



Annual Impact Report 2023

A world in which every young person can achieve their
brightest future.





Who we are

Springpod is a free, virtual platform where young people immerse themselves in career and university experiences. The opportunities on our platform enable them to connect with world-leading employers and educational institutions as they grow their knowledge and skillset to feel confident in taking their next steps.

With over half a million students, more than 150 of the world's leading employers and over 4,000 educational partners now using Springpod – it's certainly not been a quiet year for us. Whilst these milestones are significant and it's important to reflect on them, we're keen to use this report to take stock of how far we've come before looking forward and bringing greater clarity to our mission.

A world in which every young person can achieve their brightest future. That's our vision and it's what we're working towards. Here's how we've been getting on.





A message from our CEO & Founder, Sam Hyams, on our key focus areas from the past 12 months

Universal Access

The past academic year has been a landmark time for us making good on our commitment to universal access. It's been central to Springpod since its creation more than 6 years ago to make opportunities available to all young people regardless of their background or circumstances. Against the backdrop of a turbulent national and global economy it's been essential for us to remain adaptable in order to keep our platform not only accessible, but relevant. Our growth past half a million users in the UK and expansion into Ireland and the United States are testament to the trust placed in us by young people, educators and employers alike. We're proud to be a leading careers platform for more than 4,000 schools and colleges now and over 5,000 teachers trust Springpod to help the students in their care. It's not something we take lightly and Universal Access is a guiding north star we continue to work towards.

Personalised Insights

Every student journey is unique. Over the past 12 months we've placed particular focus on improving the personalisation of pathways for our users and reporting for our clients. We've done this by increasing our insight capabilities to create a data ecosystem that's more intelligent now than it has ever been. Our data-led approach to decision-making has driven record engagement from the young people on Springpod, supporting them in pursuit of their aspirations with clarity and precision. For our partners it's a similar story. Reporting on the impact they're generating through their programmes is delivering unrivalled ROI and showcasing the effort they put in. Our 40+ university partners for example have seen more than 11,000 leads come in through the Subject Spotlights on our platform. That's thousands of young people more informed about their options and opting in to hear from these institutions about the next steps they can take to become full-time students.

Impactful Outcomes

The true measure of our success lies in the tangible outcomes our students, like Natasha Manuel who you can read more about in this report, achieve. Over the previous academic year Springpod has been focused on actually translating virtual experiences into successful career stories. Young people are using Springpod to expand their understanding of different careers and then becoming the next generation of the workforce in those industries. The apprentices on our platform have told us about how they used our virtual experiences to help secure their next steps. Our students are not just ready for the future, they're actively shaping it.



A message from our Chair, Justin Cooke

In a year marked by an increasingly uncertain economic environment, the need for equitable access to quality education and career opportunities has never been more pronounced. Young people have had a lot to be concerned about – job uncertainty, the cost of living crisis, political division, climate change, the pace of advancing AI and plenty more besides. With this in mind, life-changing careers education is no longer a ‘nice to have’ for young people – it’s a necessity for their confidence, prospects and autonomy.

Over the past 12 months, Springpod’s mission to provide this career education has gained new urgency. As we’ve navigated through this period of instability our focus remained steadfast on empowering the next generation. Their continued trust in us motivates our team to relentlessly innovate and provide them with the tools and opportunities they need to thrive. It’s going well.

More than 200,000 students enrolled onto our Virtual Work Experience programmes which translates to more than £11 million in social value created and over 2.4 million hours of pre-employment training delivered with our partners. We’ve also taken our commitment to net positivity seriously with 5,700 tonnes of carbon saved through unmade journeys by taking work experience virtual.

Partnering with the likes of Amazon on their Future Engineer initiative and JLL & Meta on bringing digital skills to the fore shows our commitment to equipping young people with the skills they need to tackle the working environment they will be stepping into over the coming years.

Deepening our connections to industry and professional bodies has been key too and we now work closely with 15 such partners to inspire young talent about these industries. We’ve also secured new investment and formed exciting strategic partnerships with the likes of UCAS and the Department for Education.

Our team, new and experienced alike, have tackled 2023 with an unwavering belief in the mission and they’ve been nothing short of outstanding. Our users have continued to place their faith in us as a platform and it’s inspiring to me to see their feedback this year in the face of major challenges. With ambitious goals in 2024, I’m nothing if not excited about the potential impact Springpod can make.



The year in review

Thanks a half million!

In October, we were proud to celebrate a huge milestone as the number of young people on the Springpod platform surpassed **500,000**. For our entire team, this was a humbling moment, the result of everyone's hard work and dedication but also the unwavering support we have received from our partners.

It also provided a brief moment to reflect and take stock. Half a million is a huge number but contained within this landmark figure are 500,000 individual success stories. These are stories of confidence boosted, knowledge increased and horizons widened for their next steps.

With exciting new partnerships developing and ever-more work and university experiences available on the platform, we look forward to 2024 taking us closer to that one million milestone.



60%
Female



44%
Ethnic minority
background



24%
Free School
Meals



One of those 500,000 is Natasha, who hopes to build her love of business & finance into a career. Virtual Work Experience has helped her to secure her next step on that journey.

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It was after my experience with Springpod I figured out I had an interest in business and finance. Getting exposure to the industry spiked an interest and since then it has grown tremendously and I'm very passionate about what I do.

Natasha Manuel, Controls and Monitoring Apprentice at Julius Baer

150 partnerships and counting



During the past 12 months, we agreed our 150th employer partnership. Within the 150, there are employers and partners across every sector ensuring that, whatever interests a student might have, there are programmes and opportunities to match. For students, the ever-growing number of partnerships guarantees a greater range of opportunity.

We create a bespoke offer for every partner, tailoring the solution to meet their objectives and provide a useful, engaging experience for students. Many of our partners have engaged with multiple cohorts of students, and we work together to hone and adapt the offering, which in itself can provide valuable insight for employers. You can see detailed case studies for many partnerships we launched in 2023, [here](#).



Met Office partners with us to inspire young people and increase their confidence, improve brand awareness and reach a diverse audience. Their programme engaged over 1,000 students – many from underrepresented groups. Find out more [here](#).

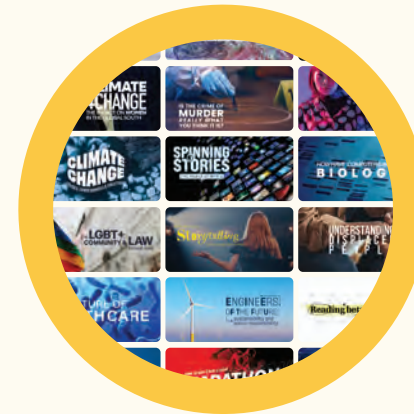
Try before you apply

We have worked with more than 40 university partners during 2023 to expand our growing higher education content library to include over 70 Subject Spotlights. Our immensely talented Studios team work with worldleading lecturers to bring students an entertaining and insightful taster of what it would be like to study at university. Students work their way through the Spotlight learning more about a specific area of the course they're viewing and get to know the lecturer. As they watch, they can choose to opt in to hear more about studying at that particular university.

The universities we partner with received interest from more than 11,000 ambitious students in 2023, generating a diverse, widespread pipeline of engaged applicants for the next 2-3 years. Those students gained understanding of what University courses would involve, a compelling addition to their personal statement.



40+
**University
partners**

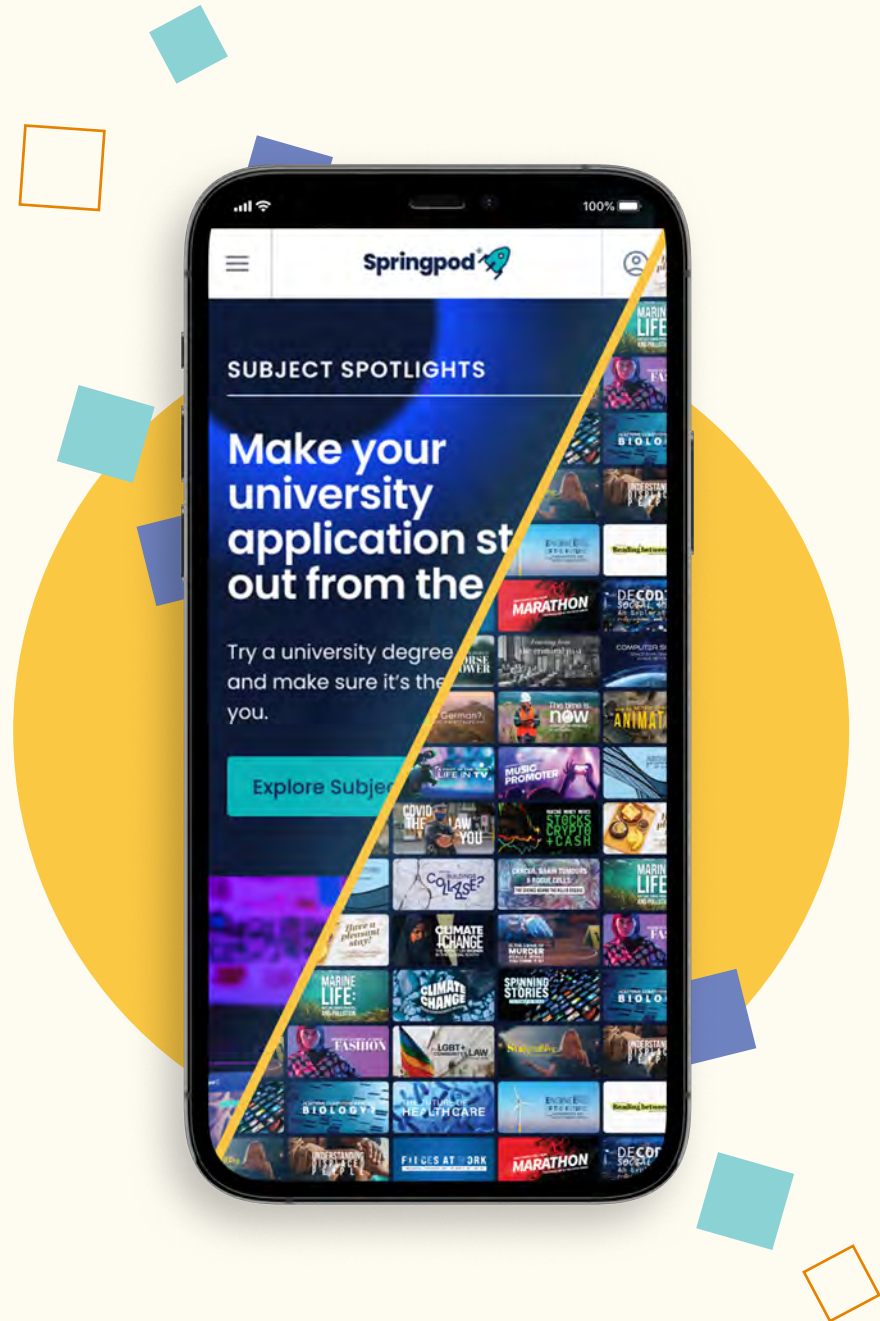


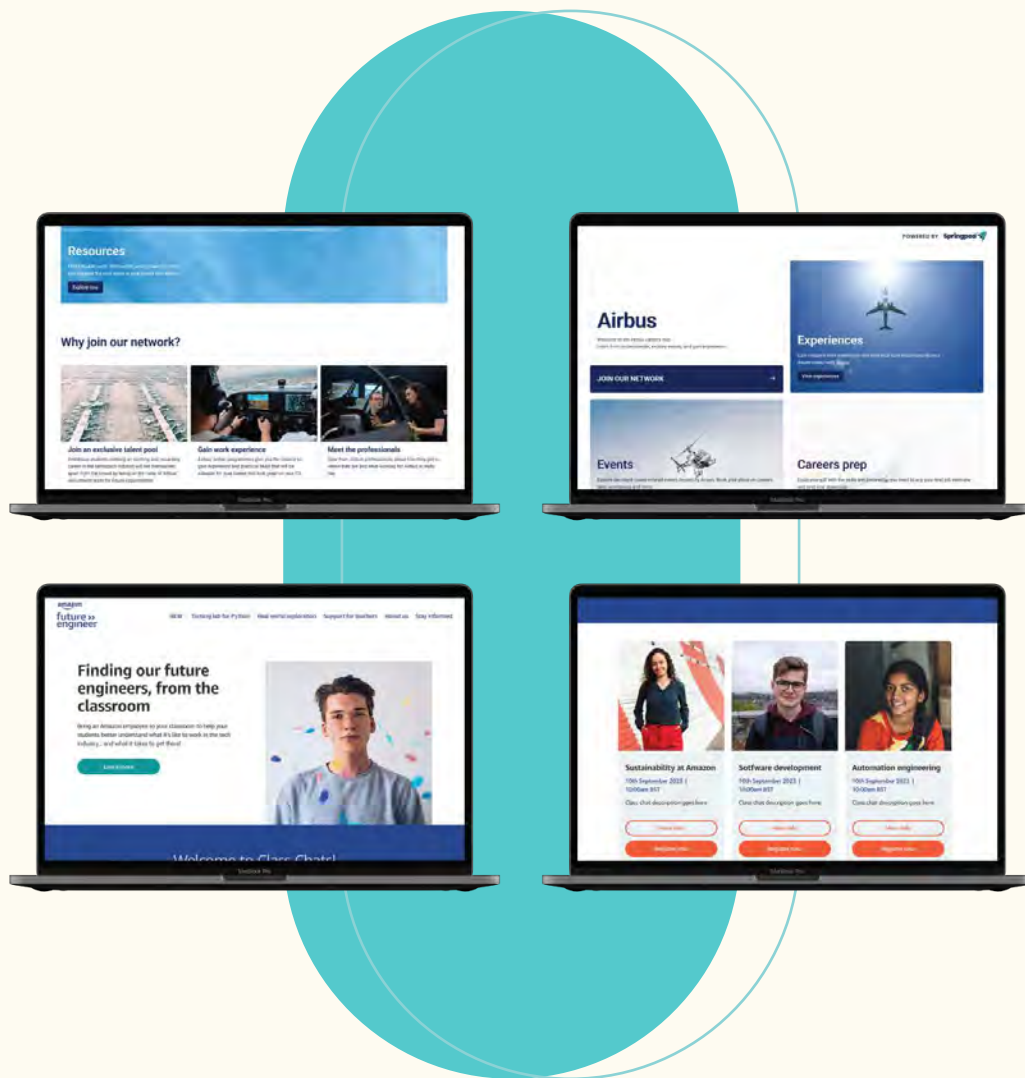
70
**Subject
Spotlights**



11,000+
**Leads
generated**

*We partnered with the **University for the Creative Arts** to deliver a taster of their innovative computer games and animation course and **UCL** saw a great level of engagement in their ever-popular pharmacy Spotlight with dozens of Springpod students going on to apply and several being made offers in this application cycle.*





Cutting edge technology

Across 2023, we continued to embrace new and emerging technology to innovate how students explore careers and university experiences.

We worked with Amazon to deliver Class Chats, available live and on-demand with topics including how companies use cloud-based solutions and exploring the validation of information provided by A.I.

Embraced by primary schools through to sixth-form colleges, the chats brought highly specialised knowledge directly into participating classrooms.

We also took our first steps into the Metaverse in 2023, with an award winning work experience programme that included virtual real estate, and partnered with Viasat to run an online competition promoting sustainability in space.

Thanks to innovative partnerships, we continue to find new ways to inspire students.

Our programme with JLL and META won "Best Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative" at the Official IWFM Awards. You can read more about it [here](#).



The professional's choice

Professional bodies provide a different type of experience for the students undertaking virtual placements. Their level of industry oversight ensures participants get a broad picture and come to understand all the roles and opportunities available within the sector as a whole.

We're delighted to now be partnered with 15 professional bodies by the end of 2023, including the likes of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), the CIPD and Health Education England. Providing greater opportunity to experience professional bodies has enabled students to find out what is required to enter an industry, rather than the specific requirements of an individual employer, influencing not only their career choices but helping to inform future course options.

Working with more professional bodies is a key aim for the next 12 months, helping a wide range of industries and professions to ensure a steady flow of new, diverse talent interested in their sector

We worked with the ICAEW, to help them enhance knowledge of the accountancy sector, bring increased brand awareness and reach groups traditionally underrepresented in the industry. At the time of publishing this programme has been shortlisted for the RAD Awards 2023 for ED&I. Check it out [here](#).

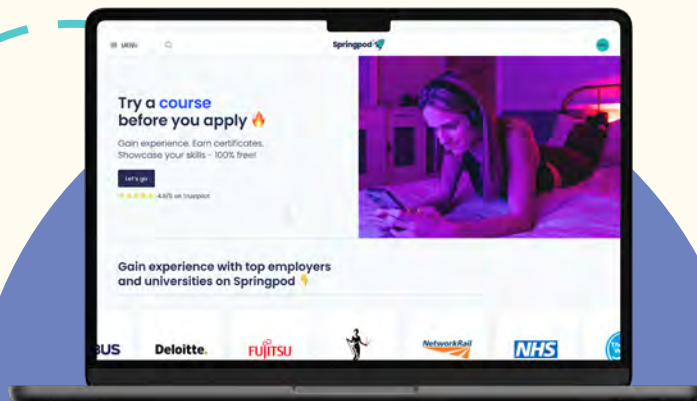


In a classroom near you

Students can use the Springpod platform regardless of whether their school or college have signed up with us. However, it is heartening to see just how many schools and colleges do encourage those in their care to use our range of services.

More than 5,000 teachers are now using our platform.

Our school's outreach team have been travelling to schools and colleges in the UK to support teachers and students directly. This dedicated group has been actively delivering workshops and resources with the aim of inspiring students to get involved in our career and university experiences and empowering teachers with the right tools they need to deliver exceptional careers education and meet the Gatsby benchmarks.



A platform for all

Our commitment is to bring opportunity to all and central to this is a requirement to redress existing imbalances. Many students find themselves excluded from work experience, university, apprenticeships and other opportunities simply because of their ethnicity, location, family's financial circumstances or legacy societal norms. One striking example is that women and girls are underrepresented in STEM roles.

By the end of 2023, 60% of students enrolled in our virtual work experience programmes were female, 44% from ethnic minorities and 24% in receipt of free school meals. Our partners are keen to reach these traditionally under represented groups and often it is one of their key objectives. The impact continues to be profound with students embracing new opportunities.

FUJITSU

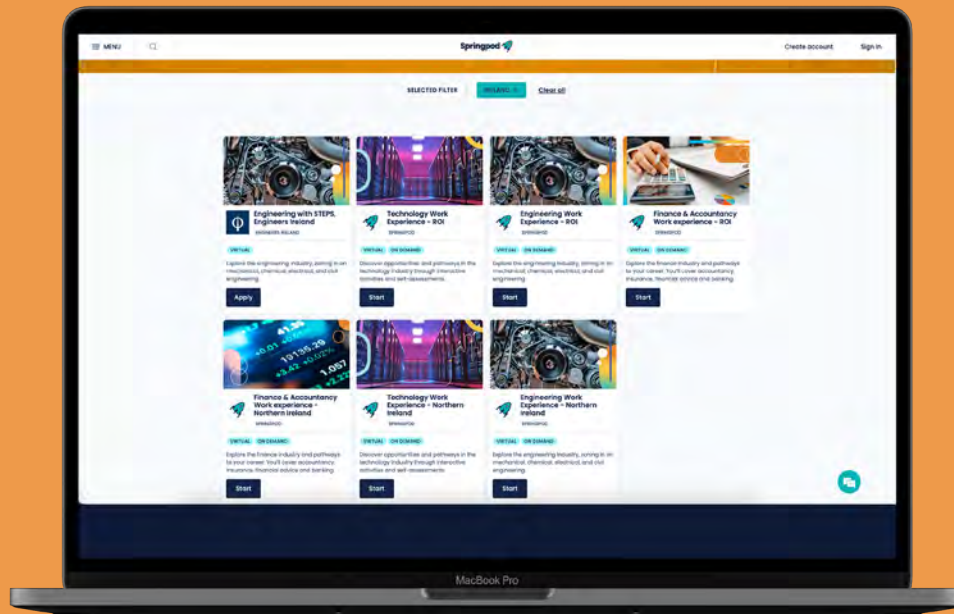
Throughout 2023, our programme in partnership with Fujitsu saw over 1,700 girls enrolled and inspired about their potential to contribute to STEM fields. The number of students feeling 'very confident' about finding a job in the future more than doubled after the programme.

A first for Ireland

During 2023 we delivered virtual work experience programmes to students in Ireland for the first time. By the end of the year, programmes were available in engineering, technology and finance & accountancy.

Our commitment to providing further opportunity to all Irish students was shown by our attendance at the Transition Year Conference where members of our team heard from careers leaders and students about their needs and wants when it comes to careers education, understanding pathways and embedding this learning into the curriculum.

We are already working on new partnerships that will benefit students from Dingle to Dublin in 2024.



Three million reasons for gratitude

In July, Springpod received significant investment of £3 million from venture capital firm Edge, enabling us to fasttrack planned developments.

Of its investment, Edge said: *"We are excited about supporting the team to achieve their mission, enabling every young person to experience a university course or career, before they apply."*

Edge's track record for backing innovative start-ups and demonstrating a commitment to driving social mobility perfectly matches our ambition.

Of the investment, Springpod CEO Sam Hyams said: *"We are excited to scale our impact together from the hundreds of thousands of young people we have supported to date, to millions."*

In Rhodes to the United States

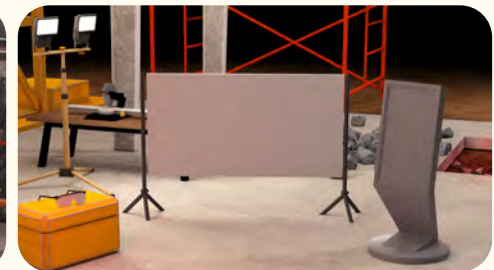
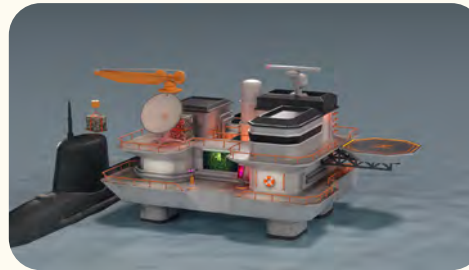
Buoyed by our impact in the United Kingdom, we expanded our global reach in 2023 by introducing new experiences for students in the United States.

The US shares many of the challenges we have worked to counter in the UK, including careers and opportunities where there are huge barriers to entry and a general lack of accessible, meaningful careers experience. The size and population of the US mean many issues are amplified.

We launched a product tailored specifically for students in Rhode Island, a three-dimensional environment where participants could explore six fascinating career options: construction & trades, business & finance, biomedicine, defence & maritime, cyber & data and manufacturing.

We apply learnings from the UK and US to continually enhance our platform for all students. Rhode Island is just the start of our ambitions for activity in the US and we're very excited to see how many young people we can impact across the pond in 2024.

Check out a taster of the 3D environment we've built for students in Rhode Island [here](#).

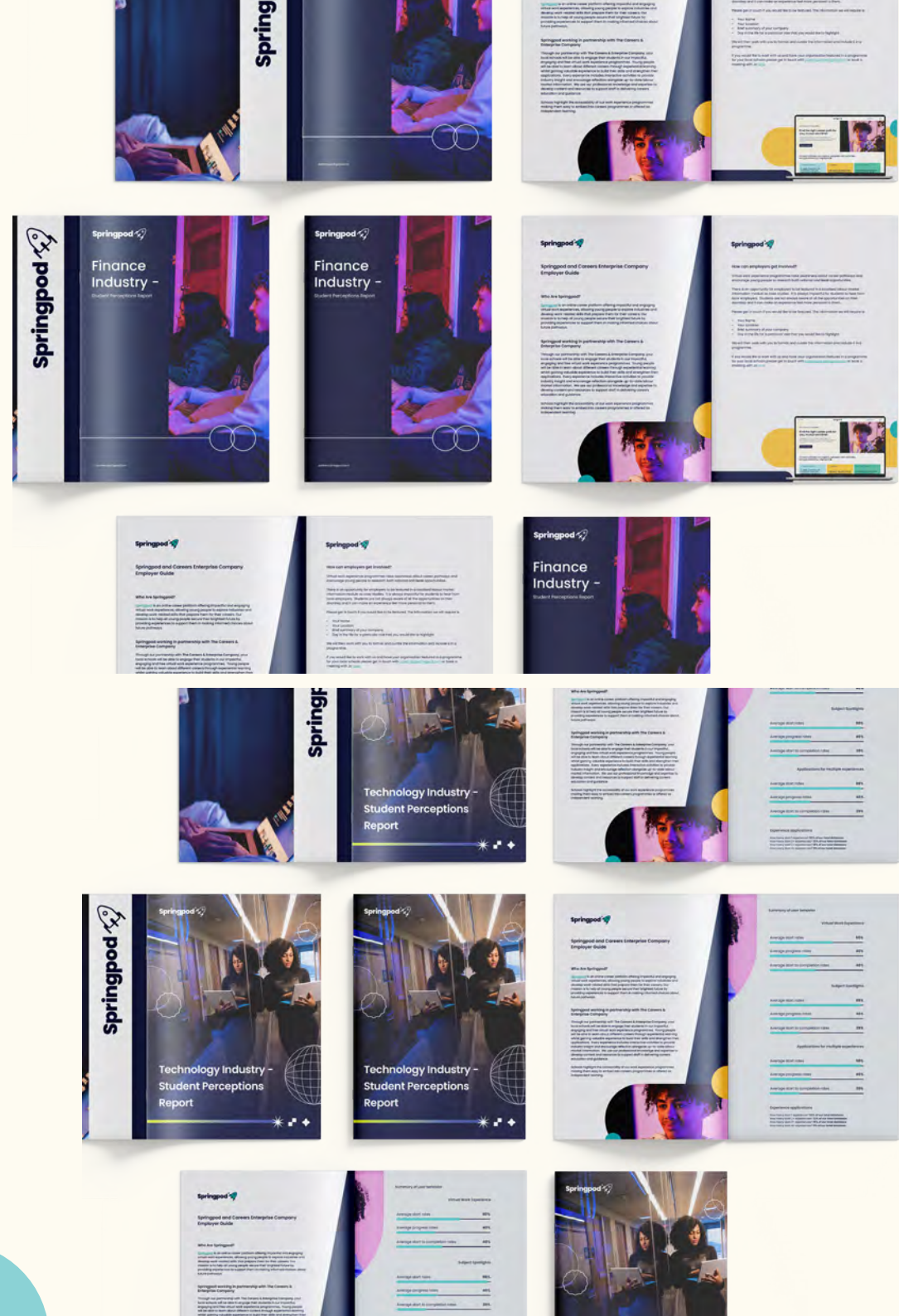


Thought provoking insight

With data from hundreds of thousands of students interacting with hundreds of employers, industries and universities we are uniquely positioned to offer insights that can shape the future of opportunity.

We were proud to publish two far-reaching reports in 2023 on student perceptions of the finance and technology industries. In the finance report we learned that over half of young people think gender affects someone's chance of success in the industry and 62% of respondents consider work experience very important. Hundreds of participants struggled to name a single job title they'd heard of in the financial sector suggesting a lack of close role models for many and a general educational void that needs to be filled. If you'd like to read the full report click [here](#).

The technology insights included that 58% of students felt an apprenticeship was the best way into the industry but there was a near universal desire for greater guidance on the ins and outs of building a career in tech. Interestingly, some of the biggest brands in the space like IBM, Oracle and Cisco were unknown to more than 60% of participants. View the rest of the insights [here](#).



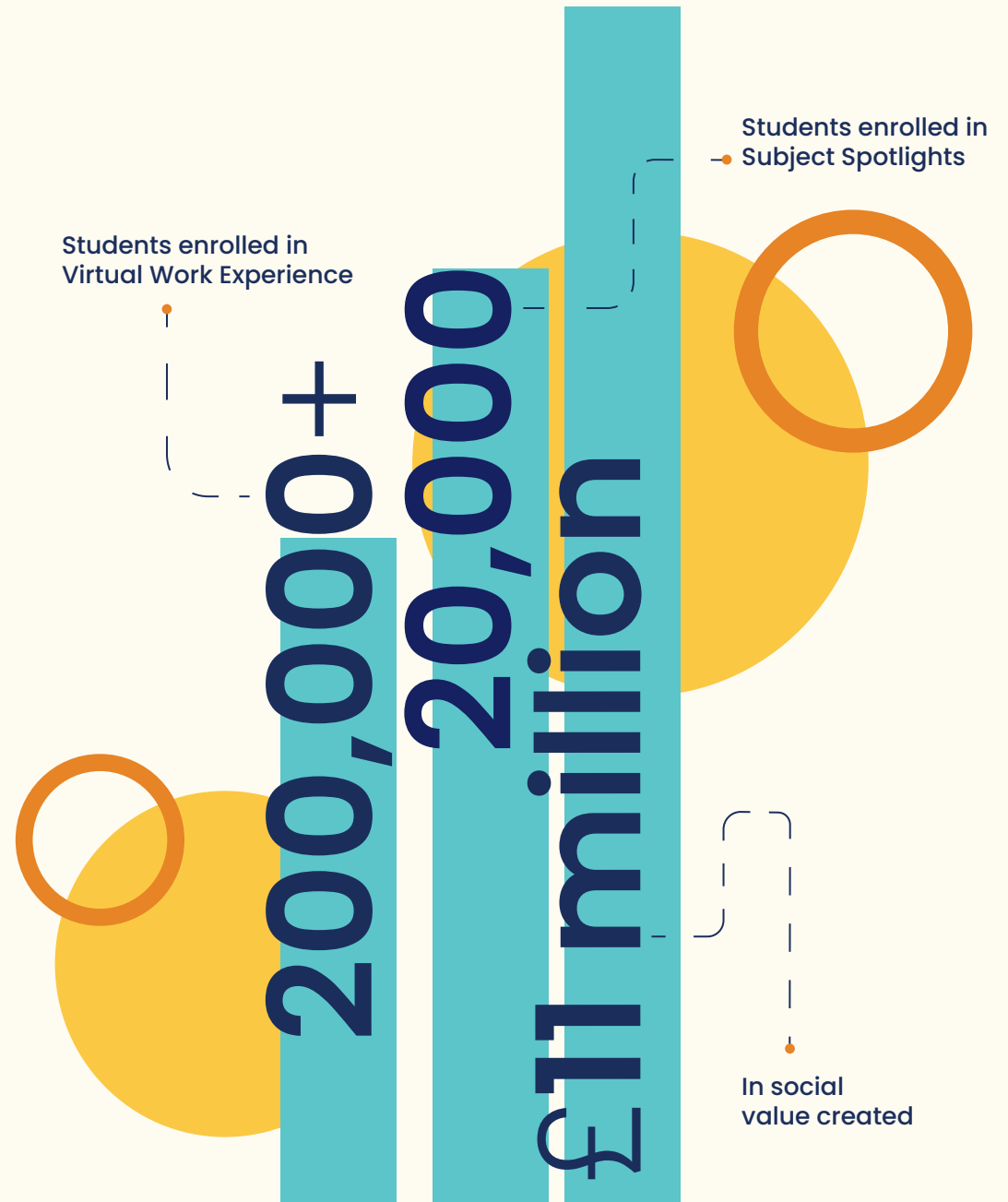
Social Impact

Springpod's social impact in 2023 involves some pretty big numbers. In fact the numbers are huge, Springpod's growth during the past 12 months has ensured that our positive social impact in 2023 eclipsed that seen in previous years.

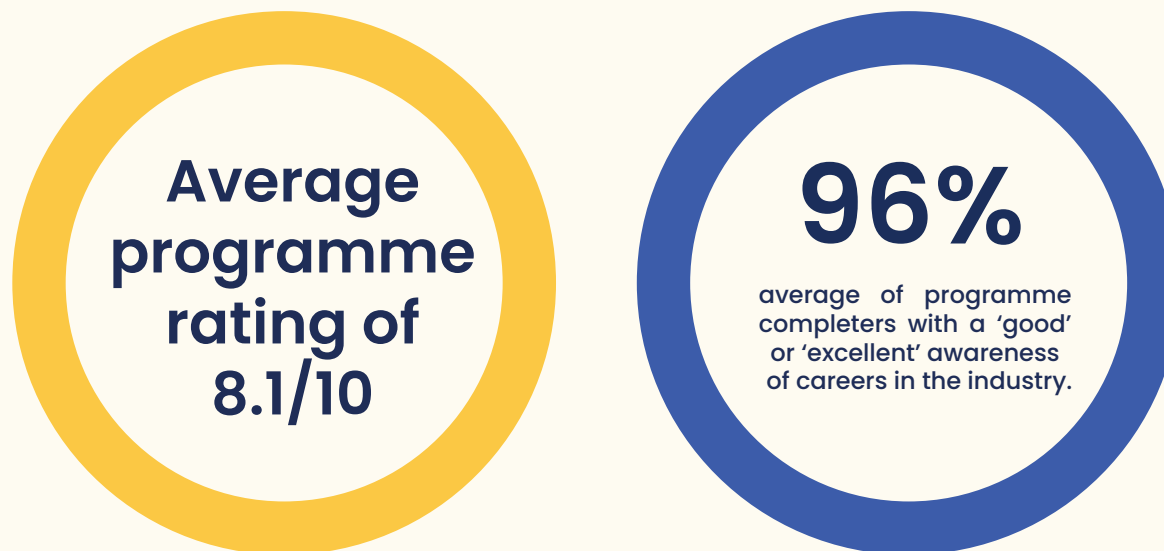
In the past year we've seen more than 200,000 students enrolled onto our Virtual Work Experience programmes and over 20,000 enrolled on Subject Spotlights.

This translates to more than £11 million in social value created and over 2.4 million hours of pre-employment training delivered with our partners.

We have also made a positive contribution to the environment, with 5,700 tonnes of carbon saved through unmade journeys by taking work experience virtually.



Building awareness – and confidence



Before each experience we ask students about their awareness of careers in the industry and their confidence in finding future employment. We often find that students have low awareness of potential careers and lack career confidence in general.

When we ask them again at the end of the programme we see nearly **3x as many students saying they are 'very confident' about finding a job in the future and more than 2x as many with a 'good' or 'excellent' awareness of careers in that industry.**

From the 752 students who undertook the Thames Water programme, an impressive 89% finished saying they felt confident about finding a job in future. Learn more about the programme [here](#).





Some context

Context can be hard to spot among the big headline figures.

Our social impact can be viewed through the lens of helping organisations work towards their corporate social responsibility targets which includes plugging skills gaps, reaching under represented groups and spreading accessible education.

In the UK, around a quarter of STEM roles are held by women, yet in collaboration with employers in this sector we have run programmes where the cohort has radically redressed this traditional imbalance. In a virtual work experience created for Thames Water, with a focus on STEM opportunities, 57% of those enrolled were female. A programme created for the Institution of Civil Engineers was delivered to a cohort that was 46% female and 72% from ethnic minority backgrounds, further increasing opportunities for under-represented groups in a key profession.

Similarly, we have worked with partners to reach traditionally underrepresented groups in society. Investec is a leader in wealth management and one of just 8% of FTSE 250 companies to have a female CEO. We helped them to engage with students who would traditionally have little opportunity to gain early experience of careers in banking. Their work experience cohort was 49% female, with 58% from ethnic minority backgrounds and 48% receiving free school meals. On completing the programme, 89% spoke of being eager to work with Investec.

A really striking example was the award-winning work experience programme we created for JLL and Meta which gave fascinating insights into property management and digital assets in the metaverse. They inspired a group of students that was 62% female and 76% from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Practise what you preach

Helping and advising organisations on best practice when it comes to reaching, engaging and impacting young people is what we do and so of course it's important for us to follow our own advice!

In July we had the pleasure of hosting some fantastic students from Harris Academy Bermondsey on work experience. Their insight and product feedback was incredibly useful but they also gained great insight into roles including marketing, content writing and tech. They met our US interns (more on that in a second) and finished the week presenting to the whole team. It was an absolute pleasure and an exciting step for our business to give back to the local community near our London office.

This summer, we were also very fortunate to welcome a group of exceptionally talented interns from various schools across Rhode Island, United States. For six weeks, these

interns played a pivotal role in projects critical to our US expansion. Their involvement ranged from refining our product offerings to effectively engaging with key stakeholders—senators, members of Congress, mayors, superintendents, and other significant figures in the state.

Much like their compatriots in the UK, what set this experience apart was the interns' ability to provide fresh, insightful feedback, directly influencing our approach to resonate more deeply with our target audience – in this case in the United States. Their diverse backgrounds brought a wealth of different perspectives, thoughts, and opinions, significantly enriching our team dynamics.

The diversity within this group not only fostered a more creative and inclusive environment but also demonstrated the substantial benefits of having varied viewpoints in tackling complex challenges. They have been instrumental in driving our mission forward.





I strongly believe that Springpod will increase the success rate in college and this tool will shine so much positive light in high schools. Showing students that going into college doesn't have to be as blind as they think. Understanding what your career interest really entails and knowing truly if it's something you really want to do will help so many young people. I know that if I didn't have this I would be just as lost as I was before. Not knowing if graphic design was truly what I wanted to do. But anytime we were given a task where I could use my creativity I would just light up. It was less of a task and more fun for me. I felt like I was really doing something that showed me what I need to do with my life. If this tool was given to me last year or when I got into college I could have found that this was my passion sooner than later.

– Coryn Pike, US Intern

The Future The Future The Future

Springpod® 



The Future

Statement from Andy Dillow, COO

It's not often that the entire Springpod team gets to come together, but back in September everyone met up in our new Liverpool office for a day of strategy planning to ensure we hit the ground running in 2024. I've been part of Springpod since July and the Liverpool meet up was a fantastic chance to get to know the entire team on a personal level.

Amongst everything we discussed are some very exciting strategic partnerships that will help us further our mission in 2024.





As we push forward with our mission to help young people to select and secure their brightest future, it's crucial that we provide access to as many students as possible wherever they are in the world.

Needless to say, we're delighted to be partnering with UCAS to embed our experiential learning content into the university application journey for every student that wishes to pursue higher education in the UK and beyond. From the first students we saw referencing Subject Spotlights on their personal statement, to soon having Springpod experiences be made synonymous with the application process, our university solutions have come a long way in a short period of time.

The future is bright and we're very excited to see the impact of this partnership.

Watch this space.



Department
for Education

We differentiate our offering by providing universal access, personalised pathways and impactful outcomes to make sure our platform caters to all student needs. While we're making huge strides in higher education, there are many other options for young people today, so we continue to drive to become the most reliable source of knowledge and experience when it comes to all learning and career pathways like apprenticeships, T-levels, HTQs or even going straight into work.

That's why we're partnering with the Department for Education on Get The Jump – a series of post-16 courses for young people to find out more about every pathway available to them. It's been a treat to see our immensely talented content team work to turn these briefs into such a diverse range of exploratory courses.

[Skills for Life](#) launched in Jan 2024 and I'm eager to see the impact it has on young people nationwide.

Industry trends – what to look out for

Springpod is in a unique position. With the number of student users in our audience and their willingness to inform us about their needs, wants, hopes and fears when it comes to careers and education, we can speak with authority on the trends we see developing and the ongoing relevance of virtual learning experiences in 2024 and beyond.



The demand for accessibility

Let's zoom out for a moment. It might surprise you to know that 2.2 billion young people under 25 do not have access to the internet at home. The disparity in accessibility has been termed the 'digital divide' so says the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 'It means that they are being left behind, unable to access education and training, or news and information that can help protect their health, safety and rights.'

We don't shy away from a big challenge at Springpod and we're keen to think universal when it comes to accessibility. We can't get every home online by the end of next year but what we can continue to focus on in 2024 is implementing principles that enable free, accessible education to permeate as far and wide as possible.

The digital curriculum

One way to help achieve this is to ensure schools are better able to support those learners who don't have access at home and that local libraries, youth clubs and other facilities too are able to support our virtual learning platform. Making it as easy as possible for teachers to embed Springpod into the curriculum is essential and will be a focus for us over the next 12 months.

With our expansion into the United States already underway we've gauged some of the troubles in careers education there and tackling those will be one of our big challenges for

the future. Even in the US nearly one in five college graduates reported that their education experience did not provide them with the skills needed to perform their first post-degree job and more than half feel unqualified for an entry-level role.

It'll be news to no one that employability and digital skills are useful, but the context provided by those damning statistics shows us that career-readiness and digital literacy have a long way to go even in countries that we tend to consider more 'developed'. We'll be using all we've learned so far in Springpod's journey to deliver this education in regions where it's badly needed.

Hybrid working

Building on the theme of the importance of digital literacy, even as many countries shake off pandemic behaviours, it seems the genie is out of the bottle when it comes to remote and hybrid working. The shift to this model has been rapid and widespread, necessitating a new set of digital skills and adaptive working methods that young people absolutely need in order to be competitive and successful when they take their first steps into work.



Remarkably, this internship taught me valuable lessons about office dynamics and cultivating professionalism. I gained insights into actual life experiences and the mechanics of higher education. It equipped me with the skills needed to navigate life after high school and college. Among the numerous lessons, the most pivotal was learning effective teamwork. Contrary to my previous inclination to work independently, particularly during my schooling years, I surprisingly found collaboration with my peers enjoyable.

– Alexander Gonzalez



That's our wrap up of the previous 12 months and where we're looking to make a difference in 2024 and beyond. We're excited to see where this journey of democratising careers education takes us and if you'd like to get involved we'd love to hear from you.

partners@springpod.com

