

EY Foundation 2024-25 Impact Report TEXT ONLY DOCUMENT

Unlocking potential for young people and employers

Welcome

Hello and welcome to the EY Foundation's Impact Report covering the period from July 2024 to June 2025.

As Chair of the EY Foundation, I am incredibly proud of the work we do and the difference it makes to so many young people every year.

Over the past year, the EY Foundation celebrated its 10-year anniversary, and a personal highlight for me was a Parliamentary reception in Westminster. It was a joy to see so many supporters and young people gathered together to reflect on a decade of impact.

In the last 12 months, our programmes have expanded into Crawley, Sheffield, Reading and Luton, and we have seen exciting progress in our digital and influence work to create long-term change. This includes work to ensure AI drives social mobility and understanding the role intrinsic motivation plays in helping young people to thrive.

But we must do more. In the UK, over one in four young people are eligible for free school meals. Growing up in a low-income household still has a huge impact on your life outcomes, from the jobs you can access to the amount you will get paid. With an increasingly divisive society and sluggish economy, our work is more important than ever. So, looking to the future, we plan to reach even more young people, aiming to create the systemic change which is needed to ensure the significant talent of young people is harnessed, giving all young people the opportunity to succeed and drive a more inclusive economy for all.

Thank you for reading our impact report and we appreciate your continued support.

Edel Harris OBE

Board Chair, EY Foundation

Hello, I am honoured to have been appointed a trustee this year, having worked closely with the EY Foundation for the last nine years.

My journey started in 2016 as part of the Leeds Smart Futures cohort, later serving on the Foundation's first Youth Advisory Board (YAB) in 2019, and now as a member of the EY Foundation's Board.

I'm excited by the Foundation's plans to accelerate its impact, and I look forward to welcoming the new Youth Voice Forum to build on the incredible work of the current YAB. I want to build on our high-impact programmes that I know – having seen them first-hand – create tangible, life-changing outcomes for young people.

At the EY Foundation, we support young people from low-income backgrounds to succeed in the workplace, using free school meals and college bursary eligibility as eligibility criterion for our programmes. Given the opportunity, these young people often outperform their peers and despite being a positive asset to businesses, they are still under-represented in professional occupations.

By driving systemic change and connecting both sides of the labour market, we support young people from lower-income backgrounds to thrive in the workplace and help employers access diverse talent, driving growth and greater social mobility.

Thank you to everyone who supports the EY Foundation. I hope this report inspires you to join us and further increase the impact of our work.

Chelsea Hargreaves
Trustee, EY Foundation

Our strategy

Our ambition is to enable the 2+ million young people eligible for free school meals (FSM) to have an employment and earnings potential that is equitable to other young people in the UK.

We will do so in collaboration with employers and key partners, through employability skills programmes, scalable digital interventions, and by leveraging our convening power to influence systemic change.

1. Inspire young people through careers support

All young people eligible for free school meals will receive consistent, relevant, and high-quality careers support throughout their primary and secondary education. This will generate the knowledge and aspiration to ignite and inspire their career ambitions.

2. Ensure employers actively engage with and recruit FSM eligible young people

Employers will drive social mobility within their organisations, committing to recruit young people from FSM backgrounds. This is done through inclusive recruitment, progression, and retention practices. In turn, it will help address skills gaps and ensure organisations benefit from untapped, diverse talent.

3. Ensure the future of work is fully inclusive for all young people

All young people eligible for free school meals will understand the opportunities and have the skillsets needed to thrive in the future of work. Rapidly evolving technologies must unlock, rather than entrench barriers to social mobility.

4. A thriving organisation

Create an organisational structure that enables us to reach our ambition. It will be powered by collaboration, and a vibrant and diverse team that delivers evidence-based insights and sustainable impact.

Our strategy: Key highlights this year

Inspire young people through careers support

- Supported 4,003 FSM-eligible young people across our programmes and workshops.
- Expanded our Smart Futures programme to include Crawley, Sheffield, Reading and Luton.
- Offered targeted apprenticeship application support linked to numerical reasoning tests and other employer assessment models.
- Supported 162 young people in their journey to starting an enterprise.
- Conducted co-design sessions in Bradford to understand what high-quality work experience looks like, and how young people could be supported in the region to raise their aspirations and develop key skills.

Ensure employers actively engage with and recruit FSM eligible young people

- [Commissioned a study with SMEs](#) in Northwest England to understand what drives businesses to prioritise social mobility activity, and the business benefits it brings.

- Convened five employer roundtables to understand what actions employers can take to drive social mobility.

Ensure the future of work is fully inclusive for all young people

- Released our [AI and Social Mobility paper](#), which sets out the opportunities and challenges for social mobility in an increasingly AI-driven future.
- Completed the Discovery Phase of an AI and Social Mobility Grand Challenge to incentivise tech-focused businesses to use AI to enhance social mobility in the UK.
- Commissioned the [Institute for the Future of Work \(IFOW\)](#) to publish [research on intrinsic motivation](#), focusing on how young people from low-income backgrounds can navigate the changes, especially technologically, occurring in our economy and society.

A thriving organisation

- Put the right processes and resources in place to support our aims and impact, including a recently completed new five-year funding agreement with EY.

A year at the EY Foundation

- 4,003 FSM-eligible young people supported
- 46 high impact programmes delivered
- 348 employers engaged
- 9 regions reached across the UK
- 3,076 volunteering opportunities
- 2,052 unique volunteers
- 132 short term interventions
- 30+ organisations engaged in the Discovery Phase of the Grand Challenge
- 319+ young people received AI Literacy + EQ training
- 3 reports published
- 1st parliamentary reception event with 100 attendees

Where are they now?

Over the past 11 years of Smart Futures, Your Future, Beyond Your Limits and Our Future programmes*; we surveyed our young people to find out where they are now:

- 84% are in education or employment
- 69% of those in full time employment earn more than the minimum wage
- 92% believe their participation in the EY Foundation's programme improved their career prospects
- 84% believe that EY Foundation's programme helped them decide what they were going to do
- 31% volunteer in their spare time
- 90% are satisfied in their present job

“Before this programme, I was quite shy and reserved, lacking a lot of key skills that are required in a professional environment. However, due to this programme, I was able to do things that I would have never done e.g., doing a presentation. Overall, this programme has been crucial in shaping and developing me as an individual.”

Maame, Smart Futures Participant 2025

Employment/education status at the time of the survey

Status	Percentage of respondents
In education	17%
In employment	38%
In education and employment	29%
Volunteering	5%
Neither in education nor employment	6%
Neither in education nor employment (awaiting confirmation of university/college course place)	5%

Statistics based on 238 responses from young people who completed our destinations survey.

*Beyond Your Limits and Our Future have now been discontinued.

A new campaign: Access their Skills

Growing up in a low-income household can mean a young person has fewer opportunities to get ahead and prepare for the world of work. But they often outperform their peers.

We worked with young people from low-income backgrounds, to [tell their story](#), encouraging employers to see their incredible potential. We'd like to thank EY and Ogilvy for their support on this project.

Link to film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?si=iuxMezr3vWr2aXwQ&v=hEsiAbgRmM0&feature=youtu.be>

“A brilliant focus on connecting young people and employers to unlock potential and provide access to invaluable talent.”

Mary Macleod, former CEO BITC

“Super emotional watching this! The Foundation kickstarted my career when I was coming out of school and I can see myself and my peers in this video too.”

Milly Allwood-Rose, EY Foundation alumni

Spotlight stories

My journey from school into my current role, as a Cyber Apprentice within Technology Consulting for EY, started back in Year 12 when I heard about the EY Foundation Smart Futures Programme.

[It] really gave me a solid insight into the corporate world, which helped me tackle all the challenges that came with starting my career... Being around professionals who were passionate about their work really inspired me. I learned how to engage in conversations, ask the right questions, and present myself in a way that reflects my professionalism. All of these experiences made me feel more prepared and excited to step into my role as an apprentice.

Being able to give back by hosting and mentoring students has been an absolute pleasure. Being part of the EY Foundation Central Team in Cyber and being able to host EY Foundation's programmes has given me a chance to help the next generation of students get excited about EY, and more specifically, what it's like to be a Cyber Apprentice... It's rewarding for me to make a difference in their journey, just like the EY Foundation did for me.

Kirat Singh

EY Foundation Programme Alumni and EY Apprentice

Read Kirat's full blog [here](#).

Before joining the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), I was struggling with my confidence, often feeling shy to speak up in meetings. However, since being on the YAB, my confidence has increased. The access to opportunities has been so transformative. For example, through the YAB I had the opportunity to have a speaking coach. This is when I was able to see a real shift in my confidence. I began to carry myself differently and put myself forward for opportunities.

Alongside this, being on the YAB increased my interest in social mobility, so much so that I decided to start a community called the FlowerInMe Network, which is for Black women who are 0-2 years into a corporate role, helping them bring out their inner leaders and thrive in the workplace. This would not have been possible without the confidence instilled in me from the YAB. I will be forever grateful.

Michelle Fotsing
YAB Member, EY Foundation

Listening to young people

"I'm Natalie Stuart, Chair of EY Foundation's Youth Advisory Board (YAB). I lead a group of young people who advise the charity on how to incorporate a young person's perspective into all aspects of its work. The YAB and its alumni have played a pivotal role through sharing their experiences of growing up in a lower socio-economic background through EY partner breakfasts, our Decade of Impact dinner, employer roundtables, and our Parliamentary Reception.

We supported on digital initiatives such as the Grand Challenge Discovery Phase; the AI and Your Side Hustle pilot project; and assessing where AI can have the most impact on EYF through youth led focus groups. The YAB also supported on building the Business Plan for FY26 to ensure that young people have opportunities to directly impact the Foundation's work.

Click on the [video](#) to learn more about youth voice in the EY Foundation."

Natalie Stuart
YAB Chair, EY Foundation

With young people at the heart of what we do, listening and reacting to their thoughts and opinions is central to our work. Whether through programme design and review, creating and implementing new projects, or spotlighting their thoughts on a variety of topics.

This year, following feedback from young people, we implemented a new Youth Engagement Framework. It provides guidance for and spotlights the importance of meaningful and thoughtful engagement with young people, ensuring they are equipped with the skills and confidence to engage with us, and feel empowered to share their voice.

One example was our Alumni Convenor events, where we brought young people, employers and other supporters together to network, share their own lived experience, and learn from other people's experiences. This allowed supporters to understand their impact while allowing alumni to mentor, build their confidence and public speaking skills. These were created and facilitated with members of our YAB and demonstrate the power in giving young people 'the mic'.

Inspire young people through careers support

Who are our young people?*

Gender split**

- 50% identify as male
- 50% identify as female

Statistics

- 31% Guardian(s) completed a university degree or equivalent
- 47% Don't have English as their first language
- 3% Are or have been in care
- 12% Are from a workless household

Demographics

- 43% Asian
- 32% Black
- 13% White
- 4% Mixed Heritage
- 4% Arab
- 1% Chinese

- 2% Other

*These statistics are based on 891 responses from participants on our Smart Futures and Your Future programmes.

**0.1% of young people identify as non-binary and 0.4% prefer not to say.

Smart Futures

The Smart Futures programme provides paid employability skills training, paid work experience and up to six months of mentoring for 16–17-year-olds.

Young people are given a chance to develop their knowledge of careers alongside core employability skills, such as leadership, presenting and networking.

We have three different models for delivery: virtual, face-to-face and hybrid. This flexibility allows us to adapt to the varying needs of young people and employers. Each version of the programme is tailored to the needs of specific sectors of the economy, providing young people with the skills and experiences they need to succeed. One example is ‘Impactful Futures’ which supports young people who want to work in the charity sector.

We constantly evolve and improve our programmes in response to student, employer, volunteer and EY Foundation team feedback. This year we have developed new content focussed on personal finance, AI, and emotional intelligence. We are also offering additional support linked to gaining apprenticeships, with training on numerical reasoning tests and other assessment models. And we are reaching more young people by expanding Smart Futures to Crawley, Sheffield, Reading and Luton.

- 848 young people engaged

“Through engaging with multiple workshops, real world projects, professional mentorship and being on a [business] placement to learn what businesses and charities deal with in the background. I learnt how to express my ideas clearly and confidently, whether it was pitching my thoughts in group discussions or networking with industry professionals, I discovered my voice and the power it holds.”

Safia, Impactful Futures Participant

Transferrable skills development

	Pre programme	Post programme	Difference
Self confidence	48%	94%	+46%
Presentation skills	41%	90%	+49%
Business networking skills	47%	96%	+49%

Careers advice received

	Pre programme	Post programme	Difference
Knowledge of what employers are looking for when recruiting	42%	96%	+54%
Development of CV skills	41%	88%	+47%
Development of interview skills	46%	96%	+50%

Stats based on 786 young people who completed both pre and post survey and their stated answer was 'Good' or 'Excellent'

Your Future

As young people complete school or college, many feel certain that they don't want to go on to further education. Your Future is designed by and for them.

Your Future provides young people who want to go straight into a job with two weeks of paid employability skills training and work experience, as well as a dedicated employment coach for up to six months.

Reflecting on our ambition to not only support young people to get ready for the world of work but also to help them get into work, we partner directly with employers with entry-level roles. One example is working alongside People's Partnership; an employer based in Crawley, five out of the nine participants were offered roles as a result of participating in Your Future.

"The experience has been very positive... Working now doesn't seem as daunting as it sounded, I definitely want to work at People's Partnership and this EY Foundation programme has helped me realise this."

Chelsea, Your Future Participant and Customer Service Executive at People's Partnership

- 123 young people engaged
- 50+% of our Your Future participants secured jobs following the programme

Transferrable skills development

	Pre programme	Post programme	Difference
Self confidence	32%	96%	+64%
Presentation skills	18%	88%	+70%
Business networking skills	28%	91%	+63%

Careers advice received

	Pre programme	Post programme	Difference
Knowledge of what employers are looking for when recruiting	24%	97%	+73%
Development of CV skills	19%	98%	+79%
Development of interview skills	22%	96%	+74%

Stats based on 80 young people who completed both pre and post survey and their stated answer was 'Good' or 'Excellent'

Step into Business

Young people are increasingly interested in entrepreneurship, but often lack the opportunity, support or network required to get started.

We listened to the ambitions of young people on our programmes who were keen to start their own businesses, and in 2024 we introduced our new Step into Business programme. It supports 16-19-year-olds who are interested in entrepreneurship and are eligible for free school meals to develop their knowledge of how to start a new business or social enterprise.

Young people take part in a one-day intensive workshop, meeting and learning from inspiring entrepreneurs before being paired with a business coach for six months. They then have the opportunity to pitch for a start-up grant of up to £2,000 to pursue their business idea.

Since its creation, we have supported over 300 young people and have handed out grants to 13 young people to develop their business ideas.

“This programme has opened me up to a community of young entrepreneurs as well as more experienced people who have been in my position before. And, my mentor has been there to support me on my entrepreneurial journey as well as helping me to withstand many challenges. I also won a grant that I used towards my website as well as marketing tools.”

Oni, Step Into Business Participant

- 162 young people supported this year

Business knowledge, skills and network development

	Pre programme	Post programme	Difference
Awareness and understanding of different companies	38%	91%	+53%
Ability to communicate and explain your business idea	43%	85%	+42%
Understanding of how to research and grow your knowledge of your chosen market	35%	83%	+48%

Stats based on 108 young people who completed both pre and post survey and their stated answer was ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’

Employability workshops

Thousands of young people took part in our employability and enrichment workshops across England and Scotland.

They provide an opportunity to connect young people with information about the local labour market and to meet employers from a range of sectors. They also provide students with key employability skills and a greater understanding of the pathways into employment from apprenticeships to graduate roles.

During our sessions, students hear inspiring career stories from diverse professionals, take part in a team challenge and work on their presentation skills, providing them with a great start on their journey to becoming work ready.

- 2,870 Employability workshop participants (FSM)
- 1,251 Employability Workshop Participants (Non FSM)*

Career Awareness

	Pre programme	Post programme	Difference
Awareness of different career paths	46%	74%	+28%
Awareness of what employers are looking for when recruiting	41%	79%	+38%
Understanding of what a job application requires	36%	72%	+36%

Motivation and confidence

	Pre programme	Post programme	Difference
Confidence and optimism felt about your future	50%	74%	+24%
Motivation felt towards achieving your future career goals	68%	82%	+14%

Confidence in working in a team with other people	63%	80%	+17%
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Stats based on 194 young people who completed both pre and post survey and their stated answer was 'Good' or 'Excellent'

*We deliver these workshops in schools in areas of high deprivation, however we do not filter participants by FSM-eligibility, and therefore we work with some young people who are not part of the core group we aim to support.

Volunteers

Volunteers are vital to the delivery of our programmes. They bring invaluable experience, knowledge, and skills that impact the lives of our participants.

In turn, we work to ensure that our volunteers benefit too by placing personal growth and purpose at the forefront of our approach. As a result of developing specialised skills and knowledge, volunteers report an increase in their communication skills and improvements in their general wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Every year we celebrate and recognise the contribution of our volunteers at our annual Impact Awards in each of our four hubs in Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham and London.

“Being part of this initiative has been a real highlight... Many have shared – in their own words – how this experience reminded them of what makes EY such a special place to work. I’d go further to say that for some of our team, this has been a moment of real growth and development – a tangible benefit we bring back to the business.”

Sam, EY

“I did not think that my experience – at my age – would be relevant to a younger audience. However, I found that it was well received and personally rewarding.”

Mark, EY

“Volunteers are at the heart of the EY Foundation, offering guidance and mentorship that truly change lives. Having started as a young volunteer myself, I’ve seen how their support helps build confidence, open doors, and inspire young people to aim higher.”

Huma, YAB member & programme alumna

- 73% said that they would talk about their volunteering activities at their performance review
- 97% said that they would volunteer again with the EY Foundation
- 52% agreed or strongly agreed that the skills and experience gained through volunteering have put them in a better position to apply for a more senior position with their employer
- 97% would recommend our volunteering opportunities to colleagues or friends

Statistics based on 152 responses from volunteers who completed our feedback survey

Evolving the work experience landscape in Bradford

We commissioned [Groundswell Innovation](#) to conduct research on the work experience landscape in the UK, looking at how effective work experience could reduce inequalities.

Recommendations included:

- Tailored support for SMEs to deliver work experience opportunities
- Acknowledgement of the role of technology as a ‘democratising force’
- Starting careers-related learning in early years to build aspirations

This insight is being put into use in the partnerships we are building in Bradford, where we are testing new approaches to work experience.

Taking an evidence-based approach, we worked with place-based practitioners [Renaissance TSIP](#) to facilitate a series of workshops with key stakeholders in the Bradford district to develop a Theory of Change that sets out how we could create a meaningful impact.

Insights from this process revealed that we need to:

- Change attitudes to and perceptions of work experience
- Develop approaches that complement existing provision
- Embed the voice and experience of young people

This insight was used as a basis for co-design sessions with over 150 people from civil society, employers, local authority, schools, parents and carers and young people, to understand what high-quality work experience should include. This highlighted:

- A limited awareness of career opportunities available, from creative careers to STEM-based

- A need for ‘soft skills’ that enable young people to build confidence and self-awareness of how to engage within a workplace environment
- Recognition of the evolving world of work, and the importance of considering non-linear career journeys
- A desire for young people to have experiences that are ‘interactive’, ‘fun’ and that would allow them to develop their own self-agency

We are working with schools, employers and local stakeholders to develop a pilot programme in the next academic year. Our aim is to address these challenges and align with statutory guidance on careers education and the government’s commitment to a new work experience guarantee for all young people in secondary education.

“[Good quality work experience would include] being able to test and try out new things; being able to find out more about different roles and options, having the ability to interact with others that have more experience, go to maybe a couple of different places, [and] talk about it in school before we start.”

Year 7 Student

Ensure employers actively engage with and recruit FSM eligible young people

Bringing employers and young people together

We work closely with employers to transform how they work with young people to drive social mobility and create sustainable change within their organisation.

Our approach is to understand the challenges faced by employers within their sector or local area, such as building a more diverse workforce or accessing a wider pool of talent. We then co-design and implement solutions, such as employability programmes, that equip young people with the skills, experience, and networks they need to thrive in the workplace. This benefits employers by:

- Contributing to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals.
- Building a diverse future talent pipeline.
- Providing high-quality and purposeful volunteering opportunities for their employees.

- Gaining a fresh perspective on their organisation from the young people they work with.
- Enhancing relationships with local communities and creating awareness of local career opportunities.

This year, we launched Real Estate Futures, which highlights the breadth of career opportunities in the commercial real estate sector. Ten young people took part and following its success, a larger programme has now been commissioned.

Exploring the business case for social mobility with SMEs

Following new research with Groundswell Innovation, we [published a report](#) addressing the pressing need for UK small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to view social mobility as both a moral responsibility and a strategic business opportunity. Our report outlines the economic risks of inaction and showcases the tangible benefits and actionable steps taken by organisations to drive social mobility regardless of size. Our research builds upon “[The Opportunity Effect](#)”, Demos’ 2024 report which makes the business case for social mobility to support UK productivity and economic growth.

Convening our employer network through round table events

We have hosted five employer roundtables, convening employers across sectors including financial services, tech, hospitality and charities. From this, we’ve gained deeper knowledge of these sectors, insights on the skills employers are looking for from early talent, and business’ approaches to the future of work, emerging technology and AI. Employers have committed to act following our sessions, and we’ll continue to monitor our contribution to employers supporting more diverse young talent.

“Taking part in the programme is a really rewarding feeling, and you get to understand the tangible impact, which is so valuable. Would love to talk about any other ways we can get involved too.”

VerseOne

Ensure the future of work is fully inclusive for all young people

Ensure the future of work is inclusive

We want to support all young people eligible for free school meals, to understand the opportunities – and the skillsets needed to thrive – in the future of work.

AI and social mobility thought leadership

Our accelerating shift towards an AI-driven economy is fundamentally transforming the labour market, altering the nature of work and reshaping the skills landscape.

In October, we [hosted a panel](#) to discuss the opportunities and risks of AI on the future of the young people we support as part of Digital Leaders Week. Bringing together AI leader Adrian Joseph, Head of Skills, Talent and Diversity at TechUK Nimmi Patel, and YAB Digital Representative John Walker.

In January, we published our [AI and Social Mobility paper](#), which set out what we see as the key opportunities and challenges for social mobility in an increasingly AI-driven future.

Endorsed by the Chair of the Social Mobility Commission, this paper moved beyond ideas to introduce two projects designed to generate practical insights into how AI can be harnessed to support young people.

EY Foundation Grand Challenge

Building on our AI and Social Mobility paper, we explored how to direct innovation to ensure technology positively impacts society through an AI and Social Mobility Grand Challenge. This uses a competition format to incentivise tech entrepreneurs to use AI to improve social mobility.

To develop the challenge concept and focus, we worked in collaboration with the Social Mobility Commission and Social Tech Trust to engage over 30 organisations in workshops and conversations. Participants included impact tech ventures, AI experts, policymakers, funders, NGOs, young people, and educators. This culminated in the publication of 'Tech for Fairer Futures,' outlining the emerging focus areas for the challenge.

With the Discovery Phase complete, we are now moving to the delivery phase in the next financial year. You can read more about the project and how to get involved in our final [Discovery Phase blog post](#).

Intrinsic motivation and technological transformation

We commissioned the Institute for the Future of Work (IFOW), to run a research project on intrinsic motivation, focussing on how young people, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, can navigate the changes occurring in our economy and society.

This research highlights the vital role of intrinsic motivation in developing key skills such as creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration, which are increasingly important in today's job market. The research reveals that a lack of intrinsic motivation - defined as engaging in

activities for their inherent enjoyment or satisfaction - can hinder young people from building fulfilling careers.

Encouragingly, the research suggests that intrinsic motivation can be cultivated through targeted support. In response to this opportunity, IFOW has developed 'The Good Work Motivation Cycle (GWMC)' to identify effective strategies for fostering intrinsic motivation among young people from low-income backgrounds, thereby enhancing their educational and career pathways.

This research not only deepens our understanding but also provides practical insights for policymakers seeking to support young people in their transition from education to work, ultimately contributing to a fairer society. As part of the next stage of this project, we will be testing the framework through our employability skills programmes. The research report can be downloaded [here](#).

“Technology must be considered on the context of social mobility because of the immense changes it is making to the labour market. For example, freely available AI-assisted learning and access to expert training support could significantly improve individual autonomy to learn and develop, no matter your background.

As part of the Grand Challenge Discovery Phase, I represented the shared concerns of myself and peers around the lack of guidance provided on the use of AI. We discussed this with key stakeholders which helped narrow the focus of the challenge prize, tackling a more pertinent pain point for young people – it was great to see youth voice have such an impact.

Being part of the YAB has improved my communication, public speaking and presentation skills in the process, while simultaneously enabling me to explore my passions outside my degree, building the foundation for a career in AI and finance.”

John Walker

YAB Member, EY Foundation

Our income

Support from individuals, companies and grant funders is critical to our success. It allows us to reach more young people across the UK, provide more opportunities and collaborate to accelerate positive change.

Every pound invested, donated or fundraised makes a difference and moves us closer to achieving our ambition.

In addition to other fantastic supporters and funders, EY provides core funding and a range of services to the EY Foundation. This long-term collaboration has enabled us to be a sustainable, high impact charity that is future focussed on transformative change for young people from low-income backgrounds.

- **Total Income:** £5.5m
- **Total Expenditure:** £4.6m
- **Raised for every £1 invested in fundraising:** £5.73

Figures correct as of 8 September 2025 and are subject to audit.

Income highlights

- To celebrate 10 years of transformational support for young people, we hosted The Decade of Impact Dinner, bringing together 200 supporters and young people in a very special evening. It raised £138,000 and introduced some of the inspiring young people supported over the last decade.
- Two groups of trekkers took on an intrepid challenge across 5 days in Cambodia, smashing personal goals and raising nearly £70,000 for EY Foundation.
- Our first ever Enterprise Challenge took place from September to December 2025. This harnessed the creativity and energy of 80 people in the early stage of their career, who worked in teams, supported by a mentor, to turn seed funding into fundraising success. Participants built skills, networks and raised nearly £8,000 for the charity.
- Across a partnership spanning five years, the Social Inclusion team at University of Warwick have supported nearly 90 young people across a range of EY Foundation programmes. They have used learnings from working with us to influence their staff social mobility strategy, identify gaps in inclusive recruitment approaches for young people, and in the development of their own staff internship programme, which has been completed by several EY Foundation alumni.
- CAF Bank has worked with EY Foundation since the inception of the programme, four years ago, supporting a total of 15 young people on our Banking and Finance Smart Futures programme helping to broaden access

to careers in banking and financial services. In addition, this year, CAF the Foundation has also engaged in our Impactful Futures programme, bringing young people a new perspective on the charitable sector and the positive impact it delivers to our society.

“Overall I loved the experience, both the challenges (which looking back caused me to grow in skills such as problem solving and emotional intelligence) and the unique positives such as having a candlelit concert at EY CP and selling our designed perfume to EY staff and family/friends.”

Enterprise Challenge participant

“It’s a fantastic partnership, not just for what it has done to progress our strategy but the engagement from a wide range of volunteers who come forward year after year and bring their authentic self to ensure a rich experience for the young people.”

Claire Algar

Social Inclusion Manager, University of Warwick

“CAF Bank has been proud to participate in the Smart Futures programme since its inception, broadening access to careers in banking and financial services for young people. Every year we get to work with inspirational young people who always challenge us to think in new and insightful ways about some aspect of our organisation and customer experience.”

CAF Bank

Looking to the future

It’s been an exciting year since we launched our ambition to enable all young people on Free School Meals to have an employment and earnings potential that is equitable to other young people in the UK. I’m reassured by the impact we’ve made this year and am looking forward to making bold strides forward on our 10-year road map next year.

We will be growing:

- Our team to support more volunteers, implement new innovations, and to engage stakeholders with our recommendations and insights.

- Our programme reach through high-impact programmes and short-term interventions.
- Our practical resources that support employers to increase social mobility within their organisation.
- Our partnerships and approach to the 'green sector' to ensure young people from low-income backgrounds have equitable access to existing and evolving jobs in this fast-growing area of the economy.

We will be launching:

- The Grand Challenge to generate interventions that harness AI to unlock opportunity for young people.
- A Social Return on Investment (SROI) assessment project that will evaluate the social value generated by our core programmes so we can clearly see which initiatives deliver the greatest impact.
- Our new Youth Voice Forum (previously our YAB) to further embed the voice of young people in everything we do.

We will be trialling:

- Interventions from our intrinsic motivation work with IFOW to test and build evidence that demonstrates how it can be trained and developed with young people.
- Our work experience pilot with young people in Bradford across five schools.

This gives you a taste of just some of the activity we have planned for next year. There is so much that I'm looking forward to but I'm especially excited about growing the momentum and engagement of organisations involved in our work to increase diversity within the beyond profit sector itself. We need to collectively model best practice. I'm also really looking forward to our Impact Roadshows and meeting more of our brilliant supporters.

Our work requires the support and partnership of young people, employers, government, decision makers, and charities to make our ambitions for young people a reality. If you're passionate about building a future that's more equitable for young people, then please get in touch.

Lynne Peabody
CEO, EY Foundation

Thank you

A massive thank you to everyone who has played a part in creating impact with us over the last year! In particular, we'd like to thank EY for their continued support and for being our core donor.

As we continue to drive social mobility and make a difference in the lives of young people, we hope you will join us in 2025/2026 with a shared passion to continue our work to support both sides of the labour market.

There are four ways you can be a part of our success:

- Volunteer
- Fundraise
- Partner with us
- Advocate for change

To find out more about our work and how you can get involved, please visit eyfoundation.com.

Get in touch to find out more:

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eyfoundation.com

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About the EY Foundation

The EY Foundation is a UK registered charity that works directly with young people and employers to create or support pathways to education, employment or enterprise. EY Foundation operates and is incorporated independently of EY and is governed by a separate trustee board.

The EY Foundation is a charitable company registered in England and Wales and Scotland with registered charity number 1157154 and SC045076. It is also a member firm of Ernst & Young Global Limited.

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