

Annual Review 2015 - 2016

Future First

Our goals

Future First looks forward to a world where a young person's background does not limit their future.

We want to see every state school and college supported by a thriving and engaged alumni community which improves students' motivation, confidence and life chances.

We are therefore



Growing the number of schools that we support in building thriving alumni communities



Undertaking innovative projects using alumni to help tackle longstanding problems in education



Helping to build a national movement of alumni engagement

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Christine Gilbert
Executive Chair



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Introduction

Former students can have a transformative effect on the lives of young people at their old schools and colleges. Future First aims to create a national culture of alumni engagement so that everyone in state schools and colleges experiences the many benefits alumni can bring.

Teachers tell us it's working. Students do too. 84% of young people we worked with last year told us that meeting alumni made them realise that 'people like them' can be successful and 82% committed to working harder in school.

We're building a movement of alumni engagement. When Future First started, less than 1% of schools made the most of their former students. This year we worked with the National Foundation for Educational Research to update that figure. We were pleased to learn that more than a quarter of schools across the country now report that they regularly engage their alumni to support today's young people.

We're proud of our role in making that shift nationally, but we know it is crucial that each school takes ownership of their network.

We've worked with 82,850 young people in the last 12 months - almost double the number from last year. We're particularly excited because it's not that we're running more workshops ourselves, or creating more work experience from our head office – instead we're making important progress towards our members embedding alumni in the fabric of the school and the lives of their students.

We've grown our support for them to do so significantly over the last 12 months. We've launched the biggest upgrade to our alumni portal since it was first created, launched a digital toolkit so teachers can access excellent resources and expertise from across the country, and run our first conference to train teachers how to get the most out of their network.

The range of ways that our members are using their networks is growing too. They've included Chace Community School arranging for a former student - now a UN ambassador - to return to co-teach an A level politics lesson, a Hong Kong-based former student of Lewis School Pengam in South Wales mentoring a current student through Skype and a former student of a Sussex school – now an artist – offering work experience to help create a huge mural in the local community.

Another highlight was a judge at the Old Bailey taking three students from her old school in Cardiff for work experience. One of the students told us he doesn't get to meet many people with jobs – "mostly I meet manual workers or, dare I say, people on the other side of the law." Another – interested in a career in law – learnt more about the difference between a solicitor and a barrister and is now firmly set on the latter.

We also ran our most successful Back to School Week campaign to-date. The Schools' Minister, Nick Gibb, and former Labour leader, Ed Miliband, returned to their old schools to speak to current students. The latter worked with Year 7s on campaign planning. They're now looking to improve housing for refugees, lengthen school holidays and increase portion sizes in the school canteen. Watch this space!

In last year's annual review, we wrote of the public support we'd received from the government's Careers and Enterprise Company. This year we were delighted to be announced as one of the first recipients of the Careers and Enterprise Fund. That investment enabled us to lead the growth of alumni networks in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset – a region that previously had some of the lowest levels of this type of work anywhere in the country.

Although we have made great progress, significant challenges remain. More than half the schools across the country are still not keeping in touch with their former students, let alone inviting them back in. At a time when school budgets are particularly tight, there is enormous work to do in communicating the impact alumni are having across the country.

We are incredibly grateful for the leadership and support shown by our staff, trustees, funders, supporters, schools, employer partners and indeed, alumni themselves. We want to say the biggest thanks to you all for helping to build this movement.

We hope this review inspires you to continue working with us. We must not rest until every young person has access to positive role models they can relate to and who build their motivation, confidence and skills.



Our purpose

Britain has a deep social mobility problem. This not only limits the contribution that individuals can make to society and the economy but is also fundamentally unfair. Although there are some signs of social progress, there is evidence too that the problem is getting worse with only one in eight children from a low-income background likely to become a high earner as an adult.

At Future First, we believe that things do not have to be this way. We help state schools and colleges to build thriving alumni communities. We believe alumni can have a major role in levelling the playing field and supporting greater social mobility. We are therefore passionate about the value that alumni networks can bring to schools and to students.

Alumni communities have two distinctive strengths - relatability and sustainability. Having grown up in the same area and attended the same school, former students are instantly relatable to the current generation. They are living proof that 'someone like me' can succeed and prosper. Alumni also provide a lasting pool of support as new students leave school each year and join the growing community of volunteers.

We believe every school has the right to benefit from a thriving alumni network just as independent schools and universities have for years.



What does a successful alumni network do?



Engages former students continuously and throughout their lives.



Provides relatable role models for current students, so they see that 'people like me' can be successful.



Engages alumni in motivating students, enriching the curriculum and giving students insights into career paths and the world of work.



Provides one-to-one support for students through mentoring and advice.



Creates a community of volunteers for activities ranging from supporting as governors to fundraising for the school.



Supports the school in raising aspirations and achievements.

What we do

Building alumni networks



STEP ONE

Sign up leavers

The first step is to sign up all final year students so they can keep in touch from their last day. Future First's secure online platform helps schools collect student contact details, keep them up to date, send out communications and easily search to find alumni to meet specific needs.



STEP TWO

Reach out to former students

We also help schools to reach out to former students using local contacts, press, social media, employer and university partnerships, and our Back to School Week campaigns to encourage alumni to sign up.



STEP THREE

Engage the network

Schools regularly contact former students with updates, newsletters and opportunities to get involved. An engaged network helps alumni feel part of the school or college community.



STEP FOUR

Track journeys

Using our annual tracking survey and online platform, we help track the paths alumni take. Schools can capture their former students' journeys by asking them to update their details every year.

STEP FIVE

Invite alumni back to school

Alumni can support students in all sorts of ways, including giving inspiring talks, mentoring, work shadowing, becoming a governor or featuring in 'a day in the life' video profile.

What we do

Stories from our schools

We help schools to establish and develop alumni networks. Once in place, networks can be used in creative ways to support students, sometimes in partnership with Future First, and sometimes using our 'do-it-yourself' package of information and support. Each year, our campaigns continue to prompt former students to give back to their old school or college.

The stories of students, schools and colleges show the impact that alumni networks have on individuals and across the school community.

CASE STUDY

Role models at Ernest Bevin College, London

Future First worked with Rose Banks, sixth form study manager, to enhance students' weekly enrichment afternoons through alumni related activities. Former students were invited to a timetable of weekly talks, where alumni described their pathway from school to their current jobs. Students with an interest in a particular area were offered specific sessions, with links to the relevant subjects forged to support the curriculum. This approach has significantly increased student interest and engagement at the College:

"The alumni just really get the students, you can see them sitting up straight, asking questions and becoming motivated through the talks. They provide a reality to what they are studying. The alumni are saying 'I used to be you, this is what I do now'; the students are thinking 'this could be me'."

Rose Banks,
Sixth Form Study Manager, Ernest Bevin College

CASE STUDY

Role Models at Torquay Academy, Devon

Future First facilitated a session at Torquay Academy to showcase the power of alumni networks. Former students, Claire Marriott, studying paediatrics at Birmingham University, Chloe Watling, who had just completed an art foundation course, and Nottingham University research fellow and microbiologist Emma Stevenson, helped Year 12 students understand the university options open to them, enabling them to make more informed decisions about their futures. The session was a great success. Claire said: "I wish there were more events like this when I was 17. I had no one to tell me things like it's really important to have experience, or to say, 'go and check out this resource'."

CASE STUDY

Enriching the curriculum at Oathall Community College, Haywards Heath

David Amor, a games developer, signed up to the Oathall network in December 2015. He offered to go back to school to speak to a Year 10 computing class who were in the middle of their first big AQA programming coursework task.

David spoke to the students about his career as a games developer and talked about what makes a great game. Much to the students' delight, he gave them an insight into Candy Crush and the possible revenue that such a successful game can produce.

Students left the class better informed and engaged, having seen a strong connection between their schoolwork and areas of interest in the outside world.

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What we do

Stories from our schools

CASE STUDY

Role models at St Anne's Catholic School, Southampton

St Anne's Catholic School has been working with Future First since 2014 and now has 400 former students in their alumni network. The school has used the Shawbrook Bank e-mentoring programme to provide students with one-to-one support from alumni role models.

Ola left St Anne's in 2007 and signed up to support in 2015. She studied medical microbiology at the University of Reading. She is now a very happy fourth year medical student and is e-mentoring a student, Advia. Ola tells us:

"When I was at school, there wasn't a lot of support for potential medical students. There were two or three of us who were thinking about medicine but we never heard from employers or former students. We didn't have support like the mentoring that St Anne's is now offering.

"Nothing is new: people have gone through this before and it would have been much faster and less painful if I had someone telling me what it would be like. There's no better education than hearing from people who have been there and have all the experience to share."

For Ola, mentoring Advia is like speaking to her younger self – she struggles with things that many people struggle with – confidence in her work and motivation. Ola has seen a difference in Advia's energy and motivation, with practical steps such as having a study plan that she sticks to on a daily basis.

"Advia doesn't know what she wants to do yet but she has an idea of the subjects she enjoys. At the moment, we're concentrating on the task in hand: getting her grades up and making sure that she does well in her exams. Then we'll start thinking about her future – I'm excited to see what she decides."

CASE STUDY

Enriching the curriculum at Tiverton High School, Devon

Tiverton High School works with alumni all over the world to make lessons and study more engaging for current students.

Former students play an important role in the delivery of the core curriculum. Returning to their former classrooms, alumni work with teachers to jointly deliver lessons related to their careers, helping to build students' understanding of the real-world application of their learning, whilst boosting their motivation to study.

Since many former students have moved away from the area, the school organised a series of talks through Skype. This included Sally Hill, now owner of her own scientific translations company in the Netherlands. Sally spoke to a Year 10 geography class about international labour markets, which the students have been studying.

CASE STUDY

Enriching the curriculum at Warden Park Academy, Haywards Heath

Warden Park's Highly Able Mentoring Scheme links alumni specialising in a specific subject area with high attaining students. Luke Mitchell, currently at university, co-taught a lesson on romantic poetry and then ran an afternoon session focused on literary criticism for 30 students. Following great feedback, the school set up a Google Classroom, in which Luke will post thought-provoking articles and initiate discussion amongst the students. He will also offer one-to-one guidance online and advice on academic needs specific to English. Warden Park plans to roll out the scheme across core subjects over the coming year.

CASE STUDY

Career insight at Cathays High School, Cardiff

As part of our Back to School Week campaign, Cathays High School's former student, Judge Wendy Joseph, spent an afternoon with four students. She showed them around the Old Bailey, offered advice from her time at secondary school and talked about her pathway to becoming a high court judge. The students even sat in on a trial, which for Abdi, an aspiring law student, meant an insight into the various choices in law: "I wasn't sure whether I wanted to be a barrister or a solicitor and now it's much clearer. Before today, I didn't really have much of an idea of what each job involves." Judge Wendy Joseph added: "Since the judiciary serves the public, in some way it ought to reflect the diversity of the public. Obviously a white, middle-class, middle-aged, male judiciary does not reflect the community which we serve."

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CASE STUDY

Career insight at Lipson Cooperative, Plymouth

Lipson is matching students to professionals through their e-mentoring scheme. Carl and Amelia were matched with Laura Gill, a Research Assistant at Plymouth University School of Medicine. Carl has a keen interest in psychology and Laura was able to give lots of hints and tips about getting into university and provided useful reading material to encourage him to go the extra mile. After mentoring the students over some months, Laura invited both to undertake a work experience placement in the Department of Psychology at Plymouth University.

CASE STUDY

Fundraising at Preston Manor School, Wembley

Preston Manor School decided to raise money for a fire fighting course for a group of their Year 10 students. The course is hugely beneficial, as it encourages commitment and helps students build resilience. The school wrote to their alumni, outlining why the course is so important to their students, how well the students had already done to raise some funds and added a quote from the students themselves. They even included a short video of the students talking about the fire fighting course. In just two days, the school had raised more than £500 for the course.

CASE STUDY

Career insight at Newall Green High School, Manchester

Newall Green High School is situated in an area of very low social mobility and high levels of unemployment.

At Newall, a 'success wall' lines the main entrance, where former students appear on posters designed to motivate students as they walk to their classes. Alumni return to speak to years 7-13 every half term to provide ongoing alumni engagement. Assistant Headteacher, Karl Grimes, says: "Future First has really helped us to build the network. The alumni show the students that there are so many possibilities for them. We've had targeted interventions with working class boys. Former students show them realistic careers that they can see themselves doing."

This year the school organised an 'introduction to careers' event for their Year 8 students who had recently selected GCSE subjects. Alumni participants included a visual director, an actor, a Virgin Media specialist and an RE teacher, sharing advice and showcasing a range of careers that the students were unlikely to connect with otherwise.



What we do
Making it happen

Our work is a collaboration between our expert team, school staff, students, alumni, employers and partners.

Our team

Future First's team of dedicated Alumni Officers works with schools and colleges to build and manage their alumni communities. They are experts in their field, offering advice and practical support to school staff. Over the year, we've worked closely with more than 400 schools and colleges, creating tailored programmes and enabling alumni to return to give support in a variety of ways.

School and college staff

School staff are critical to the way we work. Future First's approach enables schools to use their alumni to meet their students' specific needs and to manage their network with minimal support from us. This year we launched an interactive toolkit - packed with tips, case studies, templates, how-to guides and resources. With our support, our school contacts lead on embedding alumni engagement across the school, raising its profile and promoting its benefits amongst colleagues.

Alumni

Future First would not exist without alumni volunteers. By the end of this academic year more than 180,000 former students had signed up to go back and give back to their old school. Alumni support in all sorts of ways:



Role models – Having grown up in the same place and attended the same school, alumni are immediately relatable to current students. This makes them ideal role models. Alumni can talk about their educational or career experiences and inspire current students to achieve their potential.



Mentors – Alumni can act as mentors, either online or in person, providing advice, support and guidance to students. Mentoring is tailored to the individual with specific goals in mind, offering students a purposeful new relationship to help overcome a range of challenges.



Supporting the curriculum - Former students can play a key role in the delivery of the core curriculum. Returning to their old classrooms, alumni enrich the curriculum by co-delivering lessons related to their careers, helping build students' understanding of the real-world application of their learning and boosting their motivation.



Work experience – This is an invaluable opportunity for students to obtain an insight into working life. Alumni can provide shadowing opportunities and placements, helping students gain not only more awareness of work, but also the skills they need to succeed when they get there.

Volunteering – Former students often have specific expertise to offer: from coaching a football team, to running after school clubs or designing a new garden. The possibilities are endless.



Fundraisers – Alumni can support their old school or college by raising money or donating to specific causes. This could be books for the library, music equipment or to fund educational visits for current students.



Governors – Former students can help the school or college community to flourish by acting as governors. Alumni are perfectly placed for this, combining knowledge of the local community with experiences and skills they've gained since leaving school.

New in 2015-16

Future First in the South West

We are committed to growing the number of schools with an alumni network. This past year saw 134 new schools coming on board.

Future First made big strides in this direction when we were announced as one of the first recipients of the government's Careers and Enterprise Fund in March 2016. The fund, designed to increase the quality and quantity of careers education and employer engagement activity across England, targets the areas in most need.

The funding has enabled us to support 40 schools across Cornwall, Devon and Somerset to build sustainable alumni communities. The programme, which finishes in late 2017, focuses on building alumni networks for each school along with developing teachers so they can run it themselves in the future.

Overall, 108 alumni events have been held across the 40 schools, including workshops helping Year 11 students make informed decisions about next steps, assemblies, careers fairs, mentoring and in-lesson support. Many schools have even secured one-to-one alumni support for individual students.

Chilton Trinity in Somerset had a particularly unique and inspiring mentoring activity, where a paraplegic alumnus came and spoke to a disabled Year 8 student.

Bodmin College, Cornwall, tells its story

"Bodmin College is an 11-18 school in Cornwall. The area we're in is in the lowest quintile of students who access higher education. It's an indicator that we have work to do in terms of aspiration raising.

I'm the Raising Aspirations Coordinator at the school. Before this, I was Head of Art at Bodmin College. I kept in touch with ex-students and would ask them back to share portfolios with the sixth formers. Undergrads came into school to talk about university life and we would take our students to meet them at the arts university degree shows. The results in the art department were excellent and lots of the students went on to higher education.

As a teacher, I really felt the alumni were helping the students - particularly their aspirations to continue with their studies at university. I knew it was to do with role modelling and in my new position I wanted to extend this across the school.

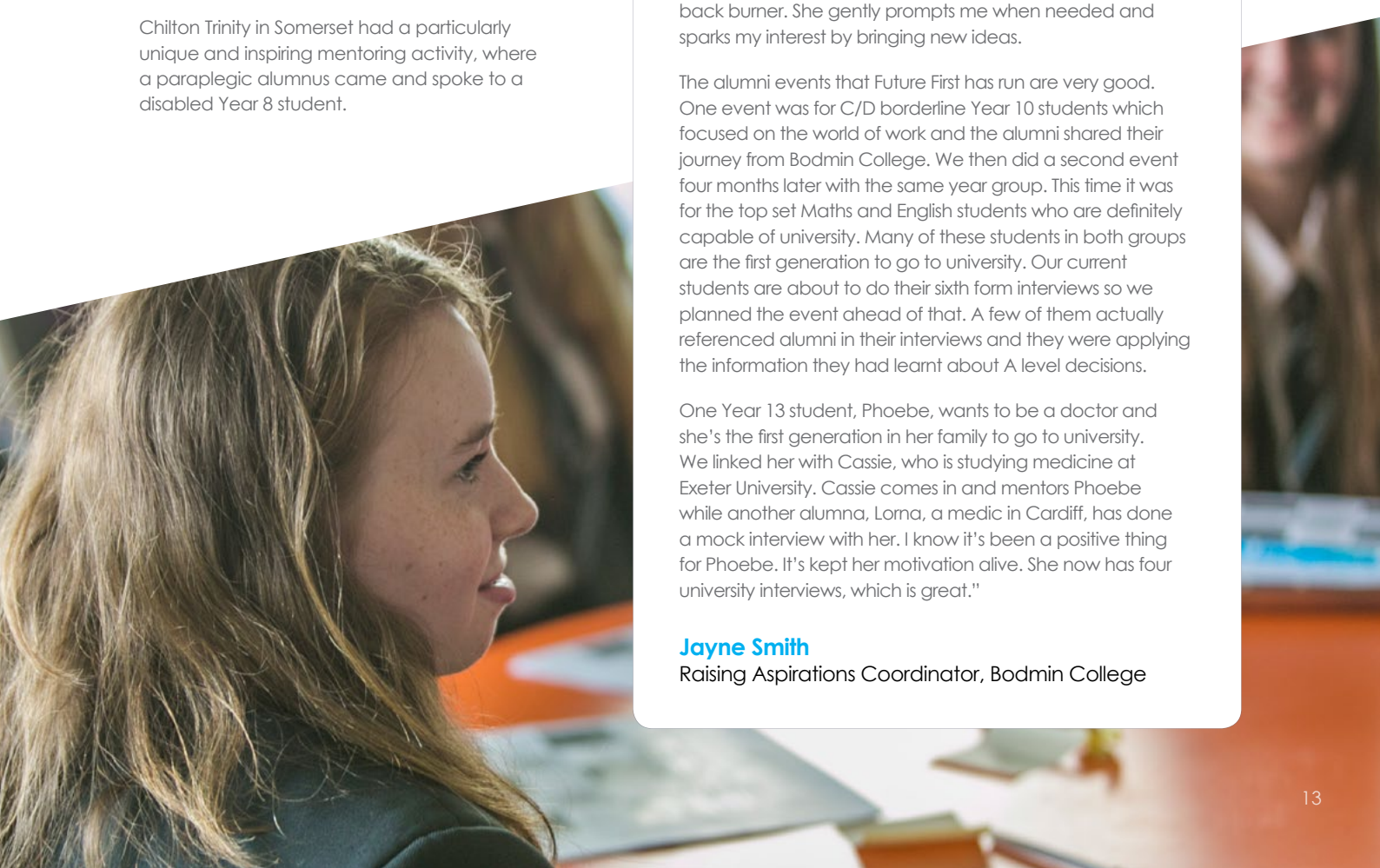
Whilst contacting alumni on social media, I used a spread sheet for contact details. At the time I wanted some kind of portal that I could access and researching it one evening, I came across Future First. The dashboard meant that I could put the Future First link out on social media, it was secure and it no longer involved using my personal account. The whole thing was much more professional. The portal is well laid out. I can click 40 people and instantly email them an invite to come into college. It has saved so much time that I just didn't have.

When the South West project started, I gathered ideas from teachers at other schools. It's been great having an Alumni Officer. It means the programme doesn't get pushed to the back burner. She gently prompts me when needed and sparks my interest by bringing new ideas.

The alumni events that Future First has run are very good. One event was for C/D borderline Year 10 students which focused on the world of work and the alumni shared their journey from Bodmin College. We then did a second event four months later with the same year group. This time it was for the top set Maths and English students who are definitely capable of university. Many of these students in both groups are the first generation to go to university. Our current students are about to do their sixth form interviews so we planned the event ahead of that. A few of them actually referenced alumni in their interviews and they were applying the information they had learnt about A level decisions.

One Year 13 student, Phoebe, wants to be a doctor and she's the first generation in her family to go to university. We linked her with Cassie, who is studying medicine at Exeter University. Cassie comes in and mentors Phoebe while another alumna, Lorna, a medic in Cardiff, has done a mock interview with her. I know it's been a positive thing for Phoebe. It's kept her motivation alive. She now has four university interviews, which is great."

Jayne Smith
Raising Aspirations Coordinator, Bodmin College



New in 2015-16

Working with multi-academy trusts

In 2015-16, we started to establish a programme for multi-academy trusts (MATs). We worked with six MATs, enabling us to embed our programme with the support, guidance and influence of each trust.

Across the six trusts we are working with 53 schools, covering the Midlands, the North East, the North West, London and the South East. In total, more than 4,500 alumni are now signed up to support these schools.

A variety of alumni events has been running at the schools, such as building motivation workshops, mock assessment centre days for Year 12s applying to university and interview technique training with students applying to college.

Seahaven Academy saw four former students, including the founder of the Seaford Musical Theatre company, and Richard, a professional photographer, return as part of an Overcoming Barriers workshop for 40 Year 10 students. The students interacted brilliantly with the session, which was based around building confidence, taking responsibility for study and looking to the future with regards to employability.

Shoreham Academy ran a workshop for 66 Year 11 students transitioning to Year 12. Six former students returned to share advice and guidance, and discuss their own experiences about the next stage of education.

The RSA Academy ran an alumni workshop for sixth form students. They heard from law student Venanda and PhD student Homira about their experiences of the UCAS process and moving away versus staying at home. Every student said the session helped them understand how to get a job in the future.



Working with Future First

- Ark
- David Ross Education Trust
- Harris Federation
- Leigh Academies Trust
- Royal Society for the Arts Academies
- United Learning Trust

New in 2015-16

Astra's story

Astra went back to her old school, Ark Helenswood Academy, as part of International Women's Day celebrations. She explains why she did it and what she wants today's students to learn.

"I wanted the Helenswood students to know that I was them once. What sets you apart from the rest of the world is who you are and where you're from, so keep pushing and overcoming the hurdles that will inevitably come your way. Different skill sets comes with different backgrounds. You know how to be practical and learn on the job.

Even when I applied for Google, I thought - I didn't go to Cambridge or to Oxford, and I don't have a language - but they hired me anyway. I want the girls to understand they can get into any job they want. You just need to take the right route. You're going to mess up along the way and there will be times when you think you've failed but you just need to keep going.

When I was at school I don't remember meeting any alumni. It would have helped to hear that it's OK to fail."

Inspiring Wales' high achievers

In 2015, the Welsh government commissioned Future First to run an initiative connecting state school students with alumni at top universities.

Working with the government's Seren network – a group of regional hubs designed to support Wales' high achieving sixth formers – Future First is enabling Welsh alumni from prominent universities to act as education role models, motivational speakers and mentors. They are inspiring Seren students to fulfil their academic potential and gain places at Russell Group universities.

To make this happen, Future First is training hub coordinators on how to build, engage and mobilise an alumni network and helping them to trace alumni. In each area, hubs are running assemblies and workshops with former students.

One event saw students from across Wrexham and Flintshire meet five alumni of schools in the region to learn about university and the application process. The students found out about different stages of the alumni's academic and career journeys - from an undergraduate studying Neuroscience at Durham University, to a recent Cambridge Law graduate and a Doctor of Physics, who has become the Head of IT for a major national retailer.

The students were given an insight into where university might lead them, helping to build their motivation and raise aspirations. After the session, 96% of the students involved told us that it had shown them that people like them could be successful. And 91% of students said they felt more confident about being successful themselves because of hearing from the alumni.

Supporting Hackney's Careers Collaborative

Hackney Learning Trust is pioneering its own Careers Collaborative. Each school in this group has paid money to be a part of it.

The aim is to improve careers provision in Hackney and promote best practice. Working with Future First, each school has been able to focus on the needs of its students to get the most out of its alumni.

Zoe Joseph, who is dyslexic and founder of the charity Dyslexia for the Wise, went back to her old school, Haggerston. She supported Year 13 students with Special Educational Needs on writing their personal statements. The school said this was a fantastic experience for the students because she was able to relate to them on many levels.

Stoke Newington School sends groups of Year 7 students on an aspiration-raising visit to the Oxbridge universities every year. But in July 2016, this experience meant so much more when former student Rebecca Verlander, a Cambridge graduate, met with a visiting group to host their tour of Cambridge University. The school said this created a big incentive for the young students.

Michele James, Hackney Learning Trust, said: "Developing their alumni cohort has been a great benefit for the most engaged schools in Hackney, it has increased capacity and supported them in delivering a number of activities and events that otherwise may not have happened."

New last year

2014-15 saw the beginning of two major partnerships for Future First. This year, these relationships have flourished, deepening their impact and paving the way for future expansion.

IGD: feeding Britain's future

Since 2015, more than 13,000 young people have taken part in IGD's Feeding Britain's Future Schools Programme workshops supported by Future First. The initiative develops young people's employability skills and showcases the variety of jobs available within food and grocery.

IGD is a research and training charity that sits at the very heart of the food and grocery industry. It brings together a unique network of retailers, manufacturers, primary producers and service providers to address skills gaps in the sector. As part of its mission to inspire the next generation, IGD continues to provide young people with an insight into the variety of food and grocery career paths, along with the skills needed to thrive in the world of work.

To help support this ambition, Future First designed a set of interactive workshops to demonstrate the dynamism and creativity of the industry and empower industry volunteers to support young people to develop their skills. We then found schools to run the programme, provided volunteer training and delivered the workshops in schools nationwide.

More than 2,000 industry professionals in food and grocery companies have so far volunteered in local schools, sharing their career journeys and shining a light on the industry. In 2017 the partnership is expanding again, with 390 workshops running nationwide, aiming to reach 10,000 young people.

In 2016, more than 90% of young people said that the programme helped them to feel better prepared for the world of work and 100% of teachers agreed.

Partnering with Teach First

This year's Careers and Employability Leadership Programme brought Future First together with partner charity Teach First - which trains and supports new teachers to work in schools serving low-income communities across the UK.

The pilot programme saw 15 middle leaders receive expert training on how to use alumni networks, with Future First focusing on building, engaging and mobilising alumni communities. The sessions were designed to upskill staff experts in schools, enabling them to create a high quality careers strategy for their school.

Future First also held all-staff training for a number of schools participating in the programme, as well as training sessions at the Teach First conferences.

Woodhouse College's Careers Coordinator, Joanna Greatwich, said:

"This was a really progressive and positive event for our group of lower sixth A level students. By conversing intensively with real, switched-on professionals - both on specific tasks and in discussing what they actually did to progress their careers - it brought alive for students an area most have had little experience of. Students were really engaged and interested. The professionals also role-modelled the confidence, presentation and ambition needed to progress, showing students that they deserve a good career and can also take the initiative to forge their own career path."



Working with employers

Future First looks for every opportunity to boost students' knowledge of the world of work. Working with a range of employers enables students to access real experience of and advice about a whole variety of jobs.

Our employer programme complements our core work of building and developing sustainable alumni communities to develop motivation and confidence. This adds real benefit to Future First's service, extending young people's understanding of employment.

This is invaluable for young people and their future chances. Research shows that young people who interact with employers during their time at school are far less likely to become NEET (not in education, employment or training). And when in full-time employment, they earn up to 18% more than those who had no such workplace exposure.[1]





Citi Foundation: career insight days

Future First and Citi Foundation have worked together for a number of years, connecting the firm with young people from our network of state schools.

Citi Foundation is keen to encourage young people to consider a career in investment banking. Gemma Lines, Head of Graduate Marketing, Recruitment and Development (EMEA) at Citigroup, explains: "We want to meet students from the broadest possible pool, which includes those from state schools who do not have the kind of access to professional networks that their peers from fee-paying schools do.''

We ran four workshops with staff from across Citi's departments. The objective was to increase students' knowledge about the range of careers available to them in banking and possible career routes - 97% of students said the workshops were successful in this.

In interactive sessions, the staff volunteers helped students identify the skills and personal qualities that make them special. They also had the chance to enhance their financial literacy skills and increase their knowledge of how the bank operates, before assessing the many factors of choosing a job.

Ashurst: reaching students early

International law firm Ashurst works with Future First on its long-term partnership with Bonner Primary School in Tower Hamlets.

Providing Year 6 students with aspiration-raising insights into careers, Future First has facilitated five insight days this year. It has been a truly collaborative project, developed as part of the school curriculum.

The programme has enabled students to build an awareness of the types of jobs they might want to do in the future, consider the steps to pursuing them, and build the confidence and skills they will need to excel in their academic and working lives.

Staff volunteers have also benefited from sharing their time and skills with young people. It has given them a unique chance to work together and develop their presentation and problem solving skills.

Ashurst is making a difference in raising young people's aspirations and improving their future prospects. Before this year's programme only 3% of pupils were very confident about getting their dream job. Afterwards, that rose to 19%.

Taylor Wessing: tomorrow's talent

Prestigious legal firm Taylor Wessing has supported and worked with Future First since 2010 by hosting insight days for students from Future First's member schools.

These career insight days remain hugely popular amongst both students and Taylor Wessing volunteers. The days are so well regarded that last year students from schools as far afield as Wales snapped up the opportunity to attend the day at Taylor Wessing's London offices.

The days focus on enabling students from Years 10 and 12 to gain a wider understanding of the range of careers available in top law firms, particularly emphasising the importance of supporting roles in key functions such as HR, finance and client support. Employees from Taylor Wessing work with students to help them identify how the skills they are developing in their school lessons are applicable to the different careers they hear about on the day.

Following the programme, students are encouraged to apply for Taylor Wessing's 'Tomorrow's Talent' programme, earning them a summer placement within the business.

[1] Percy, C and Mann, A (2014). School-mediated employer engagement and labour market outcomes for young adults: wage premia, NEET outcomes and career confidence. In Mann, A, Stanley, J and Archer, L (Eds.). Understanding Employer Engagement in Education: Theories and Evidence.

Our supporters

We are proud to be supported by a diverse range of organisations who share our commitment to ensuring every young person has access to relatable role models.

Each supporter is unique. Some organisations provide vital funding or pro bono support. Others provide hours of staff volunteering time or work with us to design powerful programmes. But every single one helps to have a meaningful impact on young people, schools and their alumni across the country.

Ashurst LLP
Citi Foundation
Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust
Rothschild
Simmons & Simmons
The Key
UBS
Wates Foundation
Wellcome Trust
The Worshipful Company of World Traders
ZING

Our income

Future First's income in 2015-16 stood at £1.54million. This significant increase is the result of a rise in income from all sources.

Income from the sale of our programmes to schools, colleges and employer partners is now over £713,000, an increase of 84% compared to last year.

To maintain the sustainability of our work, we are phasing out price subsidies to ensure that the price of Future First's programmes reflects both their value and the cost of delivery. Figure 2 outlines the average price paid by member schools for the core programme over time. By September 2017, the vast majority of income for Future First's core services will come from schools and other organisations paying for service delivery.

For every £1 spent, approximately 93p goes to programme delivery. Approximately 6p goes to fundraising and governance.

In line with Future First's growth in income, we have built on our financial reserves and are meeting our policy of maintaining four months of reserves.

Income and expenditure summary

Income from schools	£466,800
Income from employers	£249,508
Income from funders	£811,167
Income from other sources	£11,508
Total income	**£1,538,983**
Cost of provision of education and careers support	**£1,193,333**
Direct costs	£791,299
Support costs	£402,034
Cost of fundraising and governance	£81,866
Total costs	**£1,275,199**
Surplus in the year	£263,784
Reserves	£453,221


VISITOR



Our impact

Future First works closely with schools to test the impact of alumni engagement and to ensure we're providing what schools need. We collect data as well as feedback from students, school staff, alumni and employers.

In March 2016, Future First commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to conduct polling with teachers from non-member schools about alumni networks. 26% had some sort of network in place and 7% were planning on setting one up within 12 months.

This presents an encouraging picture, as we aim to see every state school and college supported by an alumni network. By demonstrating the impact engaged alumni communities have, we hope to spread the alumni culture even more widely, sparking a movement.

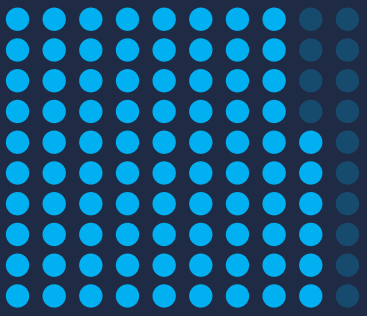
Students

83,742 students have been reached by alumni in all sorts of ways, including special events, mentoring, one-to-one support and in-curriculum activities.

Engaging with former students helped **81%** of current students to realise the link between their school work and future job options.

70% of students told us they knew more about the jobs and courses they could do in the future because of meeting alumni.

Interacting with alumni made **82%** of students want to work harder.



Meeting former students helped **84%** of pupils realise that 'people like me' can be successful.

75% of young people said that sessions with alumni will help them make better, more informed decisions.



After hearing from alumni, **79%** of students said they felt more confident about their future success.

"I can stand up and give similar advice but it's so powerful coming from voices of experience, especially ex-students who've sat in the same seats and been here themselves; I can already see how much the students have taken away from it."

Paula Sone Greenshaw High School

School Staff

100%
of school staff said hearing from people in jobs raised students' motivation levels about their school work.

94%
of teachers agreed that meeting alumni improved students' knowledge of career and education pathways.

91%
of teachers believed working with alumni boosted students' confidence.

88%
After hearing from alumni, 88% of teachers said students were better able to interact with adults from the working world.

85%
of teachers said that even without Future First they would still build an alumni community because the support of students is so valuable.

68%
of school staff felt that students' academic performance had improved because of engaging with alumni.

Alumni

98% of alumni really enjoyed working with their old schools and

99% would be happy to take part in more alumni events.

The alumni volunteers who have been giving back to their old schools believe that hearing from former students when they were at school would have made a difference to them:

70%
said it would have had an impact on their educational choices

64%
believe it would have made a difference to their career progression

70%
think it would have impacted on their career satisfaction

Looking forward

2015-16 has been an important year for Future First. We've continued to extend our reach into new schools and colleges more widely across the UK, and our community of volunteers has grown significantly. Schools are engaging their alumni communities in increasingly innovative ways. It has also been a key year in terms of our sustainability, having increased our income to support the long-term stability of Future First. But we are still a long way from realising our mission of ensuring every state school and college is supported by a thriving, engaged alumni community. To bring us closer to achieving this, Future First has identified four key themes and challenges for 2016-17 and beyond:

Extending our reach

Future First will continue to focus on the need to grow the number of schools and colleges supported by an engaged alumni network year on year. We will therefore continue to grow our core membership. As we shift towards equipping schools to manage their own alumni programme with minimal support from Future First, we will also look to grow the number of DIY+ schools with which we work. This will better equip schools and increase sustainability. In expanding our network, we will maintain the quality of our programmes by remaining agile and responding to the changing landscape of education, as well as the feedback from our member schools and external research.

Designing and trialling innovative interventions

As school budgets are set to become tighter, we recognise the growing need to explore targeted interventions to tackle longstanding problems in schools. Along with this, we see research into the impact of alumni in secondary schools and in depth evaluation of our projects as vital in not only evidencing the value of our work, but also in the evolution of it. Over the year, we will strive to secure funding for a range of innovative projects. We will also do more work with our member schools to specify and address their key priorities, helping them to increase the impact of their alumni communities.

Building an alumni movement

Future First is committed to building a national movement of alumni engagement. This means supporting or promoting the use of former students to schools beyond those with which we directly work. As well as improved communications across the board, we will build on our partnerships and collaborate with more organisations to create a coalition for change. We want to generate debate on the importance of alumni as positive role models.

Developing our organisational effectiveness

By improving and finessing Future First's organisation and processes we will become more efficient, flexible and responsive which will significantly further the charity's aims. Regularly reviewing and tightening processes in areas such as finance and technology will not only ensure Future First is operating efficiently, but it will keep the organisation at the cutting edge. Our expert staff are at the heart of what we do and by supporting their continuous development, we will increase our effectiveness.

Trustees

Christine Gilbert CBE (Executive Chair)

Sonny Leong CBE

Deji Davies

Lindsey McMurray

Sally Nelson

Robin Tombs

Michael Ter-Berg

Advisory Council

Dr Sarabajaya Kumar
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Estelle Morris, Baroness Morris of Yardley
Former Secretary of State for Education

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