



**Future
First**

ANNUAL REVIEW
2021 - 22

**"I WENT TO HAYES SCHOOL-
AND NOW I'M FLYING HIGH"**

JAMES

FAST JET PILOT

"I ENJOYED LEARNING
FROM MY MENTOR. HE
CAME TO THIS SCHOOL,
AND I KNOW THAT IF HE
CAN DO IT, SO CAN I."

For too many young people, their start in life limits their future. They do not have access to relatable role models to help them understand what they can achieve, nor the connections, knowledge or tools to help them to get there. Future First is here to change that. We are the UK education charity helping young people in state schools and colleges broaden their horizons by connecting them with former students and volunteers, as relatable role models, to raise their aspirations and help them fulfil their potential.

Since our inception, our purpose has been simple: to see every state school and college supported by a thriving and engaged alumni community, so students gain the confidence, motivation, and inspiration they need to live successful lives. Alumni communities are sustainable, with schools able to sign up their leavers every year to create a growing resource to tap into, as mentors, speakers, role models, governors, fundraisers and more.

In 2021-22 we made a decision to widen our mission beyond every state school and

college, to include every pupil. In doing so, we recognised that many students attend schools that don't have thriving networks yet. We wanted these pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to benefit from our work. Using technology, we can share the stories and resources created by state school alumni with pupils wherever they are. That is our ambition, so that all pupils benefit from the power of seeing people like them succeed - and ultimately, have a network to support and assist them.

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INTRODUCTION

It was another challenging year for families, young people, schools and teachers. The impact of the pandemic widened the learning gap, saw a rise in behavioural and attendance challenges, impacted on older students' views of their career prospects and saw an unprecedented turnover of school staff. All of this was compounded by the global situation, including the war in Ukraine, the cost of living crisis and climate change.

Young people have never needed our support as much as they do today.

Future First adjusted to new realities, working with schools, alumni, partners and employers to devise fresh ways to support our vision of ensuring no young person's future is limited by their start in life. We continued to provide relatable role models and mentors, develop alumni networks, and work with schools to show pupils a future beyond their experience. In 2021-22, we not only gave direct support to 333 schools but our work also touched the lives of 129,000 students - up from 70,000 the year before - building their confidence, motivation and self-belief.

We successfully launched a powerful digital networking tool, connecting schools and their students to a pool of volunteers signed up and ready to help them. *The Future First Hub*, which hosts alumni networks for schools, also enables students to review digital resources made by relatable role models and ask questions about their journeys and pathways. In time, it will provide real connections to opportunities and a network to support all students.

We were delighted to receive support and work with several new employer partners: AutoRaise, Caledonian Consumer Finance, Eversheds Sutherland, JT Consultancy, Lumon, Markerstudy Insurance Services, Shawbrook Bank and Wafra. Our work also continued with our longer standing supporters - Ashurst Law, Commercial Education Trust, Legal & General, Taylor Wessing, the Pears Foundation and Voi Technology. Their help is invaluable and means that we can offer an enriched programme to our member schools and even more support for students. This includes insight days, business mentors, work taster sessions and virtual resources - all helping to build understanding of life after school.

Last year, we reported that the Welsh Government had become the first UK administration to put alumni at the heart of efforts to boost young people's future prospects. Since then, we have worked with 14 schools in Wales, with thanks to the Waterloo Foundation, Monmouthshire County Council and Powys County Council. In Scotland, we worked with two Edinburgh schools in a ground-breaking pilot with the David Hume Institute and, in

partnership with Ashurst Law, we were able to extend our offer to young people in Glasgow.

Successfully securing funding from the Institute of Physics saw us start a programme of work to tackle long standing concerns about the proportion of girls studying Physics at A Level. As part of a consortium of universities, charities and private sector providers, we have launched Planet Possibility to show young people the kinds of futures studying Physics can unlock.

We extended our work by using alumni from local communities. In Camden, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and working with schools and two community groups, we trialled a successful pilot to prevent the disproportionate exclusion of Black boys. In Haringey and Enfield, we began to test the power of alumni working across a locality rather than with just a single school - thanks to support from the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation. Other locality trials are taking place in Luton, Birmingham, Somerset and Devon with various funders, including the Careers Hubs. We were delighted to receive funding from the Dulverton Trust to continue our work in primary schools, using older pupils to support transition to secondary school, as well as bringing community volunteers into the classroom to combat stereotypes.

I have been honoured to lead and serve Future First for over nine years now and believe passionately in the work we do and the difference that alumni networks can make to schools and young people. However, I also believe that it is never wise to stay too long as chair and it is the right time for someone else to bring a new perspective. I shall leave the role at the end of 2022, but will remain an enthusiastic ambassador for the work of the charity.

At the same time, Lorraine Langham has decided she wishes to relinquish the role of

chief executive. The Board is grateful for her outstanding leadership and commitment. We have been particularly fortunate to have Lorraine in post to steer the charity through the difficult years of the pandemic. She will continue to give active support, as she will join the Future First Board as a Trustee in January 2023.

This Annual Review shows Future First is in a strong position to grow its reach and impact. We have an excellent staff team in place, a good programme offer and technology which is transforming the way we work, not only with young people and schools but with alumni too. The Board has made strong appointments to both the role of chair and chief executive and we hope to be in a position to announce these in December.

Future First is a very special organisation and its work is particularly important in making a difference to the lives of our most disadvantaged young people. We remain grateful for the passion and commitment of our partners and supporters, our staff and trustees and of course, for the vital contribution of alumni and schools themselves. I hope the inspiring work reported in this Annual Review extends that passion and commitment to others and encourages even greater engagement.

With all good wishes for 2023.



**DAME CHRISTINE
GILBERT, CBE**
CHAIR



**LORRAINE
LANGHAM**
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

OUR WORK

WHAT AN ALUMNI NETWORK CAN DO



Provide relatable role models to expand students' career horizons and aspirations



Help build students' confidence, resilience, motivation and engagement



Enrich the curriculum through real-world insights in the classroom



Provide one-to-one mentoring to overcome barriers and challenge perceptions



Create a community of volunteers to act as governors, fundraisers and speakers



Provide students with connections who can share opportunities and open doors



Boost career strategies to help meet Gatsby Benchmarks



Provide insights into future education and career destinations



Create opportunities to meet employers and gain work experience



Strengthen the community around a school with a pool of willing volunteers

OUR WORK

TACKLING SOCIAL MOBILITY

Britain has a deep social mobility problem. We are working to tackle this.

1/2

Nearly half of the most persistently disadvantaged children don't know anyone in a job they would like to do.



Less than half of 15 year olds think 'people like me' will be successful compared with 71% of 11 year olds and 74% of six year olds.

1/8

Only one in eight children from a low income background is likely to become a high earner as an adult.

4%

Only 4% of teachers strongly agree they feel equipped to advise young people on the diversity of careers available.

Disadvantaged pupils in England are **18.1 months** of learning behind their peers by the time they finish their GCSEs.

67%

67% of young people believe that the pandemic will have a long term negative impact on their mental health.

The cost of living crisis will impact the hardest on disadvantaged young people, with households facing a significant reduction in their income. Alumni can prove to students that 'someone like me' can go on to succeed and prosper.

Alumni communities have two distinctive strengths: relatability and sustainability. Having grown up in the same area and perhaps having had some of the same teachers, former students are ideal role

models as they are instantly relatable. They can offer advice to students from their own context. Schools and colleges have a lasting pool of support available because as new students leave the school each year, they join the growing community of volunteers. These powerful networks are enriched by a wider pool of national volunteers, signed up to give back. Together, they enrich our offer to schools and show all young people a future that can be theirs.

EXTENDING REACH AND IMPACT

OUR WORK WITH SCHOOLS

Our four membership options have been updated for the coming year and include:

FUTURE FIRST PRO

This is a fully managed service for schools that want expert help to establish, engage and manage their alumni network. It's also designed to support schools with hosting and getting the best from existing networks, reducing the time-burden on hard pressed teachers. The Pro package offers strategic support, a suite of high-impact activities, a dedicated programme manager, three facilitated workshops, CPD for teaching staff, invitations to events, access to *The Future First Hub* - our networking platform - tailor made posters and digital resources, featuring former students. Schools also get priority access to funder and employer partner opportunities, including insight days, work experience, and business mentors.

FUTURE FIRST FREE

This membership allows all state schools and colleges to access our alumni resources, share ideas and join online events. It's perfect for schools that don't have the resources to establish an alumni network but still want to connect with former students on an ad-hoc basis, benefitting from our expert knowledge and guidance.

FUTURE FIRST LITE

This package is designed for schools with an established alumni network looking for direction, innovation, ideas and support with their alumni strategy. We provide access to *The Future First Hub* to store alumni data, maintain regular communication with former students and help generate ideas to make sure this community thrives. We help each school to craft a winning strategy, with access to resources, lesson plans, virtual CPD for teachers, connections with our national alumni volunteers and invitations to online events.

FUTURE FIRST TECH

This package is for schools with a well-established alumni network looking for somewhere secure to host it. At a price well below the commercial market (thanks to the generosity of our funders and donors), members can search, email, promote and engage with their online alumni community - and access our national pool of volunteers, widening their range of speakers and role models signed up to support their students.

NEW FOR 2022-23

To improve our membership offer, we are developing our technology and providing additional support for every school, to reduce the time commitment for busy teachers. We are also including a free mentoring programme with every *Future First Pro* membership, with added insight days and work experience opportunities, thanks to the generous support of our funders and employer partners.



EXTENDING REACH AND IMPACT

ST BONAVENTURE SCHOOL DISCOVERS THE POWER OF ALUMNI

St Bonaventure School in Newham, East London embarked on a project that showed the true power of alumni.

Twelve former pupils visited the school to work with Year 10 students in a day of interactive workshops. The day focused on the topic of *'Growing confidence, motivation and self-belief'*, where former pupils spoke about their pathways since school, the challenges they have overcome and their techniques for building resilience. One of the alumni guests was former Apprentice winner, Tim Campbell MBE, who provided details of his pathway from St Bonaventure school to his achievements as a famous entrepreneur and co-founder of the Bright Ideas Trust charity.

Alumni also attended a networking lunch with a group of Year 13s, who shared their aspirations and gained advice from the past pupils.

Bernadette Worme, school staff member and Alumni Coordinator said, "It was lovely

for the students to meet with alumni, who had once sat in the seats they now sit in, and to learn how they had been shaped by the school. It was also fantastic for students to learn the different pathways they had taken. Some had recently left university and were starting in the world of work, some had worked their way up and were in senior management, some were retired and had several careers, some were entrepreneurs."

"The students learnt about mistakes the alumni may have made and decisions that were beneficial to them. All students met someone they could relate to, which was amazing."

Throughout the year, the school further embraced its alumni network through online mentoring and participated in careers talks and many school-led activities, including an event which focused on Black History Month, led by the school's alumni.

EXTENDING REACH AND IMPACT

GUIDED BY SOMEONE LIKE ME



In 2021-22, Future First officially launched its online mentoring offer *Guided by Someone Like Me*, following a successful two-year pilot. By giving young people the opportunity to make meaningful connections with trusted mentors, they benefit from support and guidance, and can explore issues and topics of interest or concern, including career options they may have otherwise overlooked.

Through Brightside's 1:1 messaging platform, as part of our programme offer, we facilitate fully safeguarded online interactions between mentors and mentees, enabling alumni and business volunteers to help students with their questions and make informed choices about their futures.

Volunteer mentor Amber Keats, a Computer Science graduate and former teacher, said: **"It's been great using the Brightside platform to message my mentees. Mentees need someone there to ask questions about their journeys, who won't judge them; someone**

outside of school that doesn't know about their lives, that will be unbiased. It can be easy for the adults who know students to suggest going down a particular road, just because they might think a child isn't academic enough. As a mentor, you don't do that."

A mentee on the programme said:

"Mentoring has really helped me to understand the options and routes available to me in the future. My mentor has been amazing and she has given me great tips and advice on how I can progress through my educational journey."



"I have always wanted to help people - which is why I went into teaching. I'm a mentor because I want to see someone else win. It allows me to offer guidance, to help people find their path."

- AMBER KEATS



hello
future.



EXTENDING REACH AND IMPACT

VOLUNTEERING MADE EASY

Since 2018, Future First has been working with Hello Future on a number of different projects, including teacher CPD, bespoke workshops and creating inspiring posters and digital resources, including videos. In 2021-22, we embarked on two new developments, *The Adult Learners* project and the *Subject to Careers* project, both of which built on our work showcasing Cumbrian state school alumni.

The *Adult Learner project* was created to spotlight volunteers through video interviews, who had returned to higher education later in life and hadn't taken the traditional university route.

The *Subject to Careers* project aimed to support young people in Cumbria by demonstrating the link between subjects they are currently studying and the various opportunities these might lead to. The project was delivered through videos, digital resources and alumni-led, in-person workshops. The volunteers were encouraged to share their stories, including the barriers and challenges they overcame.

The workshops enabled students to hear from relatable, local people, fostering a

sense of pride, developing their confidence, aspirations and ability to succeed.

The *Subject to Careers* project was delivered to 350 Year 10 students and was so successful that Hello Future commissioned Future First to deliver another nine workshops to an additional 315 students.

One volunteer told us:

"I jumped at the opportunity to help young people of Cumbria feel more confident about their choices and to learn about different career options. The video interviews were really fun. It felt very rewarding to be giving something back to young people, to help them to understand their options, and learn about the diverse pathways that people who live in the same place as them have taken".

EXTENDING REACH AND IMPACT

WALES AND SCOTLAND TAKE OFF!

Over the last year, the success of our work with the Welsh Government has continued to grow.

Through collaborations with both Monmouthshire and Powys County Councils, Future First was able to offer every school in those local authority areas the opportunity to access a sponsored Pro Membership, enabling them to build and develop alumni networks for their schools.

Through these partnerships, Future First has worked with 14 schools in Wales over the last academic year, representing nearly 10% of all Welsh secondary schools. Our work in Wales has been further supported through a three-year grant from The Waterloo Foundation.

Mr Sion Davies, a teacher at Richard Gwyn Catholic High School in Flint, North Wales, said:

“The advice given has been invaluable to our students, and to us as professionals. I am sure that a seed has been planted in every student’s head”.

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT DEBATES POWER OF ALUMNI

Following our recent expansion into Scotland, a motion was submitted in the Scottish Parliament, congratulating two secondary schools on their groundbreaking work with Future First.

Gracemount High and Tynecastle High in Edinburgh were the first schools in Scotland to become Future First Pro members, in an initiative developed in partnership with The David Hume Institute. The schools’ partnership with Future First was celebrated by Sarah Boyack, the Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) for Lothian, who submitted the motion.

The motion encouraged state schools across Scotland ‘to consider the positive impact

that working with organisations such as Future First can have on pupils’ life chances’ and was supported by other MSPs.

We are proud to have progressed from being an English charity, to having a strong presence in Wales, and now a footprint in Scotland. In the coming year, having laid the foundations, we plan to launch programmes in five schools in Northern Ireland, promoting the power of alumni across all four UK nations for the first time.

Sarah Boyack, MSP



EXTENDING REACH AND IMPACT

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Over the last year, Future First has started locality network pilots in five regions, enabling multiple schools in Luton, Haringey and Enfield, Birmingham, Devon and Somerset to connect with a pool of local state school alumni volunteers.

The programme has been developed to test how closely students relate to the places where they grow up and whether schools can share the benefits of a local alumni pool, hosted on our networking platform. If successful over time, the locality pilots will help Future First to reach more schools and students, delivering on its strategic goal to extend reach and impact.

'MADE IN SOMERSET'

Future First and Somerset County Council have developed a Somerset volunteer network, composed of alumni from local schools and colleges. All schools and colleges across Somerset will have free access to a network of volunteers via *The Future First Hub*, allowing children to hear first-hand, from people who live/lived in Somerset. In the last academic year, the programme had made significant progress, with 46 schools signed up to participate and more in the pipeline.

CREATING A LUTON ALUMNI NETWORK

Celebrities Sharna Jackson and Monty Panesar are among those supporting Future First's initiative to link Luton's young people with relatable role models.



Sharna Jackson

"I went to Stopsley High School ... and then I became a world famous international cricketer."

– Monty Panesar, former international cricketer



Triple BAFTA-nominated author and artistic director, Sharna Jackson was born and raised in Luton. She said: "I'm delighted to be supporting Future First's work through this new network, that ensures Luton's extremely talented young people have the opportunity to thrive and flourish."

Former England cricketer Monty Panesar said: "The new Careers Hub Luton Alumni Network is so important for every student in the town so they can have access to role models just like them. There's so much talent among our young people and sometimes they just need the encouragement of someone like them, who's done it before, so they can go out and grab the future they want."

EXTENDING REACH AND IMPACT

COMMERCE IN THE CLASSROOM

In 2019-20, Future First launched *Commerce in the Classroom* a three-year initiative developed to improve awareness of the various careers in international trade and commerce. The project was aimed at disadvantaged children based in coastal communities in the Northeast and East of England and was funded by our valued partner, the Commercial Education Trust (CET).

This year, the final phase of the programme took place with year 10 and 12 children from five participating secondary schools meeting a range of people with careers in commerce. Through activities and workshops, students had meaningful encounters and interacted with volunteers, ranging from Managing Directors to front line workers,

from companies including The Body Shop, Kellogg's, ASDA, Eon and The Very Group.

Over 260 students participated in face-to-face workshops, with regional volunteers sharing their advice, expertise, and guidance. Future First also designed and delivered popular virtual work experience packs, organised workshops, and developed virtual CPD sessions for 50 teachers.

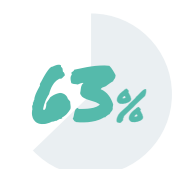
DELIVERING IMPACT:



Overall, **95%** of students rated the workshops as good or excellent



90.3% of students told us they now knew about different jobs available in the international trade/commerce sector compared to 15.9% at the beginning of the project.



62.6% agreed that their employability skills had been developed as a result of taking part



67.1% students said the workshops made them want to work harder at school.





**PERFORMANCE
AND FINANCE**

IMPACT AND EVIDENCE

An evaluation of our classroom work by independent experts ImpactEd found that after our workshops more students can see:



**What they learn is relevant
to life outside of school**



**What they learn in school
is relevant for the future**



**What they learn in school
is useful outside of exams**

Students leave our workshops with an increased understanding that different career options are open to them (a 16% increase) and are more confident about reaching their goals (up 8.3%).

We know that encounters with relatable role models build confidence, motivation, resilience and engagement with school work and school life.

Even reading about the success of a relatable role model has an impact on the way students perceive themselves.

We asked students, alumni and teachers what they thought about our in-person work:



**Students scored
us 8/10**



**Volunteers scored
us 9/10**



**Teachers scored
us 9/10**

PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS 2021-22

Despite another difficult year, Future First is proud to have supported young people across the country.

Thousands have been given crucial support to strive for a brighter future, thanks to state school alumni and other relatable volunteers. Through workshops, mentoring, talks in assemblies, careers events, school-led sessions and virtual resources, hundreds of primary and secondary schools the length and breadth of the nation have been supported by their alumni.

'We enjoy working with Future First because our former students show our current students exactly what they are capable of...I would recommend Future First to any secondary school looking to develop its careers offer, and build a network of supportive former students who will add value in many ways'.

– Nicholas John, Headteacher, Acland Burghley School

333

schools supported

59

new member schools signed up

129,000

**students connected with alumni
volunteers and role models**

29,970

**alumni/employer
encounters delivered**

571

students mentored

276

days of workshops delivered

9

new employer partners

CREATING POSSIBILITIES

Alumni volunteer Isaac Kenyon visited his former school, having built a strong career in energy transition. Isaac told the children how he rowed across the Atlantic Ocean and notched up world records for indoor endurance rowing.

He said: **"I think it's so important to give children the belief that they can make a success of their lives. I would have loved to have had someone who had come from my school show me it was possible to do something special when I was there."**



FINANCIAL MATTERS

VALUE:

92p in each £1 we spend goes directly on programme delivery. The remainder is spent on fundraising and ensuring good management and governance.



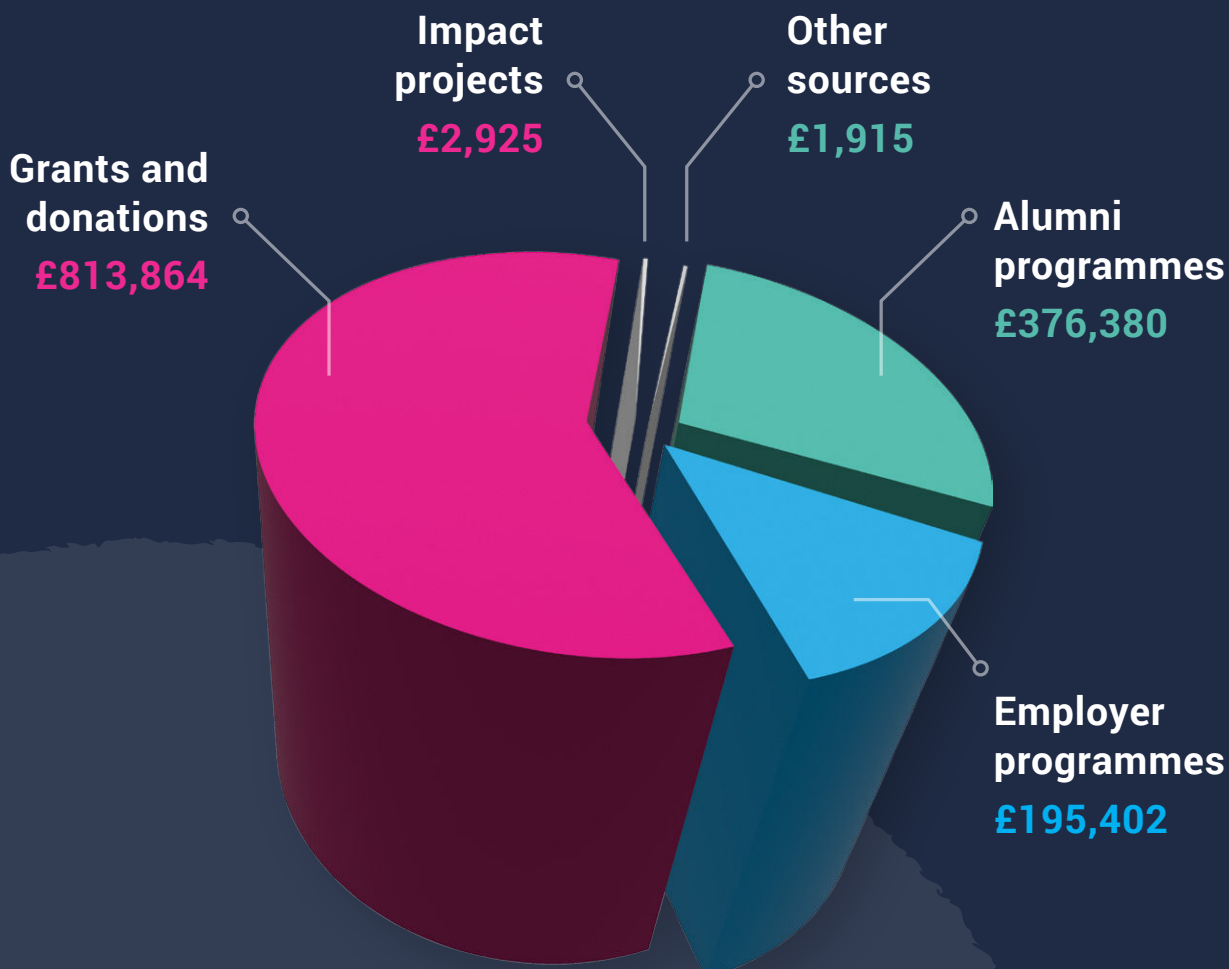
COST PER PUPIL:

£8.47



TOTAL INCOME:

£1,390,486





'IT'S NOT JUST ROCKET SCIENCE'

Future First Infinity is our first-ever, subject-specific programme promoting the endless possibilities associated with the study of Physics.

Developed throughout 2021-22, Future First Infinity combines alumni networks and teaching resources to inspire a new cohort of students to study Physics beyond GCSE. Funded by the Institute of Physics, Future First Infinity will support 35 schools over the next two years across all four UK nations. We are really excited to be part of the multi-partner *Planet Possibility* consortium that we helped to set up to deliver this work.

For students, Future First Infinity will demonstrate the invaluable life skills and real-world knowledge that learning Physics will give them, as well as building confidence and interest in the possibilities opened up by studying Physics.

For schools, Future First Infinity will provide:

A network of Physics alumni to inspire and support current students

Bespoke multimedia content showcasing alumni and other Physics role models

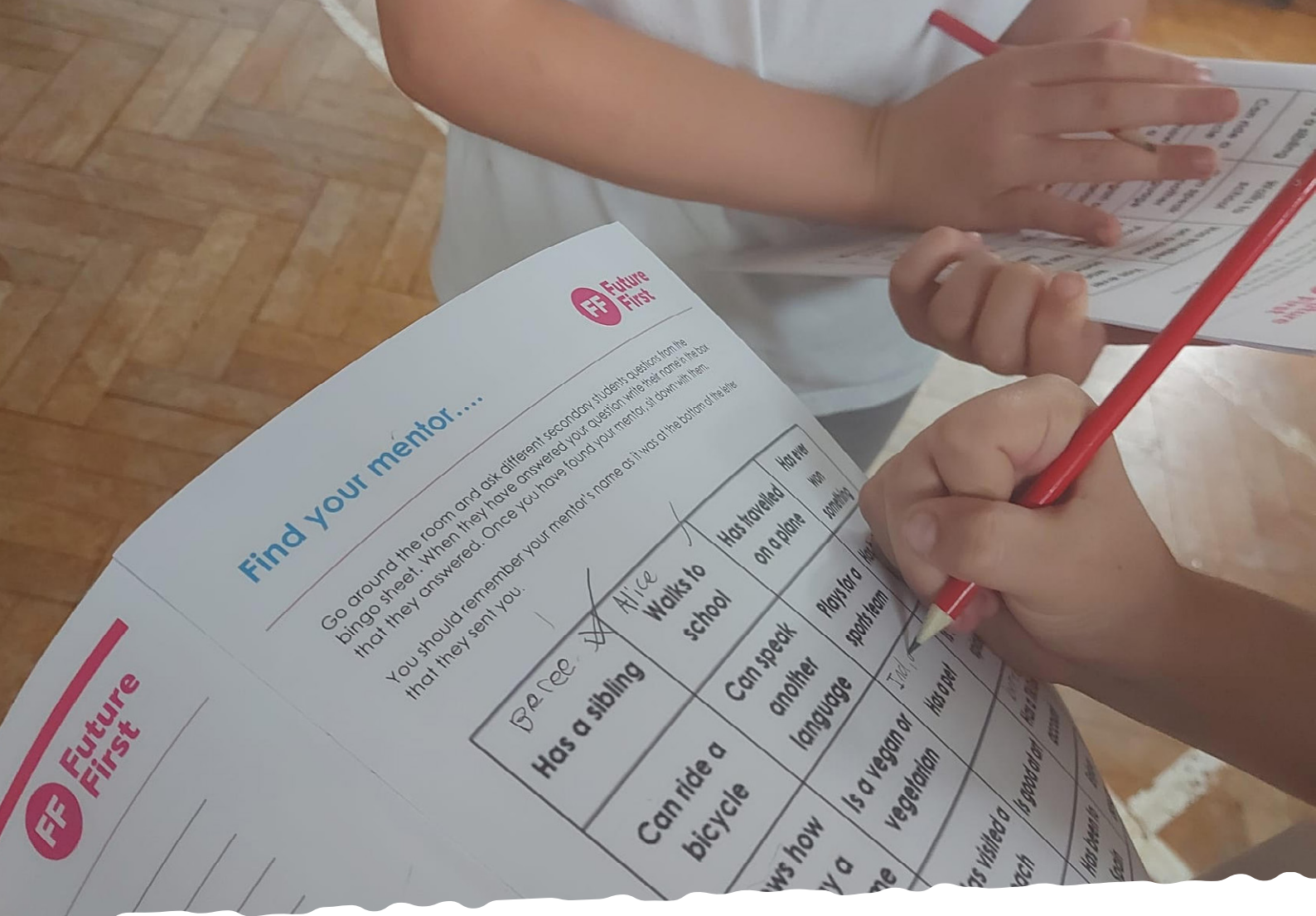
Expert support, guidance, facilitated workshops, careers information and tailor-made resources, including lesson plans and virtual work experience placements

Access to the Future First Infinity community on our networking platform

Wraparound support for teachers through provision of intensive teacher CPD

Links with relevant local and national employers who can offer vocational opportunities for students.

The aim of Future First Infinity is to grow the number of students (particularly girls and those from other under-represented groups), choosing to study Physics beyond GCSE level to discover a career without limits.



DESIGNING AND TRIALLING NEW INTERVENTIONS

BRIDGING THE GAP SUPPORTING PRIMARY TRANSITIONS

In 2021-22, Future First was able to support children with their transition from primary to secondary school, through our *Bridging the Gap* programme, funded by the Dulverton Trust.

By connecting with primary school alumni, currently in secondary schools, the aim has been for students who have recently gone through the process of transition, to help younger pupils prepare both emotionally and academically.

Former students mentor the Year 6 pupils throughout their transition to secondary school, allowing them to ask questions and explore their experience of the change. We have secured funding to continue our trial in 15 more primary schools across the country including some all-through schools and schools that are part of the same multi-academy trust.

As part of the project, the students also meet with community role models to hear about their lives and pathways since leaving school, providing an introductory insight into career possibilities and life beyond school.

DESIGNING AND TRIALLING NEW INTERVENTIONS

TACKLING EXCLUSIONS

We understand that for many young people, the circumstances of their lives and the intersectionality of race and class, can limit their future.

Last year, we worked with two secondary schools in Camden and two local community partners, the Winch and Somali Youth Development Resource Centre, to successfully pilot a programme designed to tackle the disproportionate exclusion of Black boys in Year 9. With the support of Camden Council and Camden Learning - and with funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation - the pilot delivered community-led interventions based around the needs of young people, with the influence of role models and mentors at its core.

After the programme, students fed back that they had an:

- ✓ increased sense of belonging and safety
- ✓ improved knowledge of where to go for, and confidence accessing, support
- ✓ improved experience of school
- ✓ improved wellbeing ... and they felt more empowerment to act

Inspiring Inclusion

We hope to continue our partnership working to include more schools and a wider spectrum of pupils in the coming academic year.

Rashid Iqbal, CEO of the Winch said, "We are delighted to be working in partnership with Future First, as we share a vision for a world in which every young person can succeed, regardless of their background or circumstances. We have found the team to be skilled, engaged and effective collaborators, who are committed to learning and developing the best possible local solutions. Most importantly, they are able to always hold young people's ambitions at the heart of what they do".

"The mentoring has changed me in different ways. It helps me to speak with people more professionally. If I get into trouble I can actually communicate with a teacher properly so they can understand where I am coming from." – Mentee.

"My mentor, Daniel- doesn't just listen, he tries to do something." – Mentee



BUILDING A NATIONAL ALUMNI MOVEMENT

DEVELOPING A DIGITAL COMMUNITY

The launch of *the Future First Hub* represents a significant milestone in our drive to build a national alumni movement. The digital platform has allowed students to safely connect with their alumni, whilst giving schools a simple and intuitive, online space to manage their former student community.

Last year, we successfully supported 287 schools to move over to the new system, meaning thousands of students now have the opportunity to explore the stories and pathways of people like them, gaining valuable insight and advice.

From interacting with videos about different job roles, to asking an alumni about applying for an apprenticeship, or what life is like at university, meaningful encounters with relatable volunteers have been immediately accessible to these students. *The Future First Hub* has also given young people unique access to opportunities, including information about apprenticeships, work experience, internships and virtual events.

In common with many technology programmes, it has taken time to establish, listening to users and working to develop functions that meet their needs. But the early signs have been really encouraging with positive feedback, increasing use and greater engagement. *The Future First Hub* has already proved to be instrumental in mobilising our national movement, connecting students with volunteers from all over the UK. Funded by our incredible partners, the digital platform has thousands of volunteers signed up, allowing students to communicate safely and connect with people 'just like me'.



EUGENE'S STORY

Eugene from The Sandon School in Chelmsford, Essex, used *The Future First Hub* to seek advice from a volunteer, asking "What does a Software Developer do?" What area of software engineering should I focus on? Is there a particular language or framework, or certain combination that new developers should learn? What do you do on a daily basis?

Future First reached out to its volunteers who worked in the industry, and Software Engineer, Richard, responded immediately, providing Eugene with a video with extensive answers to all his questions.

BUILDING A NATIONAL ALUMNI MOVEMENT

EMPLOYER PROGRAMMES

Our employer partners provide important enrichment opportunities for students all over the country. They give pupils the opportunity to experience the world of work, whether it's in the classroom, their workplaces, or virtually, as well as offering advice and guidance, and acting as mentors. Whilst some have donated to support our work and technology investment, others are working with Future First to produce unique plans to showcase their business, sector, employee roles and pathways, opening minds and opportunities for the next generation.

MARKERSTUDY APPRENTICES SHOW THE WAY

We were delighted to join forces with Markerstudy Insurance Services in a new partnership that gave students the opportunity to gain support, advice, and encouragement to consider a career in insurance.

Markerstudy volunteers were able to communicate safely with students using *The Future First Hub* and engage in a range of in-person and virtual events using their skills, knowledge and experiences to guide young people from schools all over the country.

Their apprentices worked together to create fantastic digital resources, all filmed professionally in their offices. One of these videos featured an interview with an employee who had started as an apprentice and now manages a department of her own.

Markerstudy also offered students work insights, including the chance to meet staff at their Saint Ives branch.

Speaking about the partnership, Tanya Gerrard-White, Group Chief People Officer at Markerstudy Group, said:

"We're thrilled to partner with Future First and proud to be in a position to provide support, guidance and mentoring to the next generation of school leavers."

"I really think the work Future First is doing gives young people the confidence to believe in themselves and confidence is so important. We need to encourage young people to step outside their comfort zone and try things that may inspire them."

LAURENCE STANNARD
UK CLIENT RELATIONSHIP
EXECUTIVE LEGAL + GENERAL



BUILDING A NATIONAL ALUMNI MOVEMENT

WORKPLACE INSIGHTS WITH LUMON

Our work with new partner Lumon began with an Insight Day that saw several disadvantaged Year 12 students from Greater London visit Lumon's offices in Gerrards Cross to participate in trading activities, ethical debates, networking, CV writing, mock interviews and more.

Avril Attias, Lumon's Internal Communications and Culture Manager, described the event's impact on the young visitors: "Most of the students had never been in an office like ours, so their visions of a 'big office' were based mostly on what they had seen in films or TV. By the end of the day, they were all fully aware that, actually, *it's just an office*, and we are just people. We aren't special, or sat on a pedestal. It's just an office where *anyone*

can work. Allowing them to discover that, and feel more and more comfortable in this environment, was incredibly important."

"The insight day was my first day working with Lumon, so I was able to share that I was a little nervous myself. I explained that I may be older than them, but I'm still figuring things out – we all are. Having that authenticity and that real, honest conversation made a great difference. At the end of the day, one of the students approached me and said, *'I have had the greatest day'*."

"Our employees have a genuine appetite to contribute towards something larger and to add to something positive. If you want to be competitive and attract talent, you need to consider how to support and operate within your communities, and Future First has helped us to do this."



"I would definitely say that every child took something important away that day. Every student seemed to leave with more confidence. I think they all had an individual experience that led them to learn something new about themselves."



BUILDING A NATIONAL ALUMNI MOVEMENT

SHAWBROOK BANK PROVIDES INSIGHTS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES

As part of a new, three-year partnership with Shawbrook Bank, we were able to offer young people from state schools and colleges an exclusive insight into a career in the financial services industry. Volunteers from Shawbrook provided valuable support, advice and insights into the many careers in financial services.

Debbie Griffin, Chief People and Marketing Officer for Shawbrook said,

“We’re delighted to be working with Future First and helping the next generation find career opportunities that they perhaps didn’t know existed. Many of us at Shawbrook started our careers

in financial services via non-traditional routes, so we’re passionate about creating more diversity in the workplace and enabling others to benefit as we have.”

Through the partnership, Shawbrook employees can use their skills, share their knowledge and stories to guide young people through both in-person and virtual workshops, as well as mentoring and creating digital resources to be accessed by schools anywhere in the UK using *The Future First Hub*.

Shawbrook plans to host insight days at their offices, where young people will learn more about what life is like in the financial services sector. Employees will also create engaging content, for students to explore, talking about their personal, education and professional pathways, and the choices that led them to where they are today.

“The workshops pushed me to take a more proactive role in researching and deciding my future”...

“They’ve done it, and so can I”...

STUDENTS SAID:

“Thank you for pushing me to think positively and feel more confident.”

“Meeting alumni has shown me what I can achieve because they’ve grown up in similar circumstances to me”...



BUILDING A NATIONAL ALUMNI MOVEMENT

ASHURST LAW TAKING FIRST STEPS TO SCOTLAND

Following the long-term success of our ten-year partnership with Ashurst, we have further extended our work together, not just continuing the *First Steps* project in 2021-22, but also increasing the number of children we reach by introducing new workshops in Scotland.

The *First Steps* programme is designed to enhance Year 6 students' awareness of the types of jobs they might want to do in the future. These workshops have been developed to help students understand the first steps needed to pursue such careers, helping them build the confidence and skills needed to excel in their academic and working lives.

This year, Bonner Primary School in Tower Hamlets in East London, participated in *First Steps* for the sixth year running, with 120 students taking part in the project. The children visited the Ashurst offices in London, met staff, completed activities, learnt about jobs and designed their own toys in an enterprise challenge.

As a result of our successful partnership with Ashurst, their Glasgow office is joining forces with Future First to offer a series of insight day sessions to students in S4, S5 and S6, from a number of Scottish schools. Our *Future Ready* programme will be designed to support students to think about their next steps and introduce them to the wide-ranging roles available in an international commercial law firm.

Ella Blakesley, Ashurst's Senior Social Impact Manager said:

"It's such a pleasure to welcome the students to our office. They come with bundles of enthusiasm and brilliant questions and it's clear to see the impact the programme has on them over the course of the school year. Our volunteers enjoy taking part too - it's an energising experience and a great chance to give back whilst benefiting from a break from their desk and workload."

Over the next academic year, six workshops are planned to take place in Ashurst's Glasgow offices reaching as many as 80 students from schools in inner city Glasgow.

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TAYLOR WESSING'S INSIGHT EXCITES

Last year we celebrated our 11th year of working with our longest standing corporate partner, Taylor Wessing, with a series of facilitated workshops at their new Liverpool office, helping local students to develop their employability skills. We all found the experience rewarding with students reporting significant personal development.

Improving staff confidence and satisfaction

The workshops also had a positive impact on participating staff, with 93% of volunteers stating that they would be likely to attend a similar event again, and that it improved their own confidence and job satisfaction. 100% also said that it helped their understanding of, and empathy towards young people.

Paul Leamy, Partner at Taylor Wessing, said, "We are extremely proud of our work with Future First. Since 2010 we have partnered together to support young people from state schools to explore careers in the legal sector, via insight days, mentoring schemes and online engagements. We want to ensure that potential, ability and talent - not background or schooling - determines a young person's success".

"It was so, so useful and it really made me consider what I wanted to do. The way our journeys were really similar made me feel really comfortable!" - Student

100%

reported that the activities within the insight days themselves helped to develop their employability skills;

97%

reported that attending the session made them want to work harder at school;

100%

agreed the jobs they'd heard about were interesting.



BUILDING A NATIONAL ALUMNI MOVEMENT

VOI – BEST FOOT FORWARD

We all know that sustainability is a big concern for young people. This year, as a part of our ongoing partnership with Voi, insight days with a sustainable focus were delivered to four secondary schools across the West Midlands.

The programme was designed to provide students with a first-hand insight into the variety of careers Voi offers, whilst demonstrating the importance of sustainability, and the company's commitment to reducing emissions.

Voi is a 'micro-mobility transport provider' best known for its scooters. They specifically wanted to visit schools in an area where they have a strong presence, to tell students about regional job opportunities. A diverse range of Voi employees provided interactive sessions to build students' knowledge about job opportunities,

from entry level maintenance and warehouse roles, to a vast range of office-based careers.

Voi also taught the students about sustainable mobility, reducing transport related emissions, decreasing car trips and Voi's commitment to creating a transport service that was inclusive, safe and accessible.

Insight days were offered to schools outside the Central Birmingham area to reach the students that might not ordinarily receive such opportunities.



PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

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The vital work we do to connect thousands of pupils across the UK with relatable role models would not be possible without the generous contributions of our supporters and partners – both individuals and organisations. Our thanks go to all of them, from those who have continued to work with Future First, to those who have just joined us.

“Future First has done an amazing job in increasing social mobility and giving students from less privileged backgrounds opportunities to realise their potential.”

– EMPLOYEE AND
ALUMNI VOLUNTEER

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OUR VALUES:



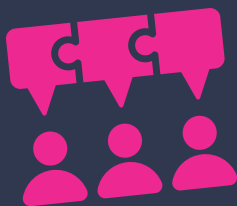
SOCIAL JUSTICE

We do all we can to achieve our mission so that a young person's background does not limit their future.



ROLE MODELLING

We believe everyone can be a good role model and we lead by example in all we say and do.



COLLABORATION

We know we have greater impact through building relationships, and by working and learning with others.



INNOVATION

We are open to fresh ideas and are constantly seeking new ways to make change happen faster.



**"I WENT TO TOWNLEY AND NOW
I AM TRAINING TO BECOME
THE FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO
MEDAL AT A WINTER OLYMPIC
GAMES FOR GREAT BRITAIN".**

TAIWO EYIOWUAWI
SKELETON ATHLETE



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