

Making the Leap.



ADR PV plant

- ADR partner with Enel x to create the largest self-consumption PV energy plant in an EU airport.
- Located at runway 3, Leonardo Da Vinci, the plant covers 340km², 22MW capacity, producing 32GWh per year.
- Reduction in CO2 emissions equivalent to planting 100,000 trees per year.
- Other potential uses.



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Foreword

Over the past year we have continued to make progress in our mission to advance social mobility for young people across the UK. Despite ongoing socio-political challenges, our commitment to transforming lives has only strengthened, and the impact of our work is more visible than ever. Our dedication to breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for less advantaged young people has been long-standing. The evidence presented in this report highlights not only our sustained efforts but also the expansion of our reach and the deepening of our impact.

We have continued to develop essential skills in young people, equip them with employability skills, and bridge the gap between education and employment. In 2024-25, we worked with 3,929 pupils and young adults, delivering 4,802 hours of activities and achieving a 74% success rate in helping young adults progress into education, employment or training. The increase in delivery hours and young people involved in our programmes is a testament to the trust placed in us by our partners, volunteers, and the communities we serve. I am particularly pleased with our continued focus on sustained, in-depth programmes, which have been crucial for building confidence and providing real-world experiences for our young people.

Our work in schools continued to evolve and deepen. Programmes such as Believe to Achieve and Pathways for Success provided sustained engagement throughout the academic year, helping pupils to strengthen essential skills and gain invaluable workplace exposure. The feedback from our Mock Interview Days, delivered by volunteers from our corporate partners, demonstrates the profound impact of these interactions, with pupils reporting improved confidence, communication skills, and understanding of the professional world.

Our iconic UK Social Mobility Awards (SOMOs), in association with National Grid, continued to cement our leadership in this space and inspire a nationwide commitment to advancing social mobility. In 2024, the Awards attracted entries from employers collectively employing close to 1.3 million people across 20 sectors. This growth reflects a fundamental shift: social mobility is no longer a niche concern but a mainstream priority for progressive organisations who understand that diversity of background drives innovation and success. I am

particularly proud of our innovation in launching The Social Mobility List 2024, in association with bp. This initiative, the first of its kind in the sector, highlighted the key contributors and initiatives driving social mobility forward, demonstrating that social mobility has become a critical issue.

We have also undertaken new projects, which have been pivotal in addressing specific barriers and supporting the development of future leaders. We expanded our support for alumni through the Fellows Board and launched our brand-new Future Leaders Ambassador Programme in January 2025. Early evaluation results show this programme is already having a highly positive impact, with alumni feeling more informed and inspired about their professional development. The success stories of individuals like Kevin, who secured a platform engineering role at Sky, and Adara, who moved into a client relationship role at Candriam, exemplify the profound impact of our work.

These achievements would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our partners, funders, and volunteers. Your contributions have been invaluable, enabling us to expand our programmes and reach more young people than ever before. Together, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it most.

As we look ahead, I am confident that we will continue to build on this momentum. Our vision remains steadfast: a society where every young person has the chance to succeed, regardless of their background, and where employers and educational institutions play a crucial role in making this a reality. Thank you for your continued support and belief in us.



Tunde Banjoko OBE
Founder and CEO, Making The Leap

Tunde Banjoko

Introduction



Introduction

Making The Leap

Making The Leap is a social mobility charity that aims to make a big difference. We work with young people from less advantaged backgrounds to develop the skills, behaviours and attitudes that will allow them to **fulfil their potential** and get into **meaningful employment**. We are also the driving force behind numerous **national initiatives for employers, educators, and the wider public** that have re-defined the UK's social mobility landscape: the UK Social Mobility Awards, the Social Mobility Podcast, Social Mobility Day, and The Social Mobility List.



Our mission is to transform the futures of less advantaged young people in the UK by raising their aspirations, developing their essential skills, and increasing their access to career opportunities. We work directly with young people in London, and using evidence from our delivery and leadership initiatives, we raise awareness and encourage action on social mobility among UK employers and educators.



Our vision is that every young person has the chance to succeed, and every employer and educational institution will have a part to play in making this happen.

What is social mobility, and why does it matter?

At its core, social mobility is about removing the barriers that prevent people from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds (LSEBs) from fulfilling their potential. At Making The Leap, our work with young people and employers aims to make social mobility a reality by ensuring that people from LSEBs have fair access to:

- High-quality education, employment, and training
- Opportunities to develop the skills, confidence, and networks they need to succeed
- Work that provides financial security, job stability, and career progression



Why does this matter? In the UK, poverty, inequality, unemployment and cost-of-living pressures continue to present significant barriers for people from LSEBs, especially young people.^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5} As ever, in spite of these significant challenges, we remain hopeful. In 2024-25, Making The Leap continued to deliver a wide range of impactful programmes, supporting young people from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds to develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. And through our leadership and advocacy initiatives we saw a significant increase in individuals and organisations joining the cause, advocating for social mobility, and taking action to make it a reality.

¹ Social Mobility Commission (2024) State of the Nation 2024: Local to National, Mapping Opportunities for All.

² House of Commons Library (2025) Youth unemployment statistics: Research briefing.

³ The Sutton Trust (2025) A World of Difference: International apprenticeship policy and lessons for England.

⁴ Citizens Advice (2025) Consumer advocacy and advice at Citizens Advice: Annual report 2024/25.

⁵ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2025) Cost of living tracker, summer 2025.

Our work in 2024-25

In 2024-25, we continued our direct delivery with schools and young adults to make social mobility a reality in the UK. Our work aimed to:

<u>Develop</u>	young people's essential skills – including confidence, communication, motivation, and teamwork
<u>Equip</u>	young people with employability skills – including tailoring CVs, effective job applications and interview techniques
<u>Bridge the gap</u>	between school and work through insight days and work experience
<u>Inform</u>	young people about a wide range of careers
<u>Support</u>	young adults into employment and through ongoing mentoring, pastoral support and career coaching
<u>Connect</u>	young people within our alumni to help advance our mission, raise awareness of our work and create a meaningful peer-to-peer community

What were our key delivery trends in 2024-25?

- **Reach:** We were pleased to deliver **+946 hours of activities** compared to 2023-24. This was driven by an increase in support provided to our young adults, from one-to-one career coaching to in-person experiences with our employer partners. We also worked with **+121 young adults** compared to 2023-24.
- **Experiences:** Pupils and young adults who participated in our activities continued to report highly positive experiences. As reflected in the quotes and case studies shared throughout this report, pupils and young adults reported a range of benefits including **improved essential skills, increased awareness of and access to career pathways**, and overall **personal development**.
- **Outcomes:** Given ongoing challenges in the UK job market and rising youth unemployment, we were pleased that **our young people's EET outcome rate remained fairly steady** in 2024-25, with a small decrease (-2%) compared to 2023-24. As ever, through our unique model of ongoing support, we continue working with our young people which means they continue to develop their employability skills, and have access to high-quality opportunities as they become available.

We reached...



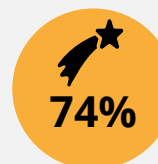
pupils and young adults, from initial engagement to our delivery programmes

And delivered...



hours of activities including workshops, mock interviews, work experience, careers fairs, insight days, masterclasses, one-to-one support, and more

Overall...



of our young adults achieved an education, employment, or training (EET) outcome

Of the young adults we supported...

100%

were from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds (LSEBs)

86%

were from racially minoritised groups

We worked with...



secondary schools

And we were supported by...



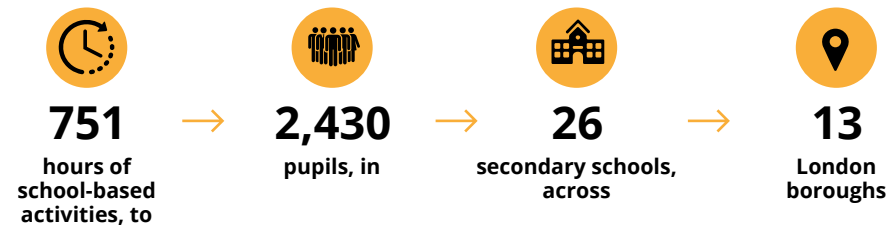
dedicated volunteers

Our work in schools



Our work in schools

In 2024-25, we delivered...



Across a range of school programmes and activities, we helped pupils to...



Develop essential skills



Bridge the gap between school and work



Access to individuals from the business world



Explore alternative pathways



What impact did we have in schools?

In 2024-25, our **Mock Interview Days** were delivered by volunteers from **ABN Amro, BBD Perfect Storm, BNP Paribas, Candriam, HSBC, Hyve, Knight Frank, Morgan Stanley Investment Management, PA Consulting, The PA Foundation and Snap.**

Our evaluation results from **1,952** pupils in 2024-25 show that our Mock Interview Days continue to be highly impactful. After taking part in a mock interview, the vast majority of pupils **improved their understanding of how interviews work**, their **confidence in interview situations**, and their **communication skills**.

Qualitative feedback further highlights pupils' and volunteers' positive experiences during Mock Interview Days. Pupils and volunteers found their interactions informative and inspiring, while volunteers reported an **increased sense of wellbeing** from their experience.

96%

improved their understanding of how interviews work

90%

improved their confidence in an interview situation

81%

improved their communication skills



"I absolutely loved [the mock interview] today. It helped me so much and improved my communication skills and I am much more confident."

Pupil from Harris Invictus Academy, June 2024

"My interviewer was nice and was not intimidating at all. I enjoyed talking about my future – it made me feel motivated for my career choices."

Pupil from William Ellis School, November 2024

"I enjoyed how motivated and passionate these young students are. It was a pleasure meeting each one of them."

Volunteer from Snap, March 2025

What impact did we have in schools?

Our continuing **Believe to Achieve** programme, funded by **The PA Foundation** and **PA Consulting**, engaged Year 12 and 13 pupils in activities across the school year. Delivered by PA Consulting volunteers, activities focused on improving essential skills and providing insights into a range of careers, particularly those in STEM. Our evaluation results show that activities such as Business Insight Visits at PA Consulting had a highly positive impact on pupils. Across participating schools, Business Insight Visits helped pupils to **improve their teamwork skills, to feel an improved sense of belonging in the workplace, and a better understanding of skills needed at work.**

We can also see the programme's positive impact from Zoe's case study. Zoe was part of a cohort of Year 12 students from St Augustine's CE High School who took part in a number of Believe to Achieve activities. She shared her reflections on how the programme helped her to **learn about new opportunities, make decisions about her future, and improve her confidence.**



Believe to Achieve: Zoe's story

Before I joined Believe to Achieve, I was really indecisive and didn't know what I wanted to do. But the programme has helped me **set goals for the future** and feel **more prepared for life** after school – I feel **more confident** about going into the workplace now. I'm still figuring it out, but I know for sure I want to do something in marketing or consulting.

I learned so many useful skills during the programme. For example, at PA Consulting's offices, I learned about **good communication** – speaking clearly, the importance of body language, and how to greet people professionally. We also got to **work in a team** to prepare a pitch, and actually **presented our ideas** to PA volunteers!

The activities were all **interactive, engaging** and **creative**, which I really enjoyed. It was so helpful talking to PA volunteers at lots of different career stages, learning about their experiences, and hearing their advice on my next steps and goals.

The PA volunteers were all so **welcoming**, we really appreciated how they took time out of their days to come and speak to us. They helped us to feel **more motivated** and **inspired** – everyone was so passionate, and we could tell they had our best interests at heart.

Overall, **Believe to Achieve lives up to its name.** It had a massive impact on helping me to make decisions about my future, helped me to develop more confidence, and gave me a lot of opportunities.

What impact did we have in schools?

Pathways for Success: Disha's story

Before I joined the Pathways for Success programme, I was interested in working in an office environment, and I wanted to do an apprenticeship. But I didn't know how to achieve this, and I didn't have a lot of support.

The programme has helped me in so many ways. Betty, my mentor from Making The Leap, really **motivated** and encouraged me to **always look for new and better opportunities**. Her support and my experience on the programme **built my confidence** and encouraged me to **just keep going**.

Pathways helped me to learn how to **build and improve my CV**, and how to make **job applications** appeal to recruiters. I also got help with my **apprenticeship application** – Kate from Making The Leap showed me how to structure my answers more formally, and helped me cut down the answers to stay in the word limit. The **practice interviews** and **presentation sessions** took me out of my comfort zone – I really wasn't comfortable to start with – but they really helped me to **gain confidence**.

A highlight for me was work experience at BNP Paribas, where I was inspired by the legal department and how different teams work together to support a wider organisation. This experience **sparked my interest in the legal field** and encouraged me to explore a career in this area. As a result, I have now secured **a Business Administration apprenticeship** with ABV Solicitors. Pathways has been truly transformative – it helped me to grow personally and professionally, and has **guided me towards a career path** I am excited to pursue.



We continued to deliver our **Pathways for Success** programme, funded by **The Mercers Charitable Foundation** for which the Mercers' Company is Corporate Trustee. Programme activities focused on developing essential skills and supporting career pathways for 16 to 18-year-olds who were not planning to go to university. Employer partners including **BNP Paribas, bp uk, Civil Service, OCS, PwC, Royal Lancaster London, and Snap** provided hands-on experience, access to professionals from a range of sectors, and insights into the world of work for students across five participating schools.

With the programme successfully completed in summer 2025, we look forward to sharing full evaluation results in our 2025-26 Annual Report. In the meantime, we are pleased to share a case study from Disha, one of our Pathways students at St Claudine's Catholic School for Girls. Towards the end of the programme, Disha **successfully secured a Level 3 Apprenticeship** in Business Administration with ABV Solicitors. In her case study, she reflects on how Making The Leap and the Pathways programme helped her to achieve her career goals.

Our work with young adults



Snap Career Panel



Matt Forrester
Senior Manager - Sales



Charlene Iragaba
Recruiter - EMEA
Talent Acquisition

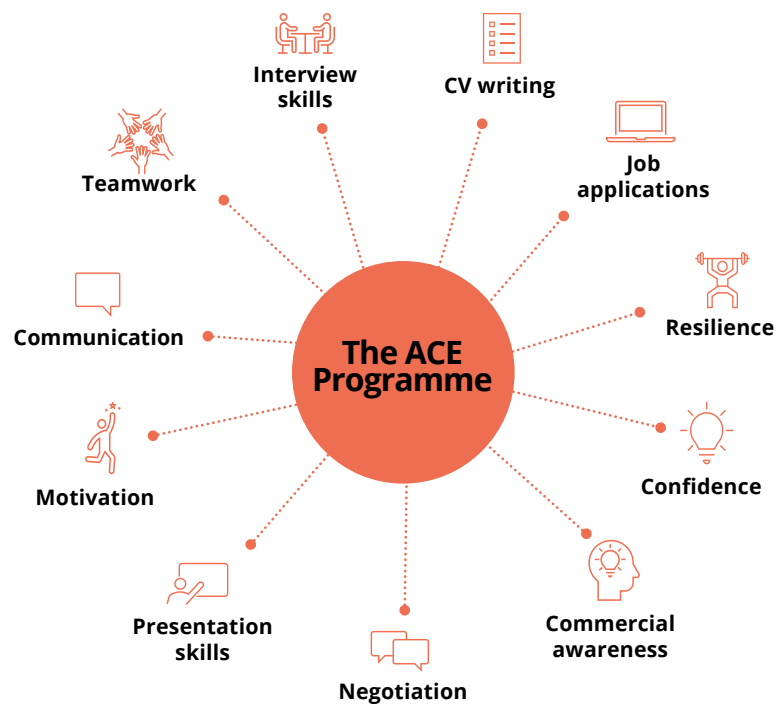


Danielle Rigg-Smith
Senior Manager -
Sales

Our work with young adults

What did we do?

In 2024-25, we delivered the ACE Programme, our flagship programme for young adults (aged 18 to 25), over...



The ACE Programme

Engagement

The ACE Programme starts with our Engagement Team, who **spread the word about what Making The Leap offers** to young people looking for work.

In 2024-25, the Engagement Team spent **2,221 hours** in Job Centres and at Careers Fairs, reaching **1,278 young adults**.

Working with young adults in groups and individually, the Engagement Team:

- Learns about their circumstances
- Discusses their career ambitions
- Delivers personalised advice and guidance
- Shares information about Making The Leap's services
- Invites them to register for the ACE Workshop

The Engagement Team also signposts young people to other relevant services, based on their needs.

The workshop

Once they have registered with Making The Leap, **young adults are invited to complete our three-week workshop**. During the workshop, Making The Leap supports young adults' personal and professional development by helping them to improve a range of soft skills, employability skills, and their business acumen. These include:

- CV writing
- Job applications
- Interview skills
- Presentation skills
- Commercial awareness
- Communication
- Confidence
- Motivation
- Negotiation
- Resilience
- Teamwork

In 2024-25, the ACE Workshop was supported by individual volunteers, as well as volunteers from our employer partners: **BNP Paribas, Cross Media, Hedley May, Howard Kennedy, HSBC, Hyve Group, Intertek, Knight Frank, Morgan Stanley Investment Management, and Opportunity London**.

Ongoing support

After they complete the workshop, **we support our young people for as long as they need us**, to help them to progress into employment, further education or training, with a focus on entry-level roles offering career progression, in line with their aspirations.

Making The Leap's ongoing support includes:

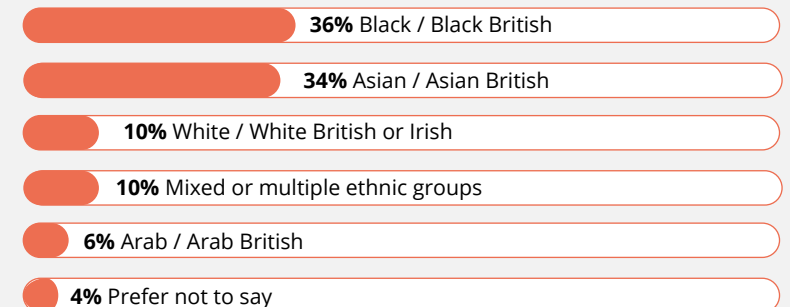
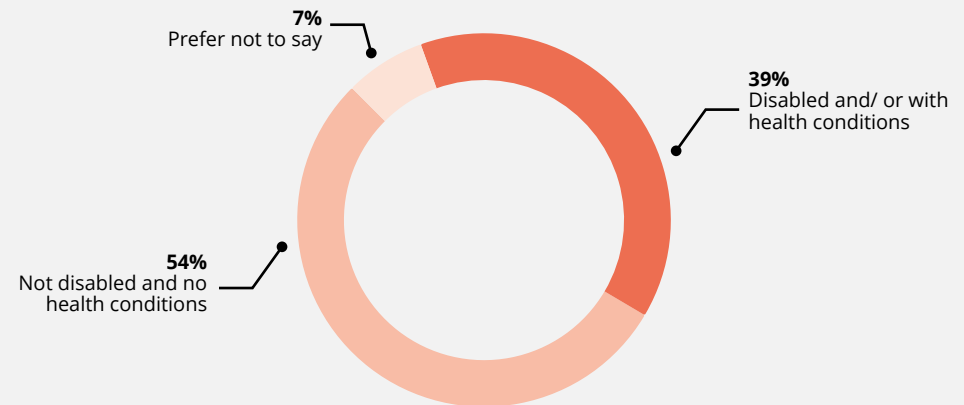
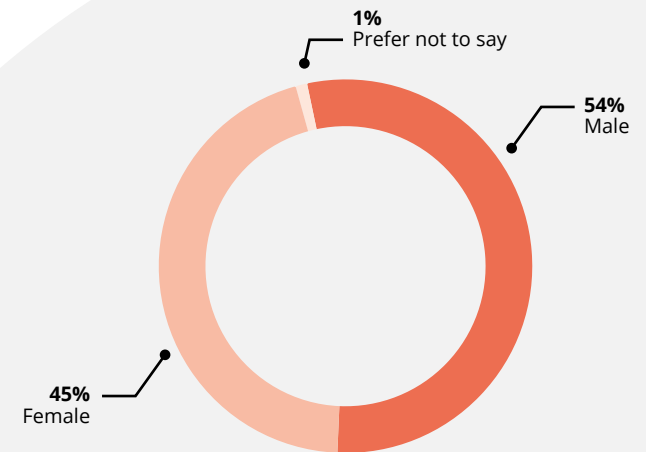
- **One-to-one career guidance:** mentoring and career coaching, provided by our Progressions Team and volunteer Career Mentors.
- **Tailored support with job applications:** weekly Job Search sessions, facilitated by our Progressions Team and regular volunteers.
- **Connections with employer partners:** access to entry-level career opportunities, Insight Days, Networking Sessions, and Work Experience at the offices of our employer partners. In 2024-25, we co-delivered activities with partners including: **BBD Perfect Storm, BNP Paribas, The Financial Times, Halifax, Hedley May, Howard Kennedy, HSBC, Knight Frank, PwC, Old Bailey, The Royal Lancaster Hotel, and StepStone**.
- **Career development:** continued professional development opportunities and support to progress in their chosen career.

Who did we work with?

At Making The Leap, **100% of the young people we work with are from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds (LSEBs)**. To recognise the multi-dimensional nature of socio-economic disadvantage (SED), we use a range of indicators to understand young people's socio-economic background. Young people are considered to be LSEB, and therefore eligible for the ACE Programme, if they indicate any one of the following factors: previous eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM); classified as working class or from a lower socio-economic background based on parental occupation at age 14; from a single parent family; first in family to attend university; any experience of homelessness; any experience of growing up in care.

Looking at further demographic data for our 2024-25 ACE Programme participants:

- **The majority of young people continued to be from racially minoritised backgrounds** (86%). As in previous years, the most represented groups were Black or Black British young people (36%) and Asian or Asian British young people (34%).
- **Just over half of our young people identified as male** (54%), with just under half identifying as female (45%). This reflects a small decrease in female participants (-3 percentage points) compared to 2023-24.
- **We saw an increase in the proportion of young people who identified as being disabled or having a long-term health condition**, rising from 31% in 2023-24 to 39% in 2024-25. This continued to reflect a higher proportion of our young people who reported neurodivergence and/or mental health conditions, compared to previous years.



What impact did we have?

Of the young people we supported through our ACE Programme in 2024-25, **74% achieved an education, employment or training (EET) outcome.**

In addition to EET outcomes, the ACE Programme continued to have a positive impact on young people's essential skills. Qualitative feedback shared by ACE Workshop participants highlights improved **commercial awareness, interview skills, networking skills, resilience, teamwork** and overall **personal development.**

74%

achieved an education,
employment, or training (EET)
outcome in 2024-25



"I enjoyed the welcoming atmosphere and the **opportunities to learn and grow.** The facilitation and peers around me made me feel as though **I could challenge myself without the fear of judgment** when making a mistake. Everyone was so supportive of one another, and I truly felt that the experience opened my eyes up to a lot of skills that I never knew I had."

ACE Programme attendee, November 2024

"I have learned [about] **new industries that I never knew before**, especially in the corporate sector. I was able to brush up on my **interview skills** as well."

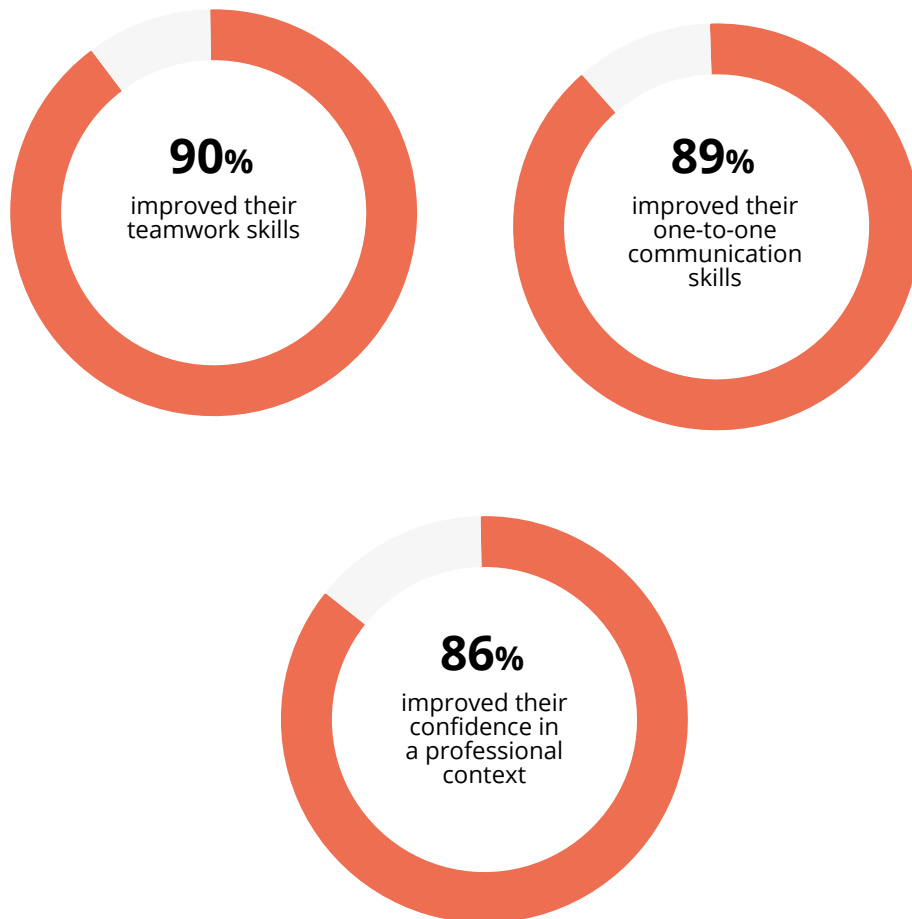
ACE Programme attendee, June 2024

"I enjoyed [the] different exercises that were relevant for soft and hard skills [...] I liked that I developed my **communication, teamwork, leadership, networking** skills and **resilience.**"

ACE Programme attendee, February 2025

What impact did we have?

Evaluation results from young people who attended our Insight Days and Networking Sessions also demonstrates a range of improved essential skills. As shown in the charts below, these include **improved teamwork skills, communication skills, and increased confidence in a professional context.**



"I enjoyed having a conversation with the Sales Director, who answered to all our questions and gave us tips in order to manage our future interviews."

Attendee at a Hyve Insight Visit,
November 2024

"Meeting the volunteers gave me an idea of the type of individuals who work in the financial industry and their day-to-day operations. I also learned about their journeys in banking and how the industry has actually changed over time."

Attendee at a BNP Paribas Networking Event,
July 2024

The StepStone Scholar Programme

Through our longstanding partnership with StepStone, in 2024-2025 we provided 38 Making The Leap alumni with an opportunity to gain insights into the private equity sector and develop their problem-solving skills, commercial awareness, and strategic thinking. By working on real-world business challenges set by the firm, young people collaborated to develop solutions, and strengthened their teamwork, networking, communication, and presentation skills.

Following the StepStone Programme, I feel more...

Confident contributing when working in a team. **100%**

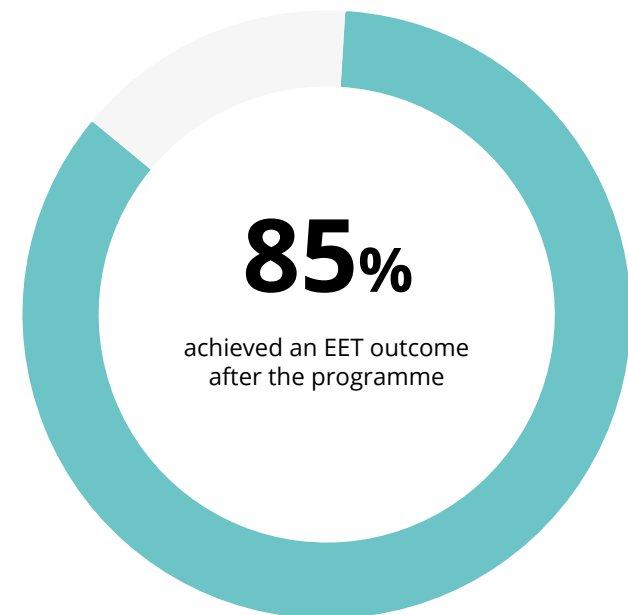
Comfortable talking to new people in a professional context. **94%**

Confident in my ability to express ideas in a one-on-one conversation. **90%**

Confident in my ability to present information to an audience. **87%**

"I really enjoyed presenting with my group, [working] together towards the same goal. It was a great networking and learning process through talking with senior colleagues in varied [roles] in StepStone. It was a really good opportunity to learn and network."

StepStone Scholar, March 2025



Our Alumni Community

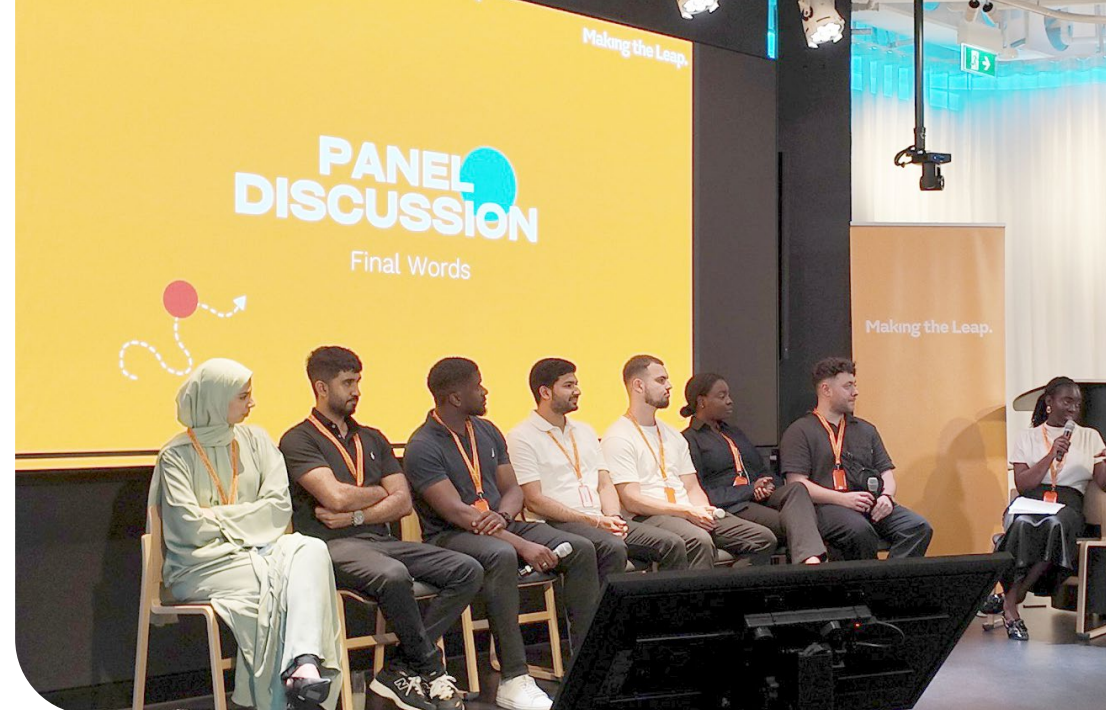
In 2024-25, we continued to grow Making The Leap's Alumni Community. Alumni activities were led by our **Fellows Board**, which consists of 12 alumni from the past six years of the ACE Programme. The Board supports Making The Leap with our mission by involving the wider alumni community in activities such as peer-to-peer networking, community engagement, corporate engagement, and ongoing training and development.

We were grateful to the following partners who hosted events for our alumni in 2024-25: **Howard Kennedy, Norton Rose Fulbright, Smart Pensions, and StepStone.**

Key alumni activities in 2024-25 included networking events, personal and professional development activities and supporting Making The Leap delivery activities such as our Careers Fairs.

We also launched our brand-new **Future Leaders Ambassador (FLA) Programme** in January 2025. Funded by the **Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation (IICF)**, this 12-month programme supports a cohort of alumni to develop the knowledge and skills required to progress and succeed in their careers. In 2024-25, FLA delivery activities were supported by partners including **AXA XL, Howard Kennedy and Smart Pension UK.**

Early evaluation results show the FLA Programme is already having a highly positive impact on our alumni, with the majority feeling **more informed and inspired** about their professional development.



"I've always been interested in business planning, but I found it to be a very daunting topic. The facilitator's presentation and delivery style made it the topic easily digestible, and she used engaging examples to further solidify my knowledge."

FLA participant, January 2025

"I plan on using my understanding [from the session] to empathise and grow not only personally but with others as my job requires engagement of people from all walks of life."

FLA participant, February 2025

MTL Fellows Board 2024-25

Our Fellows Board consisted of 12 alumni in 2024-25. Below, we share their graduation years, Board positions, and employment sectors.



Joanne Aroda (2022)

Board Chair
Works in Human Rights



Wumi Eyangho (2017)

Board Vice Chair
Works in Business Development



Danyal Bhatti (2017)

Board Secretary
Works in Business Development



Jasmine Abubekr (2021)

Works in Project Management



Sanjay Harsora (2017)

Works in Software Engineering



Koray Mallitte (2020)

Works in Business Analysis



Tasneem Oubira (2020)

Works in Research Analysis



Omolara Oyedeji (2019)

Works in Private Equity



Jack Paphitis (2020)

Works in Software Engineering



Aarti Ramchand (2020)

Works in Creative Industries



Jasmin Rasoel (2022)

Works in Consulting



Ferus Tesfay (2019)

Works in Law

Our Careers Fairs

In 2024-25, we hosted two Careers Fairs for the first time:

- Our annual **Social Mobility Careers Fair**, sponsored by our longstanding partners, **CMC Markets**. This Fair aimed to bridge the gap between young people from less-advantaged socio-economic backgrounds and employers, and to improve social mobility by giving young people insights into a range of organisations, access to job opportunities, and ultimately empowering them in their journeys to successful careers.
- A new **Early Careers Talent Fair**, supported by **Pentland Brands**. This Fair aimed to inform 16- to 19-year-olds from less-advantaged socio-economic backgrounds about careers in a range of sectors, to help them feel more positive about their future career prospects, and to help them feel more confident about making career decisions.

Across our two Careers Fairs in 2024-25, we saw:

18 employers acting as exhibitors: **Access VFX, Babri, BBC, BNP Paribas, bp, CloserStill Media, CMC Markets, Hyve, Kier, Knight Frank, Legal & General, Microsoft, Moore Kingston Smith, Morgan Stanley Investment Management, OCS, PA Consulting, Pentland Brands, and Savills.**

286 young people in attendance.

"I enjoy seeing a platform for this type of audience coming from the same [background] myself. **Breath of fresh air to know this is being pushed** and opportunities are out there for everyone as this is **important for growth in all areas of business.**"

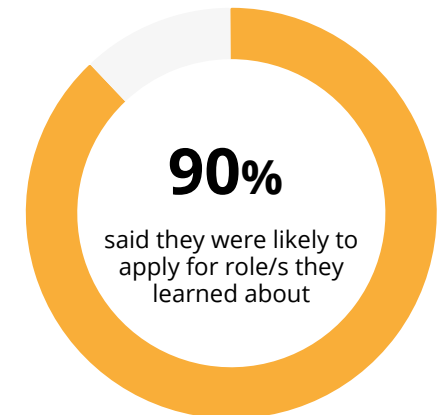
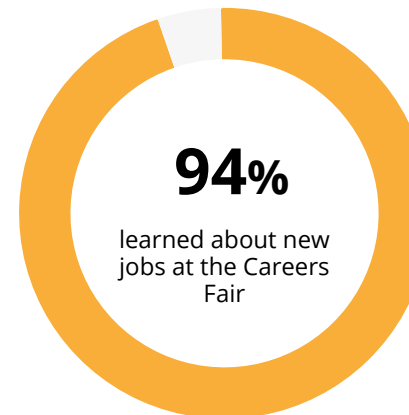
Employer exhibitor, Early Careers Talent Fair 2025

"[The Careers Fair] provided a unique opportunity to **engage directly with potential employers** and gain **first-hand insights into different industries** and career paths. I appreciated the **chance to ask questions** and receive **tailored advice** on how to enhance my career prospects. Additionally, I enjoyed **networking** with professionals and learning more about **company cultures, values, and hiring practices.**"

Attendee, Social Mobility Careers Fair 2024

"I enjoyed [...] **networking with the employers**, [it] felt great to get **CV and cover letter advice** from people who have experience with applying for jobs from big companies."

Attendee, Early Careers Talent Fair 2025



Impact Case Studies

Patient Advice Service
for people with health
conditions or disabilities

1988 KAREN ALMOND
1994 SUE DORRINGTON
1994 GILL BURNS
1997 EMMA MITCHELL
1998 GISELLE MATHER
PAULA GEORGE
KINE EDWARDS

RED ROSES CAPITAL

2003
2004
2005
2005
2007
2008
2008
2011

CLA
HEL
JO
SUE
CAT
KAT
KAR
CLA

Making the Leap.





Kevin
Platform Control Engineer
Sky

Why did you sign up for the ACE Programme?

A friend of mine did the ACE Programme two years before me. He told me about it because he had been in the same situation as me when he finished university, and he said it really helped him get a job.

When I learned about the ACE Programme, **what stood out to me was the focus on soft skills**. At university, we only focused on the technical side and hard skills and there wasn't really any teaching around soft skills so, I knew that's where I was lacking, especially when it came to interviews. I thought it would be worth focusing on developing those skills, because clearly that's what I was missing.

How has the ACE Programme helped you?

The ACE Programme helped me more than I expected. Before, I was always doubting my abilities, especially after all the rejections when applying for jobs. It gets to a point where you start taking it personally and lose confidence.

The ACE Programme helped me to see that a lot of that was in my head and that I needed to challenge those thoughts and push myself out of that mindset. **It built my confidence, and helped me improve my communication and presentation skills**, which I use now at work.

The mock interviews and networking sessions stood out to me. **Talking to professionals helped me understand what the workplace is actually**

like, and it made me more comfortable speaking to people. Even though I'm an introvert, I learned how to step outside my comfort zone and connect with others. The Job Search sessions were also helpful. I went regularly after finishing the workshop, and within a few weeks, I got a job interview. **The support I received from Making The Leap helped me prepare for the interview properly, and that led me to getting my current job.**

What advice would you give any young people thinking about coming to Making The Leap?

I'd say that **growth happens outside your comfort zone**. For me, it reached a point where I had to stop doing the same things and expecting different results. I realised that **soft skills** like **communication, presentation, and interview skills are important no matter what job you're in**, whether it's tech, marketing, or sales. So, I'd say don't hesitate and just go for it. It might feel unfamiliar at first, but you'll gain so much from it, both personally and professionally.

What would you say to individuals and organisations who support Making The Leap?

Even if you don't see results straightaway, **the impact is definitely there** – I'm living proof of that. The advice and support you gave, whether it's in a mock interview, a workshop, or during the Job Search sessions – **It helped me to grow as a person** and break out of that cycle of applying for jobs and getting nowhere. So, I'd just say **thank you, and please keep doing what you're doing, because it really does make a difference.**



Adara
Client Relationship Support
Candriam

Why did you sign up for the ACE Programme?

I was studying for my ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) qualification, and I visited the Job Centre to get support looking for work.

During one of my meetings, my Work Coach referred me to Making The Leap. The Engagement Team explained that the ACE Programme helps with building CVs, cover letters and interview skills, **with the ultimate aim of securing a job – which was my main goal.**

How has the ACE Programme helped you?

When I first joined, I didn't really know anyone or how to start looking for a job. **The ACE Programme gave me direction and support**, from helping me **build my CV and cover letter** to improving **how I communicate and present myself in interviews**. The workshop also helped me **improve my communication skills**. The mock interviews with real professionals were very helpful because they gave us feedback from people actually working in the corporate world.

The ACE Programme also helped me personally. It made me feel **more comfortable, more confident, and more ready to face new opportunities**. I met people who became real friends. I met one girl who's now my colleague at Candriam, and another who's one of my best friends. It was a great opportunity **not just for career development but also to make lasting friendships**.

After the workshop ended, the support continued. My Progressions Coach Elaine **shared lots of job opportunities**, including the one for my current role at Candriam, who are one of Making The Leap's partners. Elaine helped me **prepare for each interview stage, corrected my CV and cover letter, and ran a mock interview with me**. When I got the job offer, they were so happy for me! **I honestly don't think I would have landed this job without Making The Leap.**

What advice would you give any young people thinking about coming to Making The Leap?

I would say definitely go for it. I was in the same position as many people who join, not sure what to expect or how it would go, but **it turned out to be one of the best experiences I've had**. My advice would be to **take the opportunity and make the most of it**, because you'll gain so much.

What would you say to individuals and organisations who support Making The Leap?

Without your support, I don't think Making The Leap could do what it does. The programmes, the events, everything they provide takes a lot of effort and resources, and **it's because of your funding and involvement that young people like me get these opportunities**. Many of us have had to work harder to be seen and to prove ourselves, and Making The Leap gives us that chance. **What you're doing really makes a difference.** You're helping create more equal opportunities for everyone, and they're changing lives. I'm so grateful for that because without Making The Leap and the people behind it, I wouldn't be where I am today.

Our social mobility leadership

WIMPOLE_{St}

Barriers to progression

Perceptions of talent
not linked to
performance

POLISH/
EXPOSURE

NETWORKS

Familial / educational

FIT

Fit (style, accent, water
cooler moments)

Routes up

OPaque PROCeSSES ARE
WIDE ALLOCATIONS,
PROMOTIONS

UNWRITTEN CODES

Limited awareness

SPONSOR ACCESS

Lack of access to senior
sponsors – 17% less likely

Wifi: RSM Wireless
Password: 2ApkLCHN

WIMPOLE_{St}

Wifi: RSM Wireless
Password: 2ApkLCHN

UK
SOCIAL
MOBILITY
AWARDS



SOMO.UK

UK
SOCIAL
MOBILITY
AWARDS

WIMPOLE_{St}

UK Social Mobility Awards 2024

The UK Social Mobility Awards (SOMOs) in association with National Grid is Making The Leap's flagship nationwide social mobility initiative. Since 2017, the SOMOs has recognised and celebrated employers and educators to advance social mobility across the UK. In 2024, employers who entered the SOMOs collectively employed close to 1.3 million people across 20 sectors in the UK. Employers in finance, law, and professional services continued to be the most represented sectors among SOMO entrants. Other sectors represented included media, local authorities, government, and energy.

We produced two key SOMOs research publications in 2024-25:

[Joining and thriving? Advancing Social Mobility in 2023-24](#), which examines the key activities, enablers, and barriers to advancing social mobility among all employers and educators who entered the SOMOs in 2024.

[UK Social Mobility Awards 2024 Winners' Case Studies Report](#), which explores best practice and top tips from the 2024 winners across 14 categories.

Our SOMO 2024 winners represented organisations and individuals from UK sectors including professional services, local government, media, education, and technology:

- Organisation of the Year: **KPMG UK**
- Public Sector Organisation of the Year: **Cardiff Council**
- Leadership of the Year: **Sky**
- Community Programme of the Year: **Sky**
- Pre-Recruitment Programme of the Year: **PwC**
- Recruitment Programme of the Year: **Grant Thornton**
- Social Mobility Network of the Year: **Nationwide**
- Progression Programme of the Year: **McGinley**
- Innovation: **PA Consulting**
- Small Business of the Year: **Blackbullion**
- School/College of the Year: **Leicester College**
- University of the Year: **University of Bradford**
- Champion of the Year: **Patrick McCann, City Century**
- Mentor of the Year: **Roohi Hasan, ITN**
- Rising Star: **David McIntosh Jr., KPMG UK**



With thanks to our SOMO partners in 2024-25:

nationalgrid



Social Mobility Day 2024

On 13 June 2024, Making The Leap organised the third annual Social Mobility Day, with the theme #ShareMoments. On the day, individuals and organisations were encouraged to share their experiences of social mobility, and why it means so much – for individuals, communities, and society.

We saw fantastic engagement, with a significant increase in online and in-person activity compared to 2023:

1,500 LinkedIn posts
mentioned Social Mobility Day
(+850 posts compared to 2023)

3,309 unique impressions
on our Social Mobility Day LinkedIn
posts (+2,820 impressions)

4,200 website users
on www.socialmobilityday.com

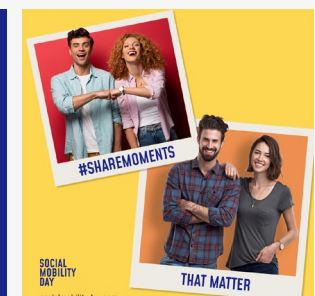
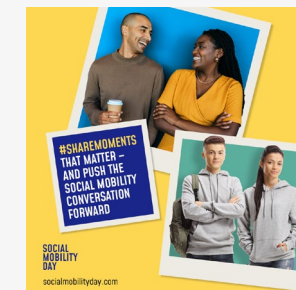
17,705 total impressions
on all social media posts

On the eve of Social Mobility Day, Making The Leap convened members of social mobility networks from a range of organisations for our **Network of Social Mobility Networks event** in London. Attendees were able to connect with each other, share their stories and best practice for advancing social mobility, and listen to a range of speakers, including Craig Emden (Chairman, Howard Kennedy) and members of our alumni community, who shared their own social mobility stories.

"If we don't include people from different socio-economic backgrounds, we lose out on talent and differing perspectives. We miss out on diversity of thought. And by not reflecting the societies and communities our customers and colleagues live in, we're unable to give them the best outcomes."

Biral Joshi, Director – Global Head of Inclusion Delivery, HSBC

#ShareMoments



Social Mobility Business Seminar 2025

In March 2025, we hosted our annual Social Mobility Business Seminar in London. Attended by 150 key stakeholders, the event convened leaders and organisations from the private, public, and third sectors to discuss best practice on advancing social mobility.

Our distinguished speakers and panel of experts included:

Will Serle

(Chief People Officer, National Grid)

Matthew Crummack

(CEO, Domestic & General)

Sophie Evans

(Client Manager, Brand Point Zero)

Natasha Frangos

(Managing Partner, HaysMac)

Paul Gerrard

(Campaigns, Public Affairs and Policy Director, Co-op Group)

Chanelle Gray

(UK Board Director of Diversity & Inclusion, Savills)

Sheriff Alderman Gregory Jones KC

(Aldermanic Sheriff, City of London)

Wendy Lyons

(Managing Director, Human Assets),

Helen Mullings

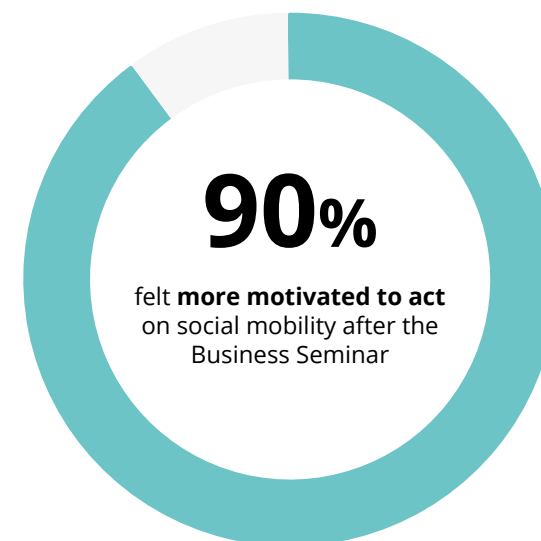
(Chief People Officer, PA Consulting)

Kimone Tefler

(Senior Project Manager, Brand Point Zero)



We received highly positive feedback from our attendees, which indicated that...



The Social Mobility Podcast

Making The Leap's Founder and CEO continued to host high-profile interviewees on the Social Mobility Podcast in 2024-25.

The podcast spotlights how leading UK employers are driving social mobility, and highlights practical actions to advance inclusion and tackle socio-economic disadvantage. In 2024-25, guests included Matthew Crummack, CEO of Domestic & General, the global provider of appliance care and repair services, and Paul Lewis, Firmwide Managing Partner at Linklaters, one of the UK's Magic Circle law firms.

In 2024-25, podcast conversations covered how leaders champion inclusion in meaningful, measurable ways: from recognising inclusion and culture contributions to advocating bold changes that strengthen society. Guests reflected on how education transforms lives, why equitable workplaces drive better performance, and how targeted initiatives can open doors for those facing the greatest barriers. Together, these conversations showcased the power of purposeful leadership to build stronger, fairer organisations where everyone can thrive.

The podcast continues to grow in listenership, with more than 2,000 downloads in the last financial year alone. It is also a key driver of online discussion with numerous comments praising its content, subject matter and importance.

The Social Mobility Podcast

"It's amazing the stories you hear - particularly across the social mobility landscape. Great podcast and absolutely sharing this. Thank you for continuing to shatter the glass ceiling."

"For anyone choosing a podcast to kick off the Bank Holiday Weekend, I highly recommend THIS one."

"Loved this episode, love the series and cannot wait to hear your interview with Paul Lewis next!"

The Social Mobility List 2024

In 2024, Making The Leap launched a brand-new leadership initiative: the Social Mobility List, in association with bp and sponsored by Kearney. The first of its kind, the Social Mobility List 2024 highlighted the key contributors and initiatives driving social mobility forward in the UK. We were delighted to hear from distinguished speakers Lee Barron (MP) and Kerry Dryburgh (EVP People, Culture, Communications and Chief Human Resources & Communications Officer, bp).

The List 2024 featured a comprehensive overview of individuals, charities and companies making significant strides for the cause. This included 56 different organisations across 12 categories, 18 individuals across three categories, five social mobility charities, and 10 Movers and Shakers who made an impact on social mobility through policy, advocacy, innovation, or direct action in 2024.

Our inaugural Movers and Shakers in 2024 were:

- Professor Graeme Atherton
- Professor Lee Elliot-Major OBE
- Rt Hon Justine Greening
- Joanna Hughes
- Vincent Keaveny CBE
- Alan Milburn
- Sophie Pender
- Stormzy
- Sandra Wallace CBE
- Chris Woolard CBE



How did we evaluate impact in 2024-25?

In 2024-25, we continued to evaluate our delivery activities using the three key dimensions in Making The Leap's Evaluation Framework:



Reach

The number of schools and pupils who participated in our programmes, the number of young adults we reached through initial engagement, and the number of young people who participated in our programmes. Our definition of reach also includes the demographic characteristics of our pupils and young adults; and the number of hours we delivered across our school and young adult programmes.



Experiences

The experiences of the pupils and young adults we reached, collected via evaluation surveys and qualitative case study interviews. This includes what they hoped to get out of our programmes, what they enjoyed, and how they felt they benefitted from the programmes.



Outcomes

The positive change and benefits from participating in our programmes. In 2024-25, we evaluated this dimension in terms of the education, employment and/or training (EET) outcomes achieved by our young adults, as well as self-reported outcomes across a range of essential skills and employability skills, measured using post-activity evaluation surveys.



Our funders in 2024-25

Making The Leap would like to thank the following partners and funders who supported our work in 2024-25.

Corporate partners

Bates Wells
BBD Perfect Storm
BNP Paribas
bp
Candriam
CMC Markets
Financial Times
Hedley May
Howard Kennedy
Hyve
Kintbury Capital
Knight Frank
Morgan Stanley Investment Management
OCS
PA Consulting
Pentland Brands
Smart Pensions
Snap
StepStone Group

SOMO partners, 2024-25

National Grid (headline partner)
Amazon
BNP Paribas
bp
Hedley May
Landsec
Lloyds Banking Group
Nationwide
PwC
Sky

Trusts and foundations

AKO Foundation
Candriam Institute for Sustainable Development
Fidelity UK Foundation
Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation (IICF)
Peter Cruddas Foundation
The Corcoran Foundation
The Future Scope Charitable Foundation
The Inflexion Foundation
The Mercers' Charitable Foundation
The PA Foundation
The Rubin Foundation Charitable Trust
The Stone Family Foundation
The Worshipful Company of Curriers
Trust For London

Our leadership in 2024-25

As of 31 March 2025

Making The Leap Executive Team

Tunde Banjoko OBE
Founder and CEO

Eugene Blavo
Deputy CEO

Clare Caccavone
Director of Programmes

Marlene Anderson
Head of Delivery

Gerard Brand
Head of Communications

Betty Campbell
Head of Educational Partnerships

Padmini Iyer
Head of Research and Advocacy

Clementine Kumar
Head of Corporate Partnerships

Gareth Pryce
Head of Engagement

Lucy Pryce
Head of Development

Making The Leap Board of Trustees

Andy Boucher
Retired

Emma Canavan
Previously Partner, PwC

Dipi McKernan
Chief Control Officer, Insurance, Pensions & Investments, Lloyds Banking Group

Laurence Meehan
Corporate Relations Director, Europe and MENA, Diageo

Catherine Osaigbovo
Partner - HR and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Page Executive

Dom Scott
Managing Director, Lifetime Connect

James Smith
Director, Advent International

Sandra Wallace
Deputy Managing Partner, DLA Piper

John Williams
Head of Sales EMEA, On

Our leadership in 2024-25

As of 31 March 2025

SOMO Advisory Board 2024

David Carrigan

Group Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing, Sky UK & ROI

Jennie Colville

Head of Sustainability, Landsec

Tracey Fuller

UK Head of CSR, BNP Paribas

Catherine Hearn

HR Director - UK Country Lead, Amazon

Nick Hedley

Partner, Hedley May

Carl Hickson

VP Future Talent, bp

Rhian Kelly

Chief Sustainability Officer, National Grid

Chris Reeve

London Region Chair, PwC

Jo Whight

Senior Inclusion & Diversity Leader & Social Mobility Lead, Nationwide

SOMO Advisory Board 2025

David Carrigan

Group Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing, Sky UK & ROI

Tracey Fuller

Head of UK Community Engagement, BNP Paribas

Catherine Hearn

HR Director, AWS EMEA, Amazon

Nick Hedley

Partner, Hedley May

Carl Hickson

VP Future Talent, bp

Rhian Kelly

Chief Sustainability Officer, National Grid

Rachel Osikoya

Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Lloyds Banking Group

Emma Thorogood

Partner, Head of Corporate Affairs, PwC