

IMPACT REPORT 24/25

For the year ending 31 August 2025



➔ Introduction to our year

Thank you for giving my voice a chance

The Talent Foundry is a social mobility charity working in some of the most under-served communities in the UK. We support young people to build their skills and confidence, connect them to leading UK employers, and help them to think big about their futures.

Last year we supported 68,070 young people in primary and secondary schools and colleges across England, Wales and Scotland, resulting in **178,850 young people** reached through our three-year strategy, powered by over **£5m of partner investment**.

Improving social mobility cannot be done in isolation and we are proud of our continuing, long-term partnerships. With industry and educators, we help young people see in themselves that they have the skills and confidence to plan for a future of their choice.

Ambition 2030

The effects of the pandemic continue to cast a long shadow. Reduced confidence, fewer opportunities, and increasing financial pressures mean many young people are unsure on how to build the skills, networks and social capital that opens doors.

Employers tell us that there remains a disconnect between education and the world of work - and young people feel it too. For those from under-served communities, the prospect of doing well - of being socially mobile - is slipping out of reach.

Our work this year has shown that with the right support, it doesn't have to be this way. In our programmes, 82% of young people left with a clearer sense of the careers available to them and increased confidence in essential skills such as teamwork, problem-solving and creativity: skills and experiences that cannot be easily replaced by AI.

That is why, as our three-year strategy concludes, we are launching Ambition 2030:

Our vision is to spark ambition and unlock opportunity so that every young person can succeed and thrive as part of a fairer society.

What we do is also recognised by educators as being high quality helping them to meet student outcomes. 97% of educators felt our programmes added value to their careers education offer for students.

“A couple of our students who had no direction before the M&G programme, came back with a new focus and are now on track to securing a positive destination. Another is returning to school to gain further qualifications to secure their pathway.”

Teacher



You can read more about our new strategy, Ambition 2030 on our website

Partnerships

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

Through our bespoke partnerships with industry, we delivered free, high-quality and in-person programmes tailored to young people's needs, which were curriculum and [Gatsby Benchmark-linked](#) in 579 schools.

This year, we worked with 24 partners and seen that a collaborative approach to tackling inequality can make a real difference. From award-winning rail programmes with Network Rail and the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB), to piloting new models of work experience with KPMG and the Careers and Enterprise Company, we've shown how collaboration can drive meaningful change.

We also welcomed new partners to the TTF network – A&O Shearman, Publicis Pro, and the Universities of Bedfordshire, Manchester and Warwick.

We celebrated 12 years of Barclays LifeSkills with the launch of their [Workforce Ready](#) report with recommendations for government and businesses on helping young people become work ready and support long-term economic growth.

“The people were so nice and kind.”

Student

People

Our workshops come to life through expert facilitators who bring energy and enthusiasm to every workshop. Their work consistently receives amazing feedback from students, teachers and volunteers, bringing skills to life for all ages and needs.

This year, 1,944 volunteers supported our programmes. Our variety of career-boosting activities combined with engaging volunteers from industry who actively participate, bring real-world insights to young people. Engagement from all levels of an organisation is key feature of our approach to connecting young people to employers.

M&G plc's senior leadership team, including Chair, Edward Braham and CEO, Andrea Rossi, engaged with students during an immersive [Experience Day](#). The event featured a Q&A session on leadership and future careers, interactive seminars on financial literacy and practical activities such as mock interviews and speed mentoring.

Our first impact study into the [benefits of volunteering](#) revealed just how powerful employee volunteering can be in closing the opportunity gap.

84% of volunteers gained an increased understanding of the barriers facing young people – insight that is helping to shape more inclusive recruitment practices and cultures. And volunteers also honed their own vital skills in communication and leadership.

“It was so fulfilling! To engage with young people I personally identify with and say ‘you can achieve anything’ was so rewarding.”

Volunteer



Place

Opportunity is not evenly distributed. According to the Sutton Trust's Opportunity Index, 42 of the top 50 constituencies for opportunity are in London.

This year, we worked across 158 local authorities, deepening place-based programmes in Blackpool, Liverpool, Manchester, Middlesbrough and Rochdale to unlock opportunities where they are needed most. Focusing on programmes outside of London will be key in our new strategy, and this year 72% of students lived outside of the capital.

For an insight into our place-based programmes watch our [Spark Liverpool film with A&O Shearman](#).

TTF also located itself 'across the pond' in November 2024 for a key moment in global politics. Through our Inspire US programme, we took 17 young people from four schools to Washington DC to develop their campaign and social action skills. Read more about their experience on page 12.

Our focus on understanding and responding to the societal and economic needs of a place will be a key part of our new 2030 strategy within our Ignite programmes. With our understanding of young people's experiences and our mission to connect education to employment, we can create genuine pathways into exciting and diverse careers.



Jenni Anderson
Chief Executive



Sir David Bell
Chair of Trustees

“I have yet to attend a Talent Foundry programme or event that has not been massively beneficial for our students' growth outside of the classroom, whether that's linking to work, university or knowing how to link things they learn in school to the bigger picture of life after school.”

Teacher

It is such a pleasure and privilege to lead this team that truly embodies the power of partnerships to unlock potential.

Every day we work with incredible teachers, facilitators, volunteers, and partners – who consider talented young people in communities across the UK deserve the same opportunities as their more privileged peers. There is no better job.



➔ The Talent Foundry approach

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

Our vision is to spark ambition and unlock opportunity so that every young person can succeed and thrive as part of a fairer society.

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

We refreshed our values in July 2025:

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.

The Talent Foundry Team

Our staff team at The Talent Foundry has grown this year to 21 full time equivalent members in line with the expansion of our programmes and partnerships and the capacity-building of our engagement team.

After moving from a permanent London office to home working in 2022, our team come together a couple of times a month for Team Together Days. These continue to be kindly hosted by our partner, SAS.

Remote working has enabled our team to be reflective of the communities we work in and harness local talent and understanding of the barriers facing young people in towns and cities outside of London.

Within the team we have several cross-organisation working groups including mental health, alumni, impact and fundraising.

We established a new engagement directorate focused on school outreach, digital communications and marketing. We plan to invest further in fundraising and impact roles in 2025-26.

Our bespoke workshops are delivered by our facilitator network who provide exceptional and inspirational facilitation, fun and motivation in the classroom. Everyone in our network shares our ambition to support young people to aim higher. They bring a wide range of professional experiences and understand how to engage young people, including teaching, performance, coaching and mentoring and SEND experience, with many also bringing relevant industry expertise including STEM and money management.

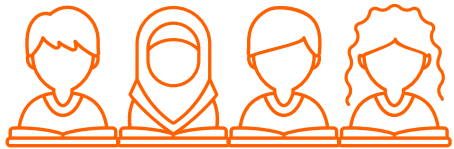
We're committed to attracting talent from the widest possible pool. Research shows that people whose parents went to university are far more likely to have a degree themselves (64%) compared to those whose parents had no qualifications (18%). That's why we don't require a degree to work at TTF. In fact, 63% of graduates in our team were the first in their family to go to university.

We are members of The 5% Club, Fair Education Alliance (FEA), The Institute of Student Employers (ISE), The Tech Future Taskforce, the Social Mobility Leaders' Forum and Progress Together.

“TTF genuinely cares about making a meaningful difference to young people's lives. I am proud to work in a place that puts so much thought into creating stand-out opportunities and experiences for students. It's a supportive team to work in and I've loved becoming a part of it.”

Jade, Programme Manager

➔ What we did in 2024/25



68,070

YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED



5,746

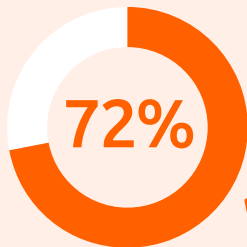
COMMUNITY BENEFICIARIES



PROGRAMMES



PARTNERS

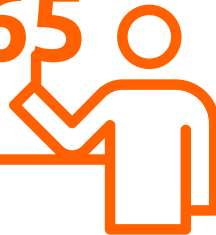


OF OUR STUDENTS LIVE OUTSIDE OF...

LONDON

WORKSHOPS

1,665



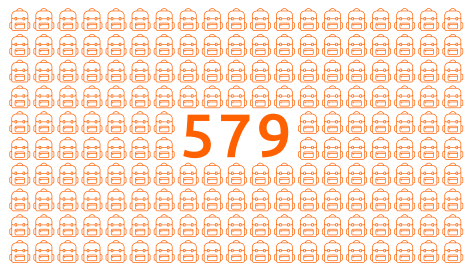
VOLUNTEERS

1,944



PLACE-BASED PROJECTS

- Blackpool • Liverpool
- Manchester • Rochdale
- Middlesbrough



579

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

73%



of the secondary schools in England that we supported have more students eligible for pupil premium than the national average.

SECTORS WE WORK WITH

- Financial Services / Healthcare
- Professional Services / Logistics
- Railways / Law / Higher Education
- Construction / Technology
- Creative Industries



➔ What educators say

Siobhan Charnley,
St Cuthberts RC High School, Rochdale

Our students have truly loved being part of the M&G Skills for Life project in Rochdale. It has been incredible to witness their growth in both confidence and skills.

The dedication of the staff and volunteers who contributed their time and effort has made a real impact. Their support has equipped our students with valuable skills and knowledge that they will carry with them throughout their lives. The students were so engaged that they didn't want it to end!

Some of the pupils who attended were uncertain about their education and future career paths. However, speaking with the staff and volunteers involved in the project gave them a valuable insight into the many career opportunities available to them.

It is crucial for students to engage with professionals from diverse backgrounds to explore potential career paths. Many had little idea of what they wanted to do or what careers might suit them.

Through guidance, advice, and confidence-building activities, they were able to broaden their horizons and recognise the possibilities available to them. This experience helped them realise that with the right mindset and determination, they can achieve their goals.

Matt Rea,
Fitzalan High School, Cardiff

What stood out to me about the **KPMG Opening Doors** programme was how interactive and inspiring it was. The chance to speak directly with professionals from different departments gave a real insight into the variety of careers available.

I also appreciated how the activities were designed to build confidence and essential life skills like teamwork and communication.

The welcoming environment and the encouragement to ask questions made the experience feel personal and empowering. The programme boosted students' confidence, communication, and teamwork skills. It raised their aspirations by exposing them to real career paths and helped them better understand the workplace. Several students returned more motivated, with clearer goals and a more mature attitude.

Tutu Alaka,
Thomas Becket Catholic School, Northampton

The **Dell Technologies Big Idea** workshop was a fantastic opportunity for our students to develop creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving skills in a real-world context.

The activities were engaging and inclusive, and it was inspiring to see students confidently pitch innovative solutions to social challenges.

This experience has not only boosted their confidence and communication skills but also broadened their aspirations for future careers in technology and social enterprise.



David O'Sullivan, Deputy Head of Sixth Form, Oakwood Academy - a special school for pupils who have a range of learning difficulties

The **SAS Future Analysts** programme was excellent quality. The TTF facilitator paced the course well and got all the students involved.

All students taking part had moderate learning difficulties, most with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) diagnosis, and the facilitator built a trusting relationship which gave them confidence to answer challenging questions. The feedback from the students was excellent.

We also took part in the **Dell Technologies Powering Potential** programme in Manchester.

The facilitators are always excellent and work hard to get everyone involved. The mentors help raise the aspirations of our students. It opens the students up to wider opportunities.

For example, one ASC student who is incredibly shy was able to stand up in front of everyone and speak with confidence.

Educator outcomes



said our programmes were excellent or good



were satisfied by how the programme linked to the curriculum



felt the programme added value to their careers, education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for young people



agreed that students started to think more confidently about their futures



agreed that students became more aware of how to apply their skills and talents to develop their ambitions

Unless otherwise stated, all data in this report is based on post-programme reflection surveys from students, educators and volunteers from the 24-25 academic year.

➔ Impact Stories

- Politics just didn't seem accessible to me
- Presenting became second nature
- Becoming workforce ready
- Collaborating for impact
- Exploring industry
- Powering pathways to Higher Education
- Championing opportunity through volunteering
- Pedalling for potential





Politics just didn't seem accessible to me

Inspire US

In 2024, our Inspire US initiative gave students the chance to demonstrate their campaigning and advocacy skills, with the ultimate prize being an **eight-day trip to Washington DC** in October for the winning teams.

Once in the USA, and having beaten over 200 competitors to get there, the winning participants joined a fully immersive experience against the backdrop of the 2024 US Presidential Election.

They visited The White House and learnt about key power structures and histories in the US, networked with campaign experts and lobbyists and experienced first-hand the reality of doorstep politics. The students knocked on 2,269 doors to speak to residents about the Democrats' campaign, learning what matters most to voters.

“A highlight of the trip was the canvassing, and understanding the information the public can know, in terms of who's voted, where they live and how to speak to them.”

Keisha, Preston Manor School alumnus

“The students were curious and full of energy, and it was just brilliant to see how motivated they were to drive change and ensure their voices are heard.”

Amy Leonard MBE, The Talent Foundry's founder and trustee

While the prospect of visiting the USA inspired many to get involved, the primary focus of the programme was rooted in making waves of social impact in the UK.

Teams of students were challenged to design and deliver a campaign over three months that either improved cohesion through cultural awareness or tackled a politically relevant issue in their local community.

Over the course of the programme, students built teamwork, communication and influencing skills, applying creativity and critical thinking to projects that made a meaningful difference.

Students received guidance from mentors and engaged with peers, conducted focus groups and interacted with community stakeholders to refine their campaigns.

From 73 entries nationwide, ten teams were selected to present at the Finalist Forum in London before a professional panel of judges. Winning teams were awarded grants to extend the reach and impact of their campaigns and secured the Washington trip as the ultimate recognition of their efforts.

Campaigns developed by students addressed issues such as child poverty, climate change, potholes and road safety, sports in youth clubs, domestic violence, unconscious bias in healthcare, the cost-of-living crisis, youth support, reduction of vape use, and period poverty.

One winning team produced an anti-vaping campaign that reached over 1,000 students, demonstrating the programme's impact on local health and lives.

The 2024 Inspire US cohort benefitted from the close partnerships which made the programme possible, with partners and supporters including Angus Walker, Andy Bookless at A2P, Denford Associates, George Coote at ITN, John Blake, Jonathan Phelps at X, Michael Barber at Grow Schools, Sam Draper, and Winning Connections.

Support from schools, corporate partners, charitable donors and local authorities ensured that students from diverse backgrounds could access this life-changing experience. The financial support, mentorship and guidance provided by these partners were central to the programme's success.

“I'm proud to have been involved with the Inspire US programme since its inception in 2012. Having interacted with the students in Washington DC, I know that The Talent Foundry continues to have a lifelong impact on the students that participate in this transatlantic political experience. The intellectual curiosity, determination to make a difference, and even the intense competitiveness shown by the students was impressive and reflect the values that my team at A2P share.”

Andy Bookless, CEO A2P

Politics just didn't seem accessible to me

For many participants, Inspire US was a transformative experience beyond the scope of a single campaign.

Students returned from Washington with enhanced independence, confidence, and a renewed sense of what they could achieve. Several have since taken leadership roles in school, pursued further social action initiatives in their communities and in work, and others have embarked upon university degrees, with three students at the University of Cambridge.



“This changed my idea about what I want out of life. From being obsessed with being alone and having walls up, I now understand the benefit of being surrounded by people with my beliefs and people who disagree. I now have connections which can help me achieve what I want out of life.”

Phoebe, Weatherhead High School alumnus

“I was going down the science route because politics just didn't seem accessible for someone from my background.

Inspire US completely changed that perspective I met political campaigners and journalists, and it just felt so real... And not only did I have the privilege of partaking in it, but it boosted my confidence.

Inspire US has been more than an experience - it's been a reminder that my background doesn't limit my dreams but rather gives them strength and purpose.

Thank you for giving my voice a chance.”

Manel, HSPS student at The University of Cambridge

You can read Kavya's, Preston Manor School alumnus, Schools Week OpEd article [about her experience online.](#)

Presenting became second nature

Bridge to M&G

When Haaris joined the Bridge to M&G programme, he had limited knowledge of apprenticeships and of M&G plc itself.

The programme quickly gave him valuable insight into the company, its culture, and the wide range of career opportunities available.

Through the workshops, coaching, and the TTF summer residential, Haaris developed essential skills such as teamwork, communication, and presenting.

He found the opportunities to practice his public speaking throughout the programme particularly valuable: 'Presenting became second nature to me.'

One-to-one coaching was also key in giving him clarity at each stage of the application process and helping him strengthen his CV:

“The CV building was great as my CV was not the best and I had to change it and tweak it a lot which my coach helped me do.”

The residential was another highlight, giving Haaris the chance to apply his skills in a new environment. He later used examples from these activities to demonstrate problem solving and resilience in interviews.

First-hand insights from M&G colleagues also played a central role in Haaris's journey.

“Talking to apprentices and other employees was something you do not get to do often, and it really helped me understand what it was actually like to work at the company.”

Haaris credits the programme with preparing him to take on new opportunities both inside and outside of work.

“I was coaching at my sports club, and the Mayor of London came down along with the BBC and news channels. I was interviewed, and if I hadn't developed my communication like I did on the Bridge programme, I may not have been able to do that interview.”

The programme ultimately gave Haaris the confidence and preparation he needed to secure a role as an Analytics Developer apprentice at M&G.

“The Bridge programme helped me make sure that the role was right for me and gave me the exclusive opportunity to see the business up close and see what the day-to-day was like.”



Becoming workforce ready

Barclays LifeSkills

“This is a great programme for your children to be involved in, easy to set up, delivery by a professional, with positive impact on the children.”

Ryan Gumley, Kinraig Primary School

Established in 2013, our partnership with Barclays LifeSkills ensures all young people - especially those from under-served backgrounds - can access high-quality careers education.

Entering our 12th year of working together and having supported over 250,000 young people in that time, each year we consider what more we can do together to reach those furthest from employment opportunities.

Our partnership combines our expertise in delivering engaging and high impact workshops in under-served schools, with the high quality Barclays LifeSkills employability and financial capability programme, enabling us to expand the programme to support students in a range of settings and locations.

This year we:

- Supported more primary schools and schools supporting students with SEND
- Delivered intensive intervention programmes to Year 12 and 13 students in London and Northampton
- Supported students to visit Barclays branches and offices to meet colleagues and experience the world of work

In May, Barclays LifeSkills launched its [Workforce Ready](#) report, a timely publication underscoring the importance of partnership between government, education and business.

Over a third of businesses feel that 17-18-year-old school leavers are not prepared for the world of work - rising to 43% for further education students (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development). Reasons for this include a lack of work experience, poor work attitude and a lack of employability skills.

Our partnership enables the targeted delivery of workshops and interventions where the need is greatest, providing sessions focusing on building confidence, enhancing communication skills and igniting ambition and aspirations. Through activities such as CV writing, interview preparation and number confidence, students gain practical skills that are directly applicable to the workplace.



“The Barclays programme was a fantastic opportunity for our students at Stratton School. It was inspiring to hear them talk so enthusiastically about the experience, even on the journey there! The programme really encouraged them to think about their future and what steps they need to take to achieve their goals. They particularly enjoyed hearing the personal stories and career journeys of Barclays staff, making a lasting impression. It was clear that the students grew in confidence, coming out of their shells, engaging in meaningful conversations, and sharing their own thoughts and experiences. It was an incredibly valuable experience for them.”

Alina El Tawagny, Stratton School

OUTCOMES

90% of participants reported increased confidence in themselves and their abilities. Students who initially lacked confidence or were disengaged became vocal and more motivated about their goals.

A high percentage of students became clearer about their career paths.

We are proud that our work together was celebrated with a silver award for the most effective long-term commitment at the Corporate Engagement Awards in 2025.

LifeSkills is independently evaluated by Chrysalis Research.

“The facilitator was amazing with our SEND students. It was great to see some of the learners that don't always engage really keen to take part. The pace of the session, the level and delivery worked really well. The courses we picked were relevant to helping them with their goals towards reaching paid employment.”

Darren Barber, Fairfield Farm College, a Specialist College for students with learning disabilities



Collaborating for impact

Opening Doors to Opportunities (ODtO) with KPMG

On average, only 49% of Year 10 pupils take part in work experience (The Key). Access is often influenced by geography and socioeconomic background, with disadvantaged young people disproportionately missing out - a lack of work experience remains the top barrier to employment for young people (Youth Census).

In June and July, we supported a pilot programme in partnership with The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and KPMG.

The programme followed CEC's Modern Work Experience approach, designed to provide equitable access to high-quality, multi-workplace experiences across Years 7 to 11. Our involvement helped advance the Government's vision for every young person aged 11-16 to access 10 days of meaningful work experience during their education.

Through this pilot, students from under-served communities gained direct exposure to diverse employers and careers, with schools and employers benefitting from a scalable, collaborative approach to careers education.

TTF's role was to bridge the gap between schools and industry, helping employers understand students' needs and ensuring that experiences were practical, inclusive and effective.

Across four schools, ODtO offered students access to two workplaces in a single day. Activities focused on confidence-building, career understanding, and practical skill development, culminating in a celebration and reflection session at KPMG UK's Canada Water HQ.

“The students were engaged throughout... One group was close to giving up and the TTF facilitator supported them with ideas and spoke through how to manage failure.”

Educator

Collaboration was central to the pilot's success. Working with the CEC ensured alignment with institutional frameworks such as the Gatsby Benchmarks and equalex, while industry partners enabled free delivery of workshops. The pilot offered schools a practical way to provide flexible, modern work experience while meeting educational standards.

[Read the Impact Report from the pilot](#)



Award-winning railway

Our rail industry collaboration was established with Network Rail in 2020 to drive social mobility and strengthen the rail industry's talent pipeline. It inspires and equips young people from under-served communities with skills, knowledge, and confidence to pursue rail careers.

“I learned how to work in a group environment and how project management works. This is a great and diverse industry to work in, and it gave me a great insight on how people work together.”

Briana, Lillian Baylis Technology School

Since then, we have engaged thousands of students through two high impact programmes – Track to the Future (Years 12-13) and Lightbulb Moments (Years 7-8) in England, Scotland and Wales.

These workshops address misconceptions about the rail sector, provide practical experience, and develop essential workplace skills, bridging the gap between education and employment.

In 2024, the partnership expanded through support from the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB), enabling broader sector involvement. Participating organisations now include Arriva Rail London, East Midlands Railway, Alstom, Northern, Govia Thameslink Railway, HS1, Porterbrook, Transpennine Route Upgrade, Transport for Wales, Stadler Rail, and CAF – with more continuing to join.

Our collaboration addresses key workforce gaps, with only 6.3% of rail workers being under 25, as well as promoting diversity in a predominantly white, male sector.

Volunteering plays a key role in what we offer students, with nearly 1,000 hours contributed by industry professionals between 2023 and 2025.

Feedback from students, educators, and volunteers highlights the transformative impact of the programmes, with 93% of students reporting increased career awareness.

The collaborative approach won the gold award at the 2025 Corporate Engagement Awards and Highly Commended award at Charity Business Awards.

“In my group there was a student who was very quiet, and appeared to lack confidence. I spent time coaching him and he introduced the start of a final presentation. The reaction of the other students was really good to see. It was a really special moment that the student and the larger group should rightly be proud of.”

Volunteer, Track to the Future, Network Rail



Exploring industry

Aligned to The Career & Enterprise Company's new equalex framework, and the Government's guarantee for all students to have 50 hours' worth of work experience, we work with a range of industries to facilitate meaningful connections between young people and the workplace.

To support teachers in measuring the impact of their careers programmes, our opportunities are also linked to Gatsby Benchmarks 5 and 6, giving students in-person encounters and experiences of workplaces.

Students gain tangible experience of the world of work and have the chance to practise crucial employability skills through real work scenarios and meeting role models.

LOGICOR

In our third year of working with Logicor, we moved our Reach programme to Derby. This employability workshop, delivered in local schools, offered students a practical insight into the logistics real-estate sector.

Students worked on tasks drawn from Logicor's daily operations, with support from volunteers including, Charlie Howard, Logicor's UK Managing Director.

He shared that the programme was "enjoying and fulfilling to be part of... Working with young people opens everyone's eyes to so many things. It's a great experience."

One teacher said that the workshop "made the world of logistics come to life for students... opened their eyes to numerous opportunities within the industry and improved their confidence and presenting skills."

- 97% of students rated the programme as 'Excellent' or 'Good'
- 87% of students reported increased confidence in teamwork

MAVEN SECURITIES

Our three-year collaboration through the Secure Your Potential (SYP) programme has enabled us to expand young people's access to meaningful workplace insights and professional networks.

The programme supported Year 12 students in London with lower confidence or from under-represented backgrounds, ensuring it delivered high-quality access where it was most needed.

Students participated in a mentoring and workshop series hosted at Maven's central London offices.

At the end of the programme, 94% of students said they felt more confident in their speaking skills.

"SYP is a must in the diary as students get to experience an industry setting and hear from real professionals. They grow in developing presentation skills and grow overall in the ability to write competitive application forms and answer interview questions due to the excellent coaching programme on offer."

Teacher, Greenshaw High School



PUBLICIS PRO

Jon Lonsdale, CEO at Publicis Pro, led a series of 'Turning Pro' workshops aimed at Year 12 and 13 students in London.

“We decided that we wanted to open our world to more young people who are at a place in their lives where they are looking for inspiration for their future.”

The sessions provided hands-on experience in marketing, helping students develop transferable skills and explore career paths in the creative industry.

The active participation of senior leaders enriched the programme and underscored the importance of leadership engagement in fostering youth development and social mobility.

“Our Turning Pro programme with The Talent Foundry shows that telling extraordinary business stories is fun, creative, thought provoking and also the route to a rewarding and diverse career.”

Jon Lonsdale, CEO at Publicis Pro

“It was wonderful being able to spend time sharing my experiences with young people and inspire them in their future prospects.”

Lucia, Volunteer

SAS

Our work with SAS UK has continued to provide meaningful work insights to young people in a sector that can often be overlooked by students who think it is not accessible.

Through our first programme together - Future Analysts, students explored the real-world power of data to inform decision-making and drive innovation across industries.

For students in Years 12-13 (Scottish S5/S6), the programme offered tangible experience with data analytics while building essential employability skills such as teamwork, communication, and critical thinking.

SAS volunteers guided students through practical challenges and shared their professional journeys, helping to demystify careers in STEM and data science.

The collaboration reflects SAS UK's wider mission to equip the next generation with digital and AI-readiness skills and access to data literacy training. This year we expanded the programme to include Better Futures.

- 96% of students stated they now know more about the skills they need to progress a career in the industry
- 90% of students became more aware of how to apply their skills and talents to develop their ambitions

“I'd highly recommend the Future Analyst programme to any teacher looking to give their students a strong foundation in data analysis. It offers a perfect balance of theoretical insight and practical application, making data concepts accessible and engaging.

Students gain hands-on experience with SAS software, which not only boosts their technical skills but also provides them with a real-world perspective on data analysis.”

Educator



Powering pathways to Higher Education

Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are still facing significant barriers to higher education. In 2023-24, only 29% of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) progressed to university by age 19 (Gov UK).

Through partnerships with Higher Education, including the University of **Manchester**, the University of **Warwick**, the University of **Bedfordshire**, and **UA92**, we offered bespoke programmes to power students' aspirations to consider higher education pathways.

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

With the University of Manchester we broke down barriers to inspire young people to genuinely see university as a place for them.

Through the **Black Heritage Project**, students in Years 9 and 10 explored the Faculty of Humanities, developing teamwork and problem-solving skills while learning how humanities degrees build transferable skills for life. Teachers praised the experience as "significantly more engaging" than other university visits.

POWERING POTENTIAL

With support from Dell Technologies, Year 12 and 13 students gained the confidence to pursue their next steps into a degree apprenticeship or university.

Not only do the participants on our programmes develop their skills and dream big, but the repercussions spark ambition in their peer and family networks, too.

Mariyam, a student at Salford City College, told us how the programme had helped her and her family.

“All the knowledge I got from this programme I passed onto my younger brother. I told him you do not need to worry about things you are not sure about right now. Choosing science or computing to study will not restrict you. Never shy away from exploring things and meeting new people.

Programmes like this mould you or polish what you already have. It has benefitted me, and because of all this knowledge I now have, it is also helping my family.”

After completing the programme, Maryiam has gone on to study an Access to HE Diploma (Computing and Digital Technology) at Future Skills in Manchester.

“Above all, they saw university as a viable pathway for them. One student, on walking around the campus during the second visit said, ‘I can really see myself fitting in here’ and the people he had engaged with were his ‘kind of people’. You can’t get better than that!”

Educator, Droylsden Academy

“The students really flourished. They got to work with other students from schools across Greater Manchester who share a similar ethnicity and to also see how vast and exciting life is after school.”

Caroline McKeeney, St Paul's Catholic High School

Championing opportunity through volunteering

Dan Merritt, Dell Technologies



When it comes to long-term impact, few volunteers have made as profound a difference as Dan Merritt, Dell Technologies Solutions Architect. This year, his dedication was recognised nationally when he won the **Volunteer of the Year Award** at the **Third Sector Charity Awards** - a fitting tribute for more than a decade of commitment, leadership, and impact.

Dan's journey with The Talent Foundry began over twelve years ago when he helped the charity with a technical challenge - building a 'Tech Bus' to take digital learning opportunities to under-served schools.

"Initially, I just thought it would be a break from the usual routine, I didn't think much of it beyond being a fun way to volunteer my time," Dan shared, "but having met the team and seen their passion - I was all in."

Since then, Dan has become an instrumental part of The Talent Foundry's partnership with Dell Technologies, helping to shape initiatives that connect thousands of young people to the tech industry. From the early Powering Transformation programme in 2013 to recent initiatives such as Bridge to Tech, Dan's leadership and advocacy have inspired hundreds of Dell colleagues to volunteer and mentor.

His passion for fundraising has also created transformational opportunities. Since 2013, Dan has been taking part and supporting overseas challenge events - first the Kilimanjaro Challenge and then the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu in 2022. Over 10 years, **£110,000** has been raised from these events.

In recognition of his commitment, The Talent Foundry was also named the **charity partner for the 2025 Dell Technologies Management Challenge**, an annual three-day challenge event that combines physical endurance (cycling, running, canoeing and orienteering) with fundraising and networking. 25 teams comprised of Dell colleagues, and their tech partners raised **£55,000** to support The Talent Foundry's mission of sparking ambition and unlocking opportunities for young people.

For Dan, the award is not about personal recognition but shared success:

"It's truly a testament to the work of all the Dell volunteers and the team at The Talent Foundry that these programmes have stood the test of time and continue to inspire so many children each year. Here's to the next 12 years."

Dan's story is a powerful reminder that when passion meets purpose, the ripple effects can last generations.

What's next?

In October 2025, the Dell team, alongside its partners, is continuing its support for young people, by taking on an epic challenge of trekking to Everest Base Camp.

A team of 24, led by Steve Young, Senior Vice President and Managing Director of Dell Technologies UK, will be trekking for 11-days to reach altitudes of 5,000+ metres.

Pedalling for potential

Our 2024 – 2025 cycling challenges

This year, our supporters from the estates and built environment sector once again demonstrated their incredible commitment, determination and community spirit through two remarkable cycling challenges - Copenhagen to Berlin and London to Brighton.

Copenhagen to Berlin

In September 2024, riders from Morgan Sindall Construction, Reds10, Willmott Dixon, Flywheel IT Services, Nexus Associates, Mott MacDonald, Wates Group, DBE Services, alongside ambassadors from the Department for Education (DfE), took to their bikes for an unforgettable journey across Northern Europe.

Over three days, cyclists pedalled from Copenhagen to Berlin, covering 270 miles through rolling countryside, quiet rural roads, and historic German towns. Their determination paid off, with an incredible £54,462 raised to support programmes that build confidence, aspiration, and opportunity for young people across the UK.

This year's challenge event marked five years since the charity's trustees and supporters from the DfE organised the first cycle challenge in 2019.

The camaraderie and endurance shown by everyone involved truly embodied our Pedalling for Potential spirit. The event was not only a physical challenge but also a powerful reminder of what's possible when organisations and individuals come together – united by a common purpose.

The challenge would not have been possible without our Platinum partners Morgan Sindall Construction, Reds10 and Willmott Dixon, and our Gold partners Flywheel IT Services.

The sixth annual cycle challenge is taking place with a ride from Prague to Munich in September 2025.

London to Brighton

Back in the UK, May 2024 saw the launch of a brand-new cycling event: the London to Brighton Cycle Challenge, delivered in partnership with Morgan Sindall Construction. Starting from one of Morgan Sindall's sites, the Woolwich Leisure Centre project, and finishing in Brighton, the 65-mile route and the famous Ditchling Beacon tested the riders' fitness levels.

45 riders raised over £14,500 to fuel The Talent Foundry's work.

“We're thrilled to be supporting the first of The Talent Foundry's one-day UK-based cycle challenge and continuing our long-term support of the important work they do within the communities we serve. It's a great opportunity to come together with like-minded people in aid of a great cause.”

Dave Wood, Framework Director, Morgan Sindall Construction





We supported 68,070 young people across 45 programmes including:



Lightbulb Moments

- The Big Idea (Dell Technologies)
- Big Ideas at the University of Warwick
- Powering Transformation (University of Bedfordshire, University of Manchester)
- Meet the Team (Dell Technologies)
- Reach Derby (Logicor)
- Enterprise Challenge (M&G plc)
- Lightbulb Moments (Network Rail)
- Powering Teesside (Tees Valley Combined Authority)
- NextGen Nurse (NHS North East & Yorkshire)

Career Insights and Building Skills

- Facilitate Now! (ABM)
- Barclays LifeSkills
- Rise, championed by ICAEW
- WorkReady (KPMG)
- Opening Doors to Opportunities (KPMG)
- Black Heritage Project (University of Manchester)
- Skills for Life & CV Review (M&G plc)
- Masterclasses and Experience Day (M&G plc)
- Turning Pro (Publicis Pro)
- Track to the Future (Network Rail and RSSB)
- Future Analysts (SAS)

Intensive Connections

- Spark Liverpool (A&O Shearman)
- Powering Potential (Dell Technologies)
- The Bridge (M&G plc and Mace Group)
- Roddy Thomson Memorial Bursary (M&G plc)
- FLOW (Severn Trent)
- Skills for Life, Blackpool, Middlesbrough and Rochdale (M&G plc)
- Secure your Potential (Maven Securities)
- Inspire US

Plans & Priorities

Ambition 2030

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

With nearly 1m young people 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 partnerships and collaboration - with schools and businesses - 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.

Over the next five years, we will unlock opportunity for over 1 million young people in total since we were founded, while working towards an additional £1m of income to realise our ambition.

Priorities

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

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

Scale our impact through sustainable growth

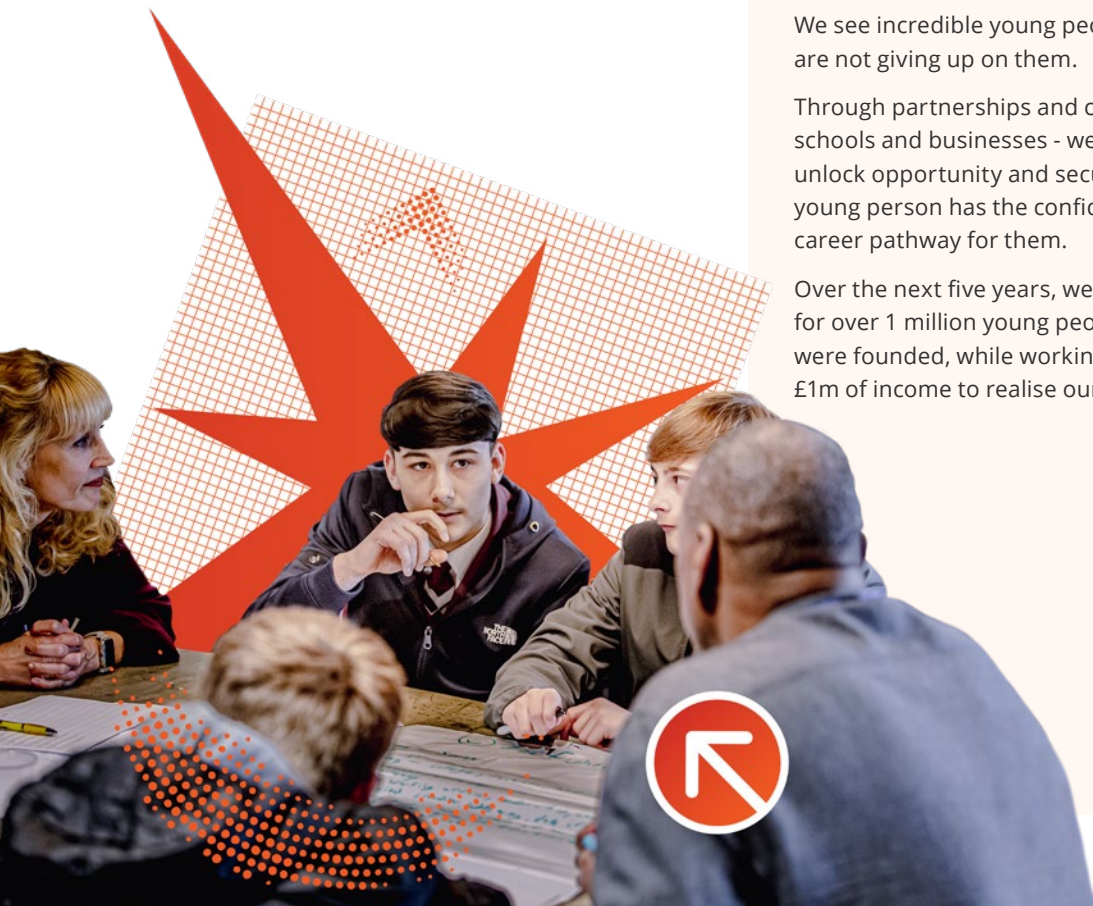
- Strengthen our systems and income to expand our impact for young people across the UK

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

[Read more about our five year strategy - Ambition 2030](#)



Get involved

Help spark ambition and unlock opportunity.

The pandemic widened the disadvantage gap, with young people feeling less confident about their employability skills.

To improve social mobility we work with a wide range of partners and industries to connect young people to relatable role models and exciting career pathways.

Become a corporate partner

Our strongest partnerships are built on a shared purpose. We collaborate with organisations to create bespoke and transformational programmes that develop young peoples' skills and confidence for the long term.

Fundraise for us

Organise a challenge or event to help us raise much-needed funds to keep delivering lightbulb moments across the UK. Join Team TTF by [taking part in one of our upcoming events](#), or be supported by our team to take on your own personal challenge.

Volunteer your time or expertise

Pro bono support is essential for our work. 98% of volunteers agreed working with young people was a rewarding experience. Whether it's volunteering at a workshop, hosting an event or supporting the development of our IT, data and marketing, meaningful engagement with the world of work transforms young lives.

Give the gift of opportunity

You can spark ambition by donating to The Talent Foundry by visiting our [JustGiving page](#).

Last year we raised £1,964,672 through our partnerships and donations, spending £1,758,869 on delivering our charitable mission.

Our full Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 August 2025 [is available on our website](#).

Get in touch - email partnerships@talentfoundry.org.uk to spark ambition.





➔ Thank you to...

Our Partners

A&O Shearman

ABM UK

Barclays LifeSkills

Dell Technologies

ICAEW and Rise partner firms

KPMG

Logicor

M&G plc

Mace Group

Maven Securities

NHS England

Network Rail

Pearson

Publicis Pro

PwC

Rail Safety and Standards Board and members

SAS UK

Tees Valley Combined Authority

University of Birmingham Centre-UB

University of Bedfordshire

University of Manchester

University of Warwick

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Morgan Sindall Construction

Reds10

Willmott Dixon

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Severn Trent

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Challenge cyclists from

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Wates





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