connector between education and employment

Be the go-to partner for schools and employers, connecting education and industry in ways that benefit young people and the communities they live in

We will:

- Provide fully funded experiences to schools facing the greatest barriers to opportunity
- Broker exceptional relationships between schools and employers with engagement from diverse industry role models
- Expand our reach in key economic and growth sectors reflecting where opportunities are limited by location
- Offer exceptional volunteering opportunities and increase awareness of the barriers facing young people
- Represent the needs of young people and educators to industry
- Initiate and contribute to industry and social mobility sector collaborations to maximise employers' time, skills, expertise and networks

Enablers of change

Enablers are the conditions, capacities, or capabilities that make our strategic goals achievable. These include:

- Improved social impact evidence base, measuring the quality of our programmes through consistent monitoring and evaluation and robust data analysis
- Growth in the capacity, skills and culture of our organisation
- Increased and diversified income
- Quality standards across safeguarding, governance and educational policy, ensuring our programme model is aligned to national best practice including the Gatsby Benchmarks

3

Scale our impact through sustainable growth

Strengthen our systems and income to expand our impact for young people across the UK

We will:

- Enhance our use of technology and automation, to strengthen our infrastructure and maximise efficiencies
- Ensure our existing income models, such as our transformational partnerships and new ones such as fundraising and consultancy provide a wide range of impact opportunities for young people
- Enhance our profile, influence sector priorities and advocate for young people

Working towards an additional £1m of income by 31 August 2030.

In our recent Ofsted inspection, we highlighted the work we do with The Talent Foundry as a key part of the careers and aspirations opportunities we provide to our students.

They were highly complimentary about the comprehensive career opportunities we offer, noting that they are 'second to none'.

Educator, Forest Oak School (SEND setting)



I highly recommend The Talent Foundry for its exceptional dedication to providing students with incredible career opportunities and broadening their horizons.

Through innovative programmes and partnerships, they equip young people with valuable skills, real-world experiences, and insights into various industries. This not only enhances their career prospects but also inspires them to reach their full potential.

Teacher, Oaks Park High School



We have been working with TTF for five years to build a programme which excites young people and introduces them to the many diverse career opportunities within rail.

Our staff volunteer at schools local to them to teach young people about what we do in rail, why we do it, and how they fit in.

Inspiring young people to pursue STEM subjects beyond education is key.

Amit Kotecha, Senior Early Careers Manager, Network Rail

I feel like I got real feedback from the exact people I needed to hear it from, which I can now put into practice throughout my career journey.



Student

I did indeed get that Cambridge offer! I honestly couldn't have done it without Inspire US. A few months ago, I wasn't even considering applying. When I say the programme was life-changing, I mean it!



Student

Thank you to our partners, funders and supporters

A&O Shearman | ABM UK | Barclays LifeSkills | Dell Technologies | Denford Associates | DHL UK Foundation | ICAEW and Rise partner firms | KPMG | Liverpool Hope University | Logicor | M&G plc | Mace | Maven Securities | Morgan Sindall Construction | The NHS | Network Rail | Nominet | Odgers | Publicis Pro | Reds10 | RSSB (Rail Safety and Standards Board) | SAS UK | Severn Trent | Tees Valley Combined Authority | University of Bedfordshire | University of Manchester | University of Warwick | Westminster Foundation | Willmott Dixon

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