



# ANNUAL REVIEW 2020/21



**SPEAKERS**  
for schools

[www.speakersforschools.org](http://www.speakersforschools.org)



# WE ARE SPEAKERS FOR SCHOOLS

Imagine you are a parent and you knew that there was one child in your own child’s class who, for no good reason, received preferential treatment over all the others, including your child.

Imagine that this one child was being given extra privileges in the form of extra support and encouragement at every stage of their studies. That they were constantly being offered more opportunities to do well and were being primed to go to the best universities and get the best jobs, even though the rest of the class were just as talented, able and deserving.

Would you think that was fair? Would you accept that your own child may never stand the same chance of being as successful as their one ‘lucky’ classmate?

Millions of school children face the same scenario. Some 93% of UK pupils attend state schools and colleges and currently miss out on the extra privileges enjoyed by the the 7% of UK pupils who attend private schools. Do you still think that the situation is unfair? We do. And we are committed to trying to level the playing field for young people from state schools and colleges to make things fairer, especially for the increasing number of pupils who are currently eligible for free school meals (FSM).

Speakers for Schools is a leading youth social mobility charity, launched in 2010 by ITV’s Political Editor Robert Peston and supported by the Law Family Charitable Foundation for the last 9 years.

**Our mission is to raise career ambitions among young people from disadvantaged backgrounds across the UK, and provide the necessary inspiration, experience and networking opportunities for them to succeed.**

Since our charity’s launch in 2010, we have supported more than 1.1 million young people.

**We aim to support 1 million young people annually by the end of the academic year 2022/23.**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

## OUR CHAIR

**The pandemic will long be remembered as one of the most challenging periods of our generation. A time where each of us has felt the strain, but where some have felt it more keenly than others.**

Young people have undoubtedly been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. And whilst the true long-term impact on them has yet to be fully determined, we know that the pandemic has also served to widen the gaps between the most and least privileged in our communities and is thus likely to seriously impede social mobility for the younger generations.

Disruption to education will continue to impact young people in and out of the classroom and, collectively, we must do what we can to help them – particularly those young people who lack the necessary resources and networks to help themselves. Our research shows that reduced opportunities for personal and social development mean that many young people currently feel disconnected from their futures. They face the prospect of a huge mountain to climb and no guarantee of support from either government, employers, or wider society to help them on their way. As the gap between young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and the working world grows, we must collectively redouble our efforts to bridge that gap and give them the best possible chance to improve their outcomes.

To that end I am really proud of what we have achieved this past year. We determined early to scale up our charity’s operations across the UK on many fronts; harnessing technology to increase the impact, geographical reach and accessibility of our programmes for young people. We grew our team from 17 to 85, enhancing the level of support available regionally and nationally to our growing networks of schools, employers and partners who share our mission. Reassuringly, we were hugely encouraged by the response of speakers and companies through Covid, to step-up their participation in our programmes. We couldn’t have achieved what we did without all of them.

Speakers for Schools newly stated goal is to improve social mobility in the UK for the younger generations by providing meaningful support to one million young people annually by the end of the academic year 2022/23 and, as you will see in the pages that follow, we are well on our way there. Thank you all for your support.



**Andrew Law**  
Chair of the Board of Trustees,  
Speakers for Schools



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

## OUR FOUNDER

**Speakers for Schools has never been more needed, after the horrendous couple of years we’ve lived through and the great challenges ahead.**

Ever since I launched the charity in 2010, our explicit aim has been to “level up” state schools with the independent sector. Thanks in large part to the remarkable financial support of our chairman Andrew Law we’ve been doing this since long before “levelling up” was even a glint in the eye of Boris Johnson.

Every piece of serious research, including our own, shows that the poorest students endured the greatest setbacks to their education in lockdown, and that the gap between the most and least privileged has widened very considerably.

It is so important to us to equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a world that is changing faster than ever. During the last academic year, Speakers for Schools has provided meaningful support to more young people than in any previous year. Two charity-wide campaigns have helped thousands of young people discover job opportunities created by reconfiguring the economy to limit climate change and the myriad ways technology is revolutionising work.

This academic year, we will look to build on the success of these campaigns and deliver two additional campaigns: one focused on the importance of improving access to the workplace for those with special needs, and another which highlights the importance of mental health and wellbeing at work.

Finally, huge thanks to all our partners: the brilliant speakers who turn up day after day for free to excite, energise and lift the ambitions of young people from state schools, together with the magnificent employers who welcome excited students into their respective places of work and give them the inspiration and confidence to make those initial, difficult choices about how to build a fulfilling career.



**Robert Peston**  
Founder,  
Speakers for Schools







# A THIRD ACADEMIC YEAR OF SUSTAINED GROWTH

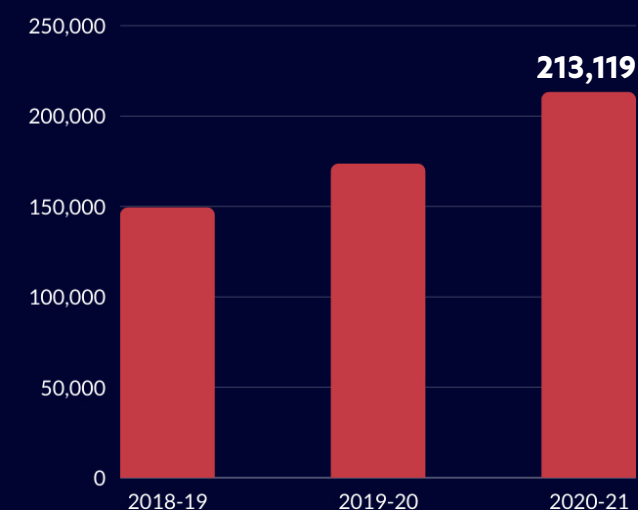
## A YEAR OF CHANGING LIVES: SCALING TO SUPPORT 1 MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE ANNUALLY

Over the course of the last three academic years (2018/19, 2019/20 & 2020/21), Speakers for Schools is proud to have grown into one of the UK's leading social mobility charities with a focus on improving the lives and outcomes of young people.

Since the academic year 2018/19, our charity has increased the number of young people we have directly supported in a year by over 42%. Our ambition is to directly support 1 million young people annually by the end of the academic year 2022/23.

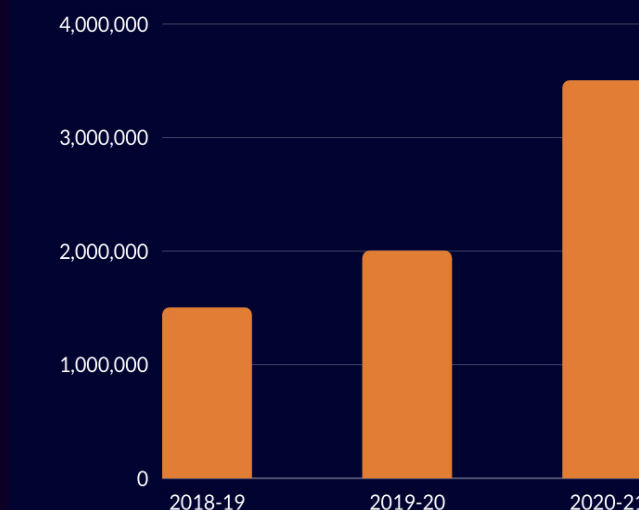
### OUR DIRECT SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Number of young people supported by our programmes per academic year.



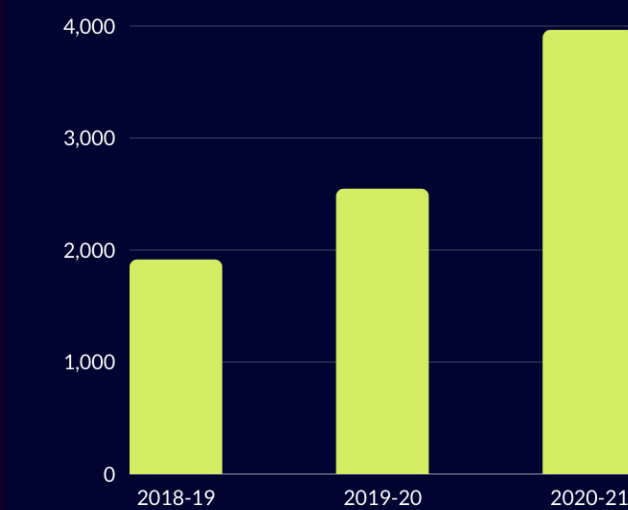
### YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR POTENTIAL REACH

Number of young people in potential reach per academic year based on the combined reach of our partners and programmes.



### OUR NETWORK OF PARTNER SCHOOLS

Number of schools registered with our charity per academic year.



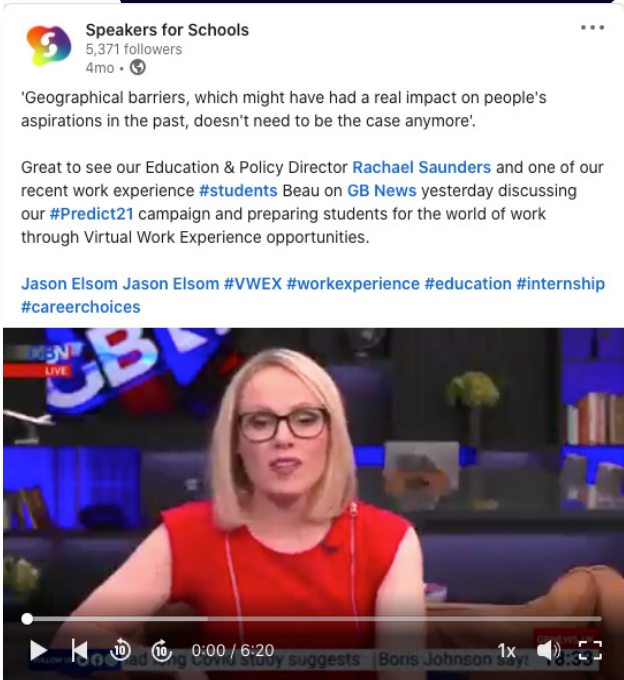


# A YEAR OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

In the last year, we have also achieved many key milestones:

- We worked alongside UK Youth and Young Enterprise to launch Youth Card, a pioneering charity collaboration that provides joined-up support to young people in a way never previously possible and increases direct engagement with our youth audience.
- We launched a national research project to highlight the issues facing young people following the pandemic and presented our findings to policymakers and business leaders.
- We rolled out two lighthouse campaigns to increase youth awareness of key growth areas for employment and maximise youth engagement and impact across our programmes.
- We acquired two new services – vInspired and Fledglink – to further strengthen and develop our offering for young people for 2021/22 onwards.

We boosted our charity's profile by appearing in over 157 online and print publications, 31 radio features/podcasts and made 5 national TV appearances.



Click each image to take you to the tweet or post

# A YEAR OF GREAT CHALLENGES: KEY INSIGHTS FROM 2020/21

## The threat to social mobility caused by learning loss



Pupils from the bottom fifth of incomes experienced higher learning loss than those from the top fifth.<sup>1</sup>



During the 2021 school closures, the poorest pupils in England missed out on a third of their learning (34.9%) while the richest pupils missed out on a quarter of their learning (24.4%).<sup>2</sup>



Learning losses suffered during the pandemic are manifested in stark gaps in attainment between children from poorer backgrounds and their more privileged counterparts.<sup>3</sup>



Learning losses are likely to result in a significant decline in social mobility levels for younger generations.<sup>4</sup>

## The % of pupils eligible for FSM across the UK nations in 2020/21



20.8%  
(June 2021)<sup>5</sup>



20.9%  
(April 2021)<sup>6</sup>



28.4%  
(November 2020)<sup>7</sup>



38.1%  
(March 2021)<sup>8</sup>



Links to references on [page 56](#)



# IN SOPHIA'S OWN WORDS

## Sophia, 16, from Bristol

The last academic year has been the most agonising and stressful time of my life. I felt like there was nothing to look forward to. But after my first work experience, not only did my confidence grow, but I could finally see some hope for the future. I finally had something to work towards and be inspired by. It showed me all the things that I am capable of, and that I have a purpose.



Watch Sophia's video here

# IN JOSH'S OWN WORDS

## Josh, 18, from Darlington

For me, this past year came with waves of mental health deterioration and struggle. It was within this mental chaos that I was introduced to Speakers for Schools through my college. From what began with an online work experience with British Airways to attending the Conservative Party Conference months later, Speakers for Schools has positively impacted my future tremendously despite the pandemic's hardships.



Watch Josh's story here

Josh comes from Darlington, one of eight areas identified as having the fastest growing attainment gaps by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) in their 2017 Closing the Gap? report. Josh qualifies for free school meals (FSM) and doesn't have a readymade network of contacts who can help him get ahead in his career. He has really struggled with his mental health throughout the pandemic. Last summer, Josh did virtual work experience with British Airways through Speakers for Schools. This opportunity has confirmed Josh's desire to pursue a career in the travel industry and he plans to run his own travel company in the future.



# LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD: HOW WE SUPPORTED SOCIAL MOBILITY IN 2020/21

**For all of us, entering the pandemic was like sailing into uncharted, stormy seas. None of us really knew the full extent of the dangers ahead nor appreciated how long it would be before we reached calmer waters.**

Throughout the continued uncertainty of the last academic year, our charity has been especially grateful to the teachers and other key workers who have laboured tirelessly to try and steady the ship. As a father and a former secondary school teacher, I have witnessed first-hand the challenges young people face in navigating and finding their place in a complex world, even during 'normal' times.

These challenges have been magnified exponentially throughout the pandemic, with many young people having their rite of passage to adulthood cruelly compromised or stolen away. These young people spent years working towards qualifications, only to be told that they would not sit traditional exams and would have little to no opportunity to celebrate their achievements with the rest of their peers.

The work of Speakers for Schools can never truly offset the loss of these important milestones. Still, the messages of thanks we have received from young people, parents, educators, and employers, have fuelled our determination to do more through what remains of the pandemic and beyond. I am honoured to have

shepherded Speakers for Schools through a period of transformational growth. I am proud of the selfless investment our colleagues have poured into delivering what young people so desperately needed during their most trying times.

Listening to young people like Sophia and Josh, it is impossible not to feel moved. We owe it to young people to help them overcome the barriers they face so that they can build the successful careers they deserve.

As a youth social mobility charity, Speakers for Schools is committed to the young people we serve – young people like Josh, Sophia and many others you'll hear about in this Annual Review. Our support is available to any young person who attends a UK state secondary school or college – and we actively prioritise those with the highest need.

The future remains uncertain, but we remain determined to work with our speakers, employers, donors, partners and other stakeholders in delivering our ambition of supporting one million young people annually by the end of the academic year 2022/23.



**Jason Elsom**  
CEO,  
Speakers for Schools



# OUR PROGRAMMES

**In the last year, our charity has provided three main programmes to support the social mobility of young people in the UK and we are about to launch a fourth:**



Our in-person and online talks and broadcast programme that connects young people from state schools and colleges to our network of speakers to help inspire them to challenge the status quo and consider careers they might otherwise have considered beyond their reach.



Our new free mobile app that provides young people in England, Wales and Northern Ireland with an easy way to access a wide range of curated life-preparing opportunities from leading youth charities, employers and organisations from across the UK.



Our in-person and virtual work experience programme that connects young people from state schools and colleges to our network of leading employers to provide opportunities for young people to experience the world of work first-hand.



## COMING IN 2021/22

Our personalised service for young people that helps them to navigate and choose the best post-16 career pathway for them by providing tailored early careers guidance.



# OUR VISION FOR OUR PROGRAMMES

## EXPERIENCE

Connecting young people with leading employers through in-person and virtual work experience

- Work placements
- Insight days
- Discovery workshops

## PROGRESSION

Bridging young people into the workplace

- Apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- Higher education
- Early career jobs
- Mentorships

## INSPIRATION

Inspiring young minds to what is possible

- In-person talks
- Virtual talks
- Broadcast talks

We are moving towards offering a **SINGLE SEAMLESS AND UNIQUE PROPOSITION TO SUPPORT SOCIAL MOBILITY** for young people in the UK.

Our charity aims to provide meaningful support to **1 MILLION** young people annually by the end of the academic year 2022/23.

## YOUTH CARD

Placing opportunities in the hands of young people everyday

- Discounts
- Broadcasts
- Work experience
- Workshops
- Youth groups

**Carly Wilkinson**  
Director of Programmes

# INSPIRATION

Dr. Funke Abimbola MBE



# INSPIRATION IN ACTION

Thanks to the ongoing success of our Inspiration programme, our network of speakers provided inspiration to over 140,000 young people during the course of 2020/21 by sharing insights into their own careers and life stories.

Tom, a former student at Codsall Community High in Wolverhampton is one of the many young people who has benefitted from our Inspiration programme. In the summer of 2021, he achieved an impressive 4 x A-levels at Grade A\* and was accepted to read Maths at Oxford University. Tom is the first in his family to go to university and he credits one of our speakers, Dr. Nira Chamberlain, as being his primary source of inspiration.

Tom first came across our Inspiration programme four years ago when, as a Year 10 student, he attended an in-person talk by leading British mathematician Dr. Nira Chamberlain\*. Dr. Chamberlain inspired Tom to pursue his love of Maths and showed him it is possible to build a successful career focused on Maths. [Find out more about our Inspiration programme.](#)

\*Dr. Nira Chamberlain has delivered 31 talks with Speakers for Schools since 2014 and has more talks in the pipeline.



Tom



Dr. Chamberlain



Click here to watch our Inspiration video

# IMPACT DATA FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21

## Our 5 most popular broadcasts

- **'How to Achieve Anything'**  
One of the Penguin Talks series featuring England football coach Gareth Southgate and Sharky.
- **'How to Boss your Mood'**  
One of the Penguin Talks series featuring Chloe Brotheridge, Clinical Hypnotherapist, author of The Anxiety Solution and Sara Milne Rowe, Performance Coach, founder of Coaching Impact and author of The SHED Method.
- **'May the 4th Be With You'**  
Panel broadcast on careers in VFX with Industrial Light and Magic and IntoFilm.
- **Broadcast by actor Toby Jones\***
- **Broadcast by CEO of Virgin Atlantic Shai Weiss**



Click on each title to view the video online

\*This broadcast was delivered as a live broadcast and is not currently available to view.

\*\*In this context, we define a school as high-need if they score 7 or more on our grading system. Please note our grading system for schools in Wales became operational in December 2020, so we do not hold high-need data for schools in Wales for the full academic year. We were unable to record high-need data for schools in Northern Ireland for the academic year 2020/21. To find out more about our grading system, [please follow this link.](#)



## Impact figures

141,327

young people supported

639

talks/broadcasts delivered

1,578

speakers in our network

2,224

schools registered

## Demographics

63%

of the schools in England, Scotland and Wales we supported were high-need schools\*\*



# TESTIMONIALS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS

Feedback for a talk by **Brandie Deignan**, Chief Executive Officer, Pier Health Group, Former Managing Director, Marco Pierre White Restaurants.

Brandie has so much positivity and enthusiasm, she really inspired me.

It's great to see a positive role model of a black woman.

**SPEAKER:**  
BRANDIE DEIGNAN



Feedback for a talk by **Branko Bjelobaba**, Finance and Engaging in Democracy Speaker.



**SPEAKER:**  
BRANKO BJELOBABA

Amazing! I understand democracy better!

I've been learning the political spectrum in politics, but the world comparison helps me really understand the UK stance on the world's stage!

# MEET OUR 10 MOST ACTIVE SPEAKERS FROM 2020/21



**David Dein MBE**  
Former Chairman of Arsenal and the Football Association



**Richard Murrell**  
Lead Director, BBC News



**Branko Bjelobaba**  
Finance and Engaging in Democracy Speaker



**Brandie Deignan**  
Chief Executive Officer, Pier Health Group, Former Managing Director, Marco Pierre White Restaurants



**Martin Prendergast**  
Director of Development and Public Affairs, Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA)



**Anjana Ahuja**  
Award-Winning Science Journalist



**Rt Hon Amber Rudd**  
Former MP



**Tom Toumazis MBE**  
Former Media, Entertainment and Tech Executive, now investor in start ups



**Steve Wilkinson**  
Managing Partner, Advisory, EY



**Mohammed Amin MBE**  
Former Partner at PwC and Co-Chair of the Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester



# EXPERIENCE

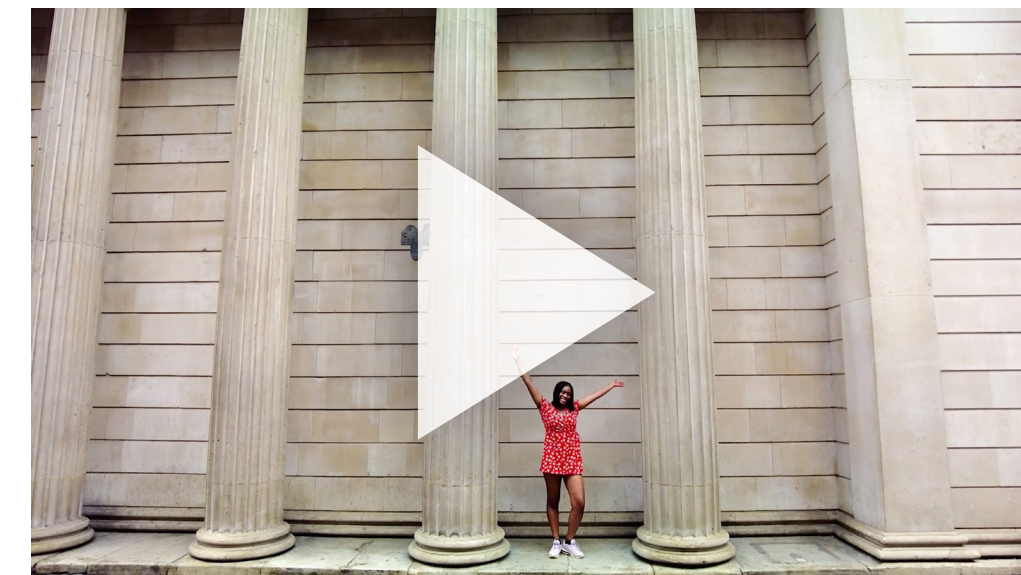
## EXPERIENCE IN ACTION



Thanks to the success of our virtual delivery model for work experience, we grew our network of employers by 250% and provided 1523% more places to young people in 2020/21.

Among those who benefitted was Joyce, from Merton in London. Joyce was struggling to access work experience during the pandemic. She came across Speakers for Schools and completed virtual work experience with Caxton Associates and the Bank of England. Thanks to her placements, Joyce now feels more informed about her career options and has ambitions to work in the finance sector.

We were delighted to see Joyce take centre stage alongside musician Nile Rodgers in a [recent BBC national news story](#) on the importance of opening up opportunities for young people.



Joyce talks about her work experience with Caxton Associates



Find out more about our Experience programme



# EMPLOYER CASE STUDIES



It's not just young people who we support. During the last year, our Experience programme has enabled employers from a wide range of industries to extend their early talent outreach to include a more diverse group of young people.

The success of our partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvement and our Experience Nursing programme in early spring 2021 laid the groundwork for creating charity-wide campaigns focused on strategic growth areas for employment such as the green economy and tech-accelerated careers. Our case studies for British Airways and the British Army link to these campaigns, which we expand on further in the research section of this review.

Read our NHS case study here



Read our British Airways case study here



Read our British Army case study here



# MEET SOME OF OUR EMPLOYERS





# THE NATIONAL TEEN BOOK CLUB

Following the success of our virtual work experience programme we launched a virtual book club for teenagers together with Andersen Press, Harper Collins and Book Clubs in Schools in spring 2021.

Using the same platform as our virtual work experience placements, the National Teen Book Club brings together thousands of 14-19 year olds on a weekly basis to provide a novel and engaging way to support literacy and encourage young people to consider careers in the creative industries.

Our largest recurring virtual work experience placement, the National Teen Book Club appeals to avid and reluctant readers alike. Through this initiative, young people read and review the same literary text together, meet inspiring speakers from the world of publishing and get their own stories published online.

Visit the [National Teen Book Club website](#) to hear feedback from some of the 1,789 young people who took part during the academic year 2020/21 and [read some of their published work](#).



# IMPACT DATA FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21



## Impact figures

56,792

Placements provided

677

Employers

3,094

Schools

## Demographics

6,795

qualified for free school meals (FSM)\*

1,613

were young people with SEND/ASN/ALN\*

50%

were from ethnic minority groups (based on those who chose to disclose their ethnicity)\*

29%

of applications were from high-need schools\*\* (based on all applications from schools in England, Wales and Scotland with a known score)

## Our 10 most active employers



\*This data is based on applications for placements via our Experience portal. It does not include applications for placements via group registrations.  
\*\* In this context, we define a school as high-need if they score 4 or more on our grading system. Please note our grading system for schools in Wales became operational in December 2020, so we do not hold high-need data for schools in Wales for the full academic year. We were unable to record high need data for schools in Northern Ireland for the academic year 2020/21. To find out more about our grading system, [please follow this link](#).





# KEY FINDINGS: EXPERIENCE IMPACT RESEARCH PROJECT

Research period February to July 2021

11,138 young people completed the pre-placement survey

3,148 young people participated in the post-placement survey

143 employers offered placements to the young people who responded to the questionnaires



9  
out of  
10

young people found our placements 'highly beneficial'

30%  
more

young people felt confident or very confident about their future career possibilities following their placement

Top 3 areas where placements boosted young people's confidence

44%  
of young people felt more confident in researching careers

61%  
of young people felt more confident in knowing their career options

53%  
of young people felt more confident in knowing what employers are looking for



# TESTIMONIALS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

Many young students have been prevented from doing in-person work experience due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but virtual work experience is equally as good.

Omaima, 17, Birmingham



The best thing about the insight day was that I was able to hear from many departments in RAPP in such a short time and this was very insightful.

Dilpreet, 17, West



This work experience has made a big difference to me as I have found out about the different jobs and roles that are available in the construction industry, some of which I didn't even know existed!

Gosia, 17, Bangor, NI



They gave plenty of Q & A opportunities for the students to ask the presenters about their personal experiences. It really opened my eyes to all the different roles involved in nuclear engineering.

Will, 17, Harrogate





# EDUCATOR TESTIMONIALS



Virtual work experience has proven to be a really positive and valuable experience for our students over the last year... we have all been incredibly impressed at the quality of the online work experience organised through Speakers for Schools. There is no doubt that our students have benefited hugely from the opportunity to engage directly with employers.

Marian Farrar, lead for Business & Community Partnerships at St Aidan's and St John Fisher Associated Sixth Form, Harrogate



One of the parents of the pupils who completed this placement sent me a message about her son's experience: 'found it very informative and enjoyable throughout the 3 days. Definitely gave him more of insight into the construction industry and the different roles/jobs available.'

C O Kane, Head of Careers, St. Patrick's College, Maghera, Northern Ireland



# EMPLOYER TESTIMONIALS



We have found that by partnering with companies like Speakers for Schools we can still offer these opportunities in new and innovative ways, potentially allowing us to reach even more young people both individually and whilst in the classroom.

Sallie Johnson, NHS Futures Manager at NHS Futures Team, The Royal Wolverhampton Trust



Being virtual has enabled us to reach out further and improve our diversity of who has access to our programme... Improving diversity has been a key driver of our programme in the East. The success of our first VWEX week has meant the rest of Morgan Sindall Construction has adopted the programme and also the wider Morgan Sindall family.

Helen Clements, Social Value Manager, Morgan Sindall Construction





# EMPLOYER TESTIMONIALS



Although students can't be at one of our sites in person, they will get to virtually meet real life defence scientists and find out about some of the exciting science projects they are working on. They'll be developing their employability skills too, as we'll be setting exciting interactive challenges relating to each of the work areas.

Jaime Williamson, heads up Early Careers for Dstl (Defence Science and Technology Laboratory)



Really pleased to still be able to offer young people this opportunity despite the circumstances. I found the young people to be incredibly engaged and motivated and asked lots of good questions. They were eager to learn as much as they could from us, and it was refreshing for me to share what I know with young people. I hope the students that took part have learnt something and would now consider a career in my sector.

Heidi Isacks, Technology Internal Comms and Events Coordinator, Tesco



YOUTH CARD



Pilot launch of Youth Card, Birmingham Bullring



# YOUTH CARD IN ACTION

In summer 2021, we collaborated with leading youth charities UK Youth and Young Enterprise to launch Youth Card, a free social mobility app that enables young people to access joined-up support to improve their outcomes in a way never previously possible.

Youth Card is the first charity collaboration of its kind to provide multiple support agencies and partner organisations, including brands such as Misguided, Lookfantastic, National Express, Collins, CineWorld and many more with an easy way to deliver a range of curated life-enhancing opportunities direct to young people.

Young people aged 11-25 who download the app instantly gain access to career and development opportunities and discounts that include money-saving deals.

Over 7 million young people use equivalent versions of Youth Card already in Scotland and across Europe through the European Youth Card Association (EYCA) and Young Scot. Speakers for Schools is the EYCA member for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and works closely with Young Scot.



Find out more about our Youth Card app

# RESPONDING TO A GROWING EVIDENCE OF NEED

Young people who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) represent one key group whose numbers have swelled since the pandemic and who will require enhanced levels of additional support from our charity going forwards.

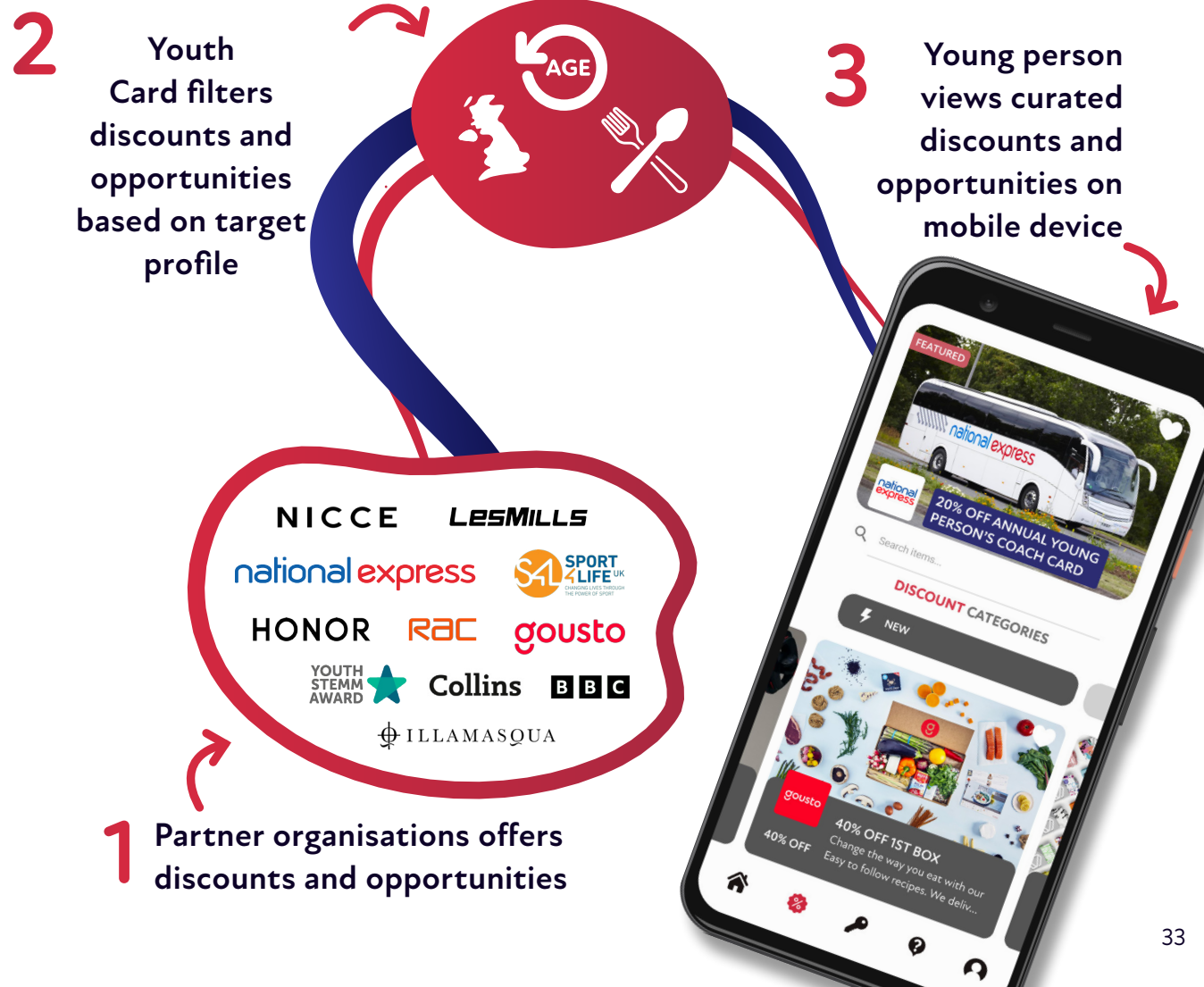
From 2021/22 onwards, we will be working closely with schools, colleges and universities to offer educational organisations the option to securely integrate their Management Information Systems (MIS) with Youth Card. This will mean that, through Youth Card, our partners will be able to tailor their opportunities to offer additional levels of support to the young people who need it most.

In the first instance this will mean offering enhanced support to young people who qualify for free school meals (FSM) and/or with special educational needs and disability (SEND) or additional learning needs (ALN). In time, this can be extended to include those who meet the criteria for other high-need identifiers such as those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and/or looked-after young people who are in the care of their local authority.

Youth Card will also offer joined-up support as young people progress through their studies and early career and allow our charity to track impact and outcomes for our programmes in a way never previously possible.



## How Youth Card works





# IMPACT DATA FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21



**15,000**

app downloads since launch which equates to 15,000 young people aged 11-25 supported



**2.5k**

app downloads as part of the pilot in Greater Birmingham



**148**

Youth Card partners registered



**142**

discounts listed on app



**272**

opportunities listed on app



# TESTIMONIALS

The last 18 months have been difficult for all of us, but we know that young people have found it hard to access the continued support they need to learn and grow. It is wonderful to see three of our leading youth charities coming together to launch the Youth Card which opens up a whole new world of real opportunity, helping our young people get back on track and accessing the career guidance and support they need to succeed.



Baroness Barran, Minister for Civil Society and Youth, DCMS



Watch BBC West Midlands coverage of Youth Card here





# PROGRESSION

## INTRODUCING PROGRESSION A NEW PROGRAMME LAUNCHING IN 2021/22



In order to achieve our vision of a single seamless and unique proposition to support social mobility in the UK, we want to help young people supercharge their futures by helping them to make more informed choices about the many different career pathways available to them.

With this in mind, we are developing our **Progression programme** that will offer a personalised service for young people to help them navigate and choose the best post-16 career pathway for them.

As part of our preparations for the launch Progression, we acquired Fledglink in summer 2021. Fledglink is **an early careers app that provides CV and interview support** and has already enabled thousands of diverse students and unemployed young people to **build their skills and access the support and opportunities they needed to reach their potential**. Fledglink will become an integrated part of our Progression programme going forwards.

Progression will complement our existing services and offer an enhanced level of functionality for young people already using Youth Card and our Experience portal.







# RESEARCH

## RESEARCH: IMPLEMENTING OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



**Our charity's core theory of change is based on clear evidence that increased personal and cultural capital in young people leads to increased motivation, which leads to higher academic achievement, a greater focus on making future plans, and higher wages.**

We know that, for young people to be ready and equipped to succeed and thrive, in education, work and life, it is vital that they have access to advice, role models, information, knowledge and inspiration. This development of personal and cultural capital leads to confidence and self-efficacy which means that young people feel more able to undertake careers research that supports their choices and enables them to plan and make decisions for the future. Increased motivation and understanding of the connections between curriculum content and the workplace can also motivate young people in their studies, leading to improved academic outcomes.

We are committed to continuous improvement in our programmes, listening to young people, learning from our partners and making use of cutting-edge research to ensure that we understand the needs of the young people who

are most disadvantaged, and that the voices of young people are heard by policy makers and people in power.

Pre-pandemic research and evidence by organisations such as the Career & Enterprise Company in partnership with the Confederation of British Industry supports the theory that employer engagement in schools improves outcomes for young people.

This research evidence is borne out by our own research and impact data from the last academic year. Over the year ahead, we will continue to undertake research to amplify young people's voices, contribute to the evidence base on the impact of employer engagement in education, and demonstrate the value of leaders and businesses contributing to their communities to help improve social mobility and inequality.



**Rachael Saunders**  
Education and Policy Director,  
for Schools



# USING RESEARCH TO: IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THE HIGHEST NEED

To ensure that we concentrated our support where it was needed most, our charity developed a unique grading system for evaluating the level of need in state secondary schools and colleges in England in April 2017. This grading system allowed us to prioritise schools and colleges in so-called opportunity areas (defined by the Department for Education) as well as individual cases of schools and colleges with higher need.

Our grading system uses a scale of 1 to 10 – with 1 being the lowest level of need and 10 being the highest level of need. The grading system uses an amalgamation of publicly available data to create a scale of ‘need’ for schools in the charity’s network and located in an opportunity area, determining the priority level for the charity’s services. This includes:

- Government data on the school’s attainment and progress
  - > If this data is not available, the score for the Local Authority is used
- Percentage of pupils receiving free school meals (FSM) at the school
- Percentage of pupils ‘not in education, employment or training’ (NEET) aged 16 onwards

By establishing a consistent set of criteria to rate the need of every state secondary school and college we worked with in England, we ensured that schools and colleges in disadvantaged areas benefitted most from both our Inspiration and Experience programmes.

In July 2019, we extended the grading system to include secondary schools and colleges in Scotland and, in December 2020, we were able to extend this to Wales. We continue to explore ways to enable a similar approach in Northern Ireland.

Our latest programme, Youth Card, will take prioritising high need to another level still, allowing us to make services, discounts and opportunities available to young people according to their individual needs profile. Youth Card is a mobile application, backed by a fully scalable cloud-hosted service, which has the potential to be securely integrated with the Management Information Systems (MIS) of schools, colleges and universities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to enable enhanced levels of support (in the form of additional opportunities and discounts) to be delivered directly to the individuals who need it most.

Youth Card will also offer joined-up support as young people progress through their studies and early career and allow our charity to track impact and outcomes for our programmes in a way never previously possible.

# USING RESEARCH TO: AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

On 24th September 2021, we published a research report – Making Up for Lost Time – which revealed the combined results of three independent YouGov surveys we commissioned in May/June 2021 with 2,113 young people, 100 MPs and 100 business leaders together with semi-structured interviews with 13 young people who had undertaken work experience with us.

The aim of the report was to better understand the issues facing the young people in our communities in the wake of the pandemic and give them the opportunity to tell us what they think will help them make up for lost time.

Our research revealed some significant gaps in perceptions among the different groups. It also highlighted some surprising areas of consensus, which could be built on going forwards.

The findings detailed in our report included key insights into the views of young people, politicians and employers, together with a comprehensive set of recommendations for how the government and business leaders can contribute towards helping young people to make up for lost time.

[Download the report now](#)

**YouGov**<sup>®</sup>





# USING RESEARCH TO: CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE OUR SERVICES

As well as this research report, we have also commissioned several other key pieces of qualitative and quantitative research over the last year, including:

- an independent marketing survey in June of 4,512 young people aged 16 to 19 to gain insights into their lifestyle preferences
- product development research throughout February, March and April to improve our Experience portal for all audiences
- youth market research and regular youth focus groups to help inform the ongoing development of our new Youth Card app

In addition to these examples of research, we have continued to invite feedback for our Inspiration and Experience programmes, so that we can actively monitor quality assurance and impact.



In the case of our Inspiration programme, we invited secondary schools and colleges that hosted in-person or virtual talks to complete feedback forms. In the case of our Experience programme, we sought pre- and post-placement feedback from young people and employers as standard practice for every work experience placement we hosted. To further enhance the quality of our work experience offering, we also implemented the Skills Builder Universal Framework as part of the Experience programme to enable employers to use their placements as an opportunity to embed one or more of the eight core Skills Builder skills: Listening, Speaking, Leadership, Aiming High, Creativity, Problem Solving, Teamwork and Staying Positive.

We have continued to work closely with the government and other leading organisations throughout the academic year 2020/21 – in England as well as the devolved nations – to ensure that all our programmes continue to meet the latest national guidelines for best practice. Given the quality and depth of our impact data, we also contributed to calls for evidence from government departments as part of the Boost 2021 programme and the Times Education Commission.

# USING RESEARCH TO: MAXIMISE IMPACT THROUGH KEY CAMPAIGNS

In the last year, the UK economy has faced the combined challenges of the pandemic, Brexit, and an aging workforce. At the same time, young people have faced major disruption to their education, reduced opportunities for social and personal development and rising youth unemployment.

Young people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and for many of the young people our charity serves, an already bad situation has become worse with widening gaps between the most and least privileged in our communities.

With so many challenges affecting our employer network and the main beneficiaries of our charity (young people), we decided to organise our activity for Inspiration and Experience programmes around key campaigns to bring a sharper focus to our efforts and maximise our impact by concentrating on key growth areas for employment: the green economy in the case of Green Skills Week which took place in April 2021 and tech-accelerated careers in the case of Predict which took place in June 2021.

By setting objectives and deliverables/KPIs for these campaigns, we were able to align our efforts to ensure that young people could take full advantage of a range of opportunities to learn as much as possible about two significant growth areas for future careers: the green economy and tech-accelerated careers.

Following the success of these campaigns, we have taken the decision to repeat both these campaigns in the academic year 2021/22 as well as introduce two further campaigns in the autumn term, Access All Areas and Work/Life\*.

## Speakers for Schools Campaigns



\*Our Access All Areas campaign aims to open up work experience and the world of work to young people with special needs and disabilities, and our Work/Life campaign seeks to normalise conversations around mental health.



# GREEN SKILLS WEEK

Our first campaign Green Skills Week - which aimed to introduce young people to careers in the green economy - took place in April 2021 and was hugely successful.



We spent a whole day learning about sustainability and looked at a real-life project they're working on to make something greener. It was really insightful and interesting to find out how to become more energy efficient. When I have my own kids, I want to be able to tell them I made the world a better place.



Felix, 16, from Aylesbury, completed a 5-day virtual work experience placement with Align JV as part of Green Skills Week



Find out more about Green Skills Week

# GREEN SKILLS WEEK: IMPACT DATA



9  
out of  
10

young people felt well-informed or very well-informed about careers in the industry following their placement

11%  
more

young people expressed that they would actively consider a career in the industry following their placement



99%

of young people who attended placements as part of our Green Skills Week and who completed feedback felt more confident about the world of work following their placement

Top 3 areas where placements boosted young people's confidence

64%

of young people felt more confident in knowing what career pathways were available to them

57%

of young people felt more confident in knowing the career options available to them

49%

of young people felt more confident in knowing what employers are looking for



Dig deeper into the success of Green Skills Week by reading our full Impact Report here.



# PREDICT

Green Skills Week was followed in June 2021 by Predict, another hugely successful campaign, which aimed to demystify careers in the evolving world of technology-accelerated careers.

16,658

young people supported

48

eminent guest speakers gave technology-themed talks and broadcasts to reach 7,306 young people

78

employers delivered 9,352 technology-themed work experience placements to young people



Dig deeper into the success of Predict by reading our full Impact Report here



I really enjoyed working with Spaceport Cornwall, during my experience I worked in a team to develop a new product using existing satellite technology to help the local community... Working on a project like this has further inspired me to pursue a career in aerospace engineering and allowed me to meet some people who do jobs similar to those I want later in life.



Beau, 14, from Birmingham, completed a 3-day virtual work experience placement with Spaceport Cornwall as part of Predict



It is revolutionising how we grow,

Find out more about Predict

# PREDICT: IMPACT DATA

95%

young people rated their placement 4 stars put of 5 or higher, indicating that they found it highly beneficial

46%  
more

young people felt confident or very confident about their future in the world of work following their placement

9  
out of  
10

young people felt well-informed or very well-informed about careers in the industry following their placement

13%  
more

young people expressed that they would actively consider a career in the industry following their placement

86%

of young people who completed a placement expressed they were likely to apply for another placement with Speakers for Schools

The top three skills that young people became more confident or very confident in were

86%  
SPEAKING

77%  
PROBLEM SOLVING

70%  
TEAMWORK





# OUR YEAR IN BRIEF

SEPTEMBER  
2020

**Penguin Talks series** (available through our Inspiration programme) restarts for a new academic year.

OCTOBER - DECEMBER  
2020

The charity undertakes a major scale-up and goes **from 14 to 55 staff**. We build our first internal tech development team. Marketing and outreach scales increasing our national school network.

JANUARY  
2021

**Experience Nursing launches** to encourage more young people into the nursing profession. 1,557 young people take part across 21 x Insight Days and 1 x 5-day placement.

7 high-profile speakers deliver broadcasts in support of **Experience Nursing**, reaching 2,491 young people.

FEBRUARY  
2021

**Almost 4,000 work experience placements** are delivered in a single week over half term.

MARCH  
2021

**National Teen Book Club** launches in schools across the UK.  
  
Speakers for Schools feature on **BBC Three Counties radio**.

In partnership with Speakers for Schools, **Cumbria LEP and 27 local employers delivered a week of Insight Days** across 5 growth sectors for 250 Year 10 and 11 students at Queen Katherine's School.

APRIL  
2021

**Green Skills Week campaign launches**, supported by 45 employers and 107 guest speakers.

**Green Skills Week Challenge** with Man Group launches.

Speakers for Schools feature in **The Sun** and **The Sunday Times**.

Experience programme introduces **Discovery Workshops**.

MAY  
2021

As part of a national research project, Speakers for Schools commission **three independent surveys with YouGov**.

Our new **Youth Card app pilots in the Greater Birmingham** area and achieves 2.5k downloads.

Speakers for Schools join **the government's Boost programme**.

Speakers for Schools feature on **BBC West Midlands 6pm news**.

**Green Skills National Competition** launches with Anglian Water.

JUNE  
2021

**Predict campaign launches**, supported by 78 employers and 48 guest speakers.

Speakers for Schools feature on **GB News**.

As part of a national research project, **Speakers for Schools conduct semi-structured interviews with 13 young people** who completed work experience placements.

JULY  
2021

The **Youth Card app** is rolled out across **England, Wales and Northern Ireland** and achieves 15k downloads before the end of the academic year.

**Speakers for Schools release the findings of their YouGov research** into how best to support young people in making up for lost time following the pandemic.

**West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Leeds City Region LEP team up with Speakers for Schools** and 30 regional employers to deliver **Leeds City Region Virtual Insight Festival**.

AUGUST  
2021

Speakers for Schools acquire **vInspired and Fledglink**.

**Speakers for Schools announce partnership with charity Mencap** in preparation for our **Access All Areas campaign**.

Speakers for Schools feature on **BBC London news**.

**Doncaster Council team up with Speakers for Schools and Game Academy** to help young people from the region to gain insights into **transferable skills for the gaming industry**.







THANK  
YOU

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

The success and achievements of our charity in 2020/21 are thanks to a huge team effort on the part of a great many people. Support for Speakers for Schools comes in many forms, from many different people and from many different places.

On behalf of the charity and all the young people we supported during the academic year 2020/21, we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to every speaker, employer, school, organisation and individual who contributed their time, good will and/or resources to Speakers for Schools in the last year for their generous support.

We would also like to extend our very special thanks to all our generous benefactors who provided financial support to help fund our charity's work, including those named here and others who preferred to remain anonymous. Every penny donated to our charity is an investment in a young person's future, helping us to take positive steps towards improving social mobility for those who need and deserve it most.

## Our donors

- The Law Family Charitable Foundation
- The Waterloo Foundation
- Zedra Trust
- The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- Barbour Foundation
- Didymus CIO
- Sir James Reckitt Charitable Trust
- Evolution Education Trust
- DCR Allen Charitable Trust
- The Englefield Charitable Trust
- The Rowlands Trust
- RG Hills Charitable Trust
- Fowler Smith and Jones Trust
- The SMB Charitable Trust
- The Paul Bassham Charitable Trust
- The Mauld Elkington Charitable Trust
- The Thales Charitable Trust
- Sir James Roll Charitable Trust
- The Arnold Clark Community Fund
- The RE Chadwick Charitable Trust
- The Irving Memorial Trust
- The Rothley Trust
- The Thomas Sivewright Catto Charitable Settlement
- The Ian Askew Charitable Trust
- The Joicey Trust
- Tabor Foundation
- The Rowan Bentall Charitable Trust

## Our corporate supporters and sponsors

- Man Group PLC
- Sky UK
- National Grid
- University of Law
- Anglian Water
- Bank of England



# Our Trustees

## Andrew Law Chair Of The Board Of Trustees

Andrew Law is the Chairman and CEO of Caxton Associates, a global macro hedge fund. Andrew attended state school in Manchester and subsequently graduated from Sheffield University with a First Class Honours Degree in Economics. He spent his early career at County NatWest and Chemical Bank, before joining Goldman Sachs in 1996 where he was a Managing Director, heading FICC proprietary trading. Andrew joined the London office of Caxton in 2003; he was appointed Chief Investment Officer globally in early 2008, and to his current position effective January 2012. His charitable interests include founding trustee of the Law Family Charitable Foundation, and the Law Family Educational Trust through which he sponsors a Multi Academy Trust in Manchester. He is a Board member of the Sutton Trust, a former Deputy Chair of the New Schools Network and a former director of Social Finance.

## Robert Peston Founder of Speakers for Schools, ITV Political Editor

Robert Peston is ITV’s Political Editor, presenter of the weekly ‘Peston’ show and the founder of Speakers for Schools. Formerly he was the BBC’s economics editor. He has won numerous awards for his journalism and was previously political editor and financial editor of the Financial Times, City Editor of the Sunday Telegraph and a columnist for the New Statesman and the Sunday Times. He became a household name in 2007 when he broadcast and published a series of influential reports on the causes and consequences of the global financial crisis. Robert has published five critically acclaimed books, ‘The Whistleblower’, ‘WTF’, ‘How Do We Fix this Mess?’ ‘Who Runs Britain’ and ‘Brown’s Britain’. He is Vice President of Hospice UK. You can follow Robert at [www.twitter.com/peston](http://www.twitter.com/peston)

## David Giampaolo Founder and Chief Executive of Pi Capital

David is the Founder and Chief Executive of Pi Capital. He previously founded, built up and sold several businesses and health club chains in the US, Europe and Asia. David has financial interests in several other businesses and industries and has been involved as an investor, advisor and board member of some of the most successful health & fitness companies in the world. David is Chairman of Oga Fit, Sarva and EXi, non-executive director of Agronomics and also a senior advisor to AMG (Affiliated Managers Group, Inc.) and BC Partners. David is a member of YPO, the Chief Executives Organization and the Global Leadership Circle of ONE. In addition, he is a trustee of Speaker for schools and patron of Pro Bono Economics.

## Sakhila Mona Mirza General Counsel at London Bullion Market Association

Sakhila, qualified lawyer, has worked in the financial services sector for 15 years, covering the oil markets and then moving to the precious metals market. Most of her career has focused on providing legal, regulatory and compliance advice, and building corporate governance programmes.

Currently she works at the London Bullion Market Association, where she is a Board Member and the General Counsel. Sakhila works on the strategic development of the Association, by leading and working on several business development initiatives with various market stakeholders, and taking responsibility for all the legal work affecting the organisation. In addition, she has built key relationships with government officials and regulators around the world, and has spoken at several conferences, educating stakeholders on the developments within the precious metals market. Sakhila read law at the London School of Economics and went on to qualify as a solicitor.

# Our Trustees

## Diana Osagie Director of Courageous Leadership Consultancy

With 21 years’ experience leading secondary education, including six years as a successful head teacher in a London secondary school; Diana works at the cutting edge of leadership development. She is known as a resilient school leader, skilled in urban leadership under challenging circumstances. Diana has substantial success in developing school wide models that strategically enhance the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum and can couple sound strategic vision whilst giving clear operational direction. She is a programme director on a MA in Educational Leadership for a UK university. Diana is also a lead school inspector, with developed expertise scrutinizing school wide leadership systems.

With a proven track record of developing leaders via bespoke training programs, Diana founded The Academy of Women’s Leadership; specializing in supporting women to grow the leadership cultures of their organisations and to flourish as leaders established in confidence, Diana has established capability in mentoring and supporting leaders facing challenging circumstances and change. She is the author of Courageous Leadership, a humorous book that gives leaders’ strategies for shaping their leadership experience.

## Roland Rudd Founding Partner at Finsbury

Roland Rudd is Chairman of Finsbury Glover Hering. He founded Finsbury 25 years ago and was Chairman throughout this time. He is a leader in corporate communications and provides personal counsel to board members and senior executives at the most critical moments for their companies.

Before Finsbury, he worked as a political and financial journalist primarily at the Financial Times.

He is Chair of Tate, Trustee for Speakers for Schools, and the Bayreuth Festival. He is an ambassador for the Alzheimer’s Society and the Made By Dyslexia campaign and is Chairman of the Governors of Millfield School. He is also an Honorary Fellow at Oxford School of Corporate Reputation and Regents College, Oxford University.



# OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE LIES AHEAD:

## HOW YOU CAN HELP US



### Donate funds and/or explore opportunities for corporate sponsorship and partnership

We welcome financial support in the form of one-off donations and grants, and we also offer corporate sponsorship and bespoke partnership opportunities. Every financial gift makes a difference to the young people we support and moves us a step closer to supporting one million young people annually.

Find out more about the different ways you can support us financially by visiting [www.speakersforschools.org](http://www.speakersforschools.org) or email us at [fundraising@speakersforschools.org](mailto:fundraising@speakersforschools.org)



£10

could fund one week of **Virtual Work Experience**, boosting the confidence of a young person from a disadvantaged background and helping them extend their network and choose a future career path.

£100

could fund a **speaker from a FTSE 100 company** to deliver an inspirational talk to a group of 100 young people in an opportunity area of the UK.

£150

could fund an **Insight Day for a class of 30 young people** to learn about the career opportunities in a sector that is entirely new to them.



# OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE LIES AHEAD:

## MORE WAYS TO HELP US



### Select one of our premium service level options for Experience

We offer a range of service levels to employers hosting work experience through our Experience programme, from free entry-level packages right through to Enhanced and Managed services, which are our premium offerings. If your organisation would like to do more to support social mobility and be able to measure the impact of its placements with Speakers for Schools, please consider opting for one of our premium service level options.

Find out more about the range of options available by emailing us at [experience@speakersforschools.org](mailto:experience@speakersforschools.org)



### Donate your time, skills and/or resources

We are always looking to raise awareness of our charity's good work, to expand our networks and to be able to do more for less money. If you can help facilitate introductions to people of influence, assist us with increasing our media coverage, or help us save money by donating resources of some kind, we would love to hear from you.

Get in touch with us today to discuss how you might be able to help by emailing [pr@speakersforschools.org](mailto:pr@speakersforschools.org)



### Take part in and and/or promote our events

We want to ensure that the value of our charity's work continues to be widely recognised and shared. We welcome your support in participating and/or promoting our events to your network. Over the last year, we hosted roundtable events and webinars in support of the government's Boost programme, Black History month and more.

We will be hosting a full programme of in-person and online events throughout the year in 2021/22 to champion social mobility and showcase our charity's work.

Find out more about our events calendar for 2021/22 by emailing us at [events@speakersforschools.org](mailto:events@speakersforschools.org)



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