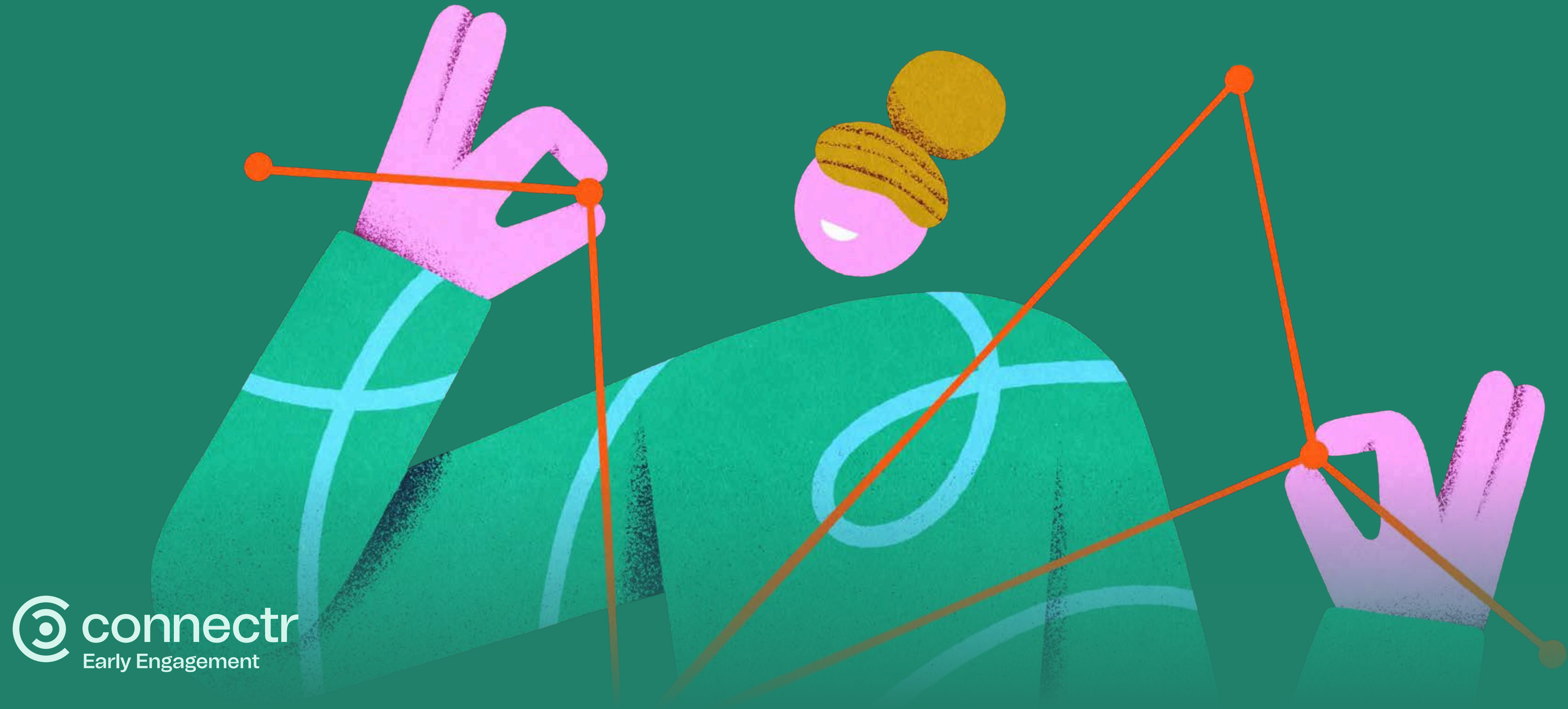


Connectr Early Engagement: Our Impact: 2024–2025 Academic Year



This year has been an incredible whirlwind!

It's impossible to summarise everything, so here are some of the highlights...



Working with our employer and educator partners this year has continued to deliver excellent outcomes for young people across the UK, and we can't wait to see what the next academic year brings.

Rachel Morar, Hannah Weston and Charlotte Dudley,
Connectr Early Engagement Senior Leadership Team

Scalable, multi-employer work experience is going from strength to strength. Discover Finance's first year delivered a visible impact, including hires. The next academic year will see tech sector collaborative on work experience, driven forward by Cisco.

Higher conversion to career 'next steps'. We're moving more students into career pathways, with follow-on support delivering trackable impact across projects.

Future-proofing tomorrow's talent. We're helping corporates, young people and educators navigate what being 'work ready' looks like in an AI-enabled world.


Strategic research projects including...

UK Atomic Energy Authority. We collaborated to map the current STEM provision across Oxfordshire, identifying impact, overlaps and gaps.

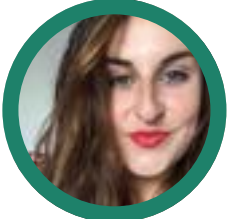
Grain partnership. Creating benchmarking data to enable Grain to assess the social impact of their activities.

Compiling impact reports with Aon and for Discover Finance.


Follow us on LinkedIn



Rachel Morar



Hannah Grace Weston



Charlotte Dudley

Don't just take our word for it....

It's impossible to summarise everything, so here are some of the highlights...

"I came into this work experience, not to see whether I really want to do finance but to see what it would take to get into a career like this. I've met lots of people from different companies, it's been great for networking. I've learnt that the opportunities are very diverse and speaking to Tom, the CEO at Phoenix, I've learnt that you don't necessarily need a background in finance to follow a career in the sector."

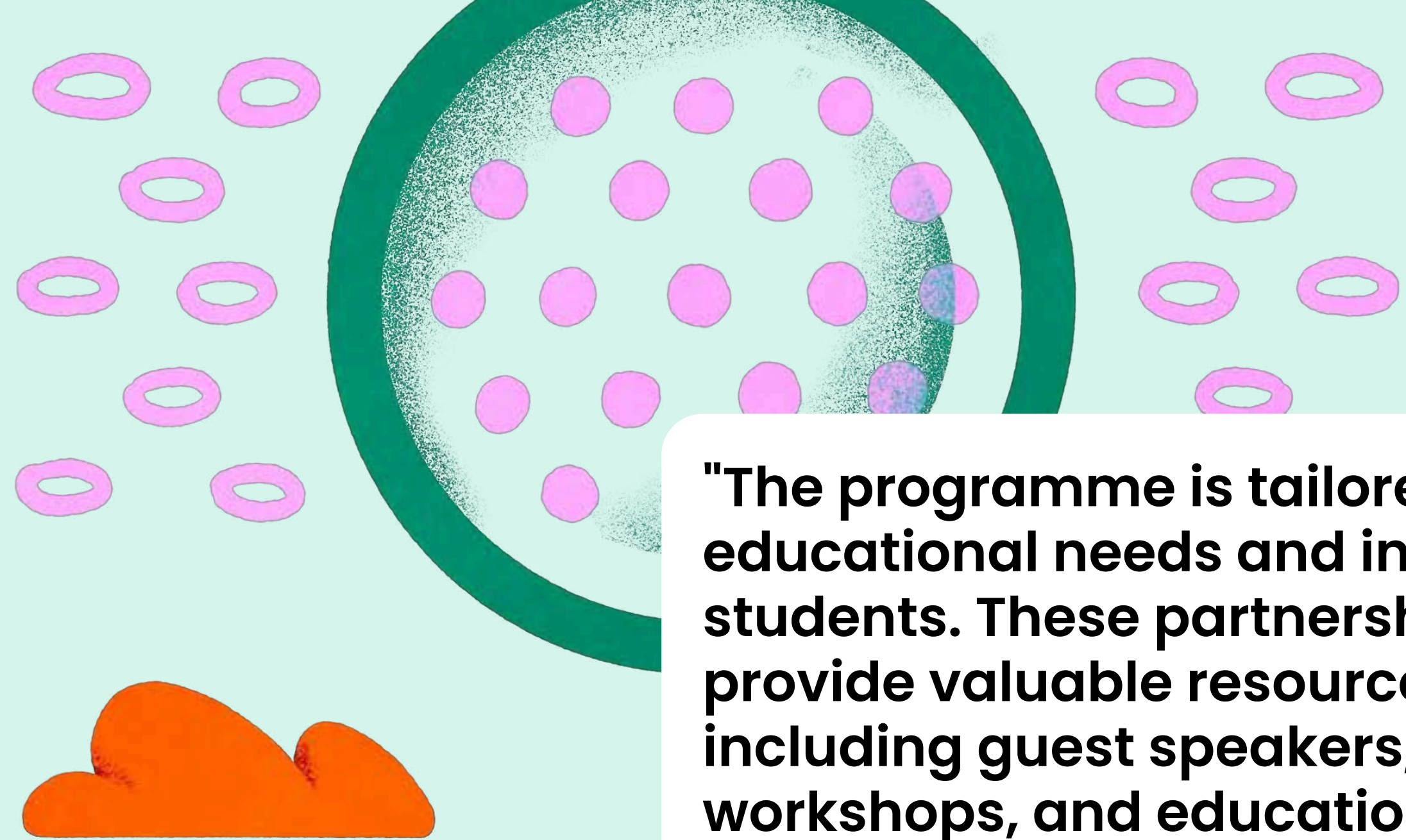
Syed Zaman,
Discover Finance Student,
London, July 2025

"We knew we wanted to do something ambitious at Aon to boost social mobility, so we worked with Connectr Early Engagement to collaboratively build out a solution we'd have confidence in. Together our partnership delivers big impact – and at scale."

Phil Sartain,
Early Careers TA Leader,
EMEA, Aon

"The programme is tailored to the educational needs and interests of students. These partnerships provide valuable resources, including guest speakers, workshops, and educational materials that complement the curriculum. The programme has provided our students with invaluable insight into the energy sector, showcasing potential career pathways that they may not have considered. It has inspired them to think beyond traditional career routes and understand the variety of roles available within a leading organization like National Grid."

Wakib Ullah, Business Studies Teacher at Royal Greenwich Trust School, an LPT 2 Partner School



A valuable direct feedback loop – long-term teacher relationships

Our Teacher Advisory Board (TAB) is a group of teachers from across the UK who share insights, feedback and best practices to engage students and schools in careers education. The regular focused advisory sessions are attended by us, the TAB board and one of our employer partners.



Informing organisations

TAB input tells us and our clients what schools and young people need from work experience and careers education.

We've explored themes including:

What does meaningful work experience look like?

How can we help young people to build work-ready skills?

What are teacher and student perceptions of AI?

They act as a 'reality check', helping us ensure our programmes respond to student needs.

Supporting educators

TAB members get a true insight into the jobs market, helping them provide more meaningful careers advice. The TAB network provides a forum for careers advisors to connect with counterparts in other settings, helping add value to this profession.

TAB members can engage in the projects we run with employer partners. This helps them:

Connect directly with local employers and employer events

Share employer insights with students

Give students more opportunities to learn about the workplace and potential career opportunities.

We've worked with Cisco to launch Discover Tech

Building on a 10-year partnership with Cisco, we've collaborated to address a persistent challenge: diverse young talent lacks access to work experience despite companies like Cisco's best efforts, with just 28% of young people in the UK having had work experience, compared to 78% in Switzerland (ISE research 2025).



The solution

Cisco's ambition is to bring the tech sector together to deliver work experience at scale. Introducing Discover Tech: our new sector-wide programme giving work experience opportunities to young people from underrepresented backgrounds.



7k

We're aiming for 7,000 young people to take part

4

Four cities – London, Manchester, Birmingham & Glasgow

100

100-person pilot launches in February 2026

600

A further 600 people will take part next July in London & Manchester



Interested in taking part? Email rachel@connectr.com

With generous support from:

BBC

accenture

HIGHPOINT

Adobe

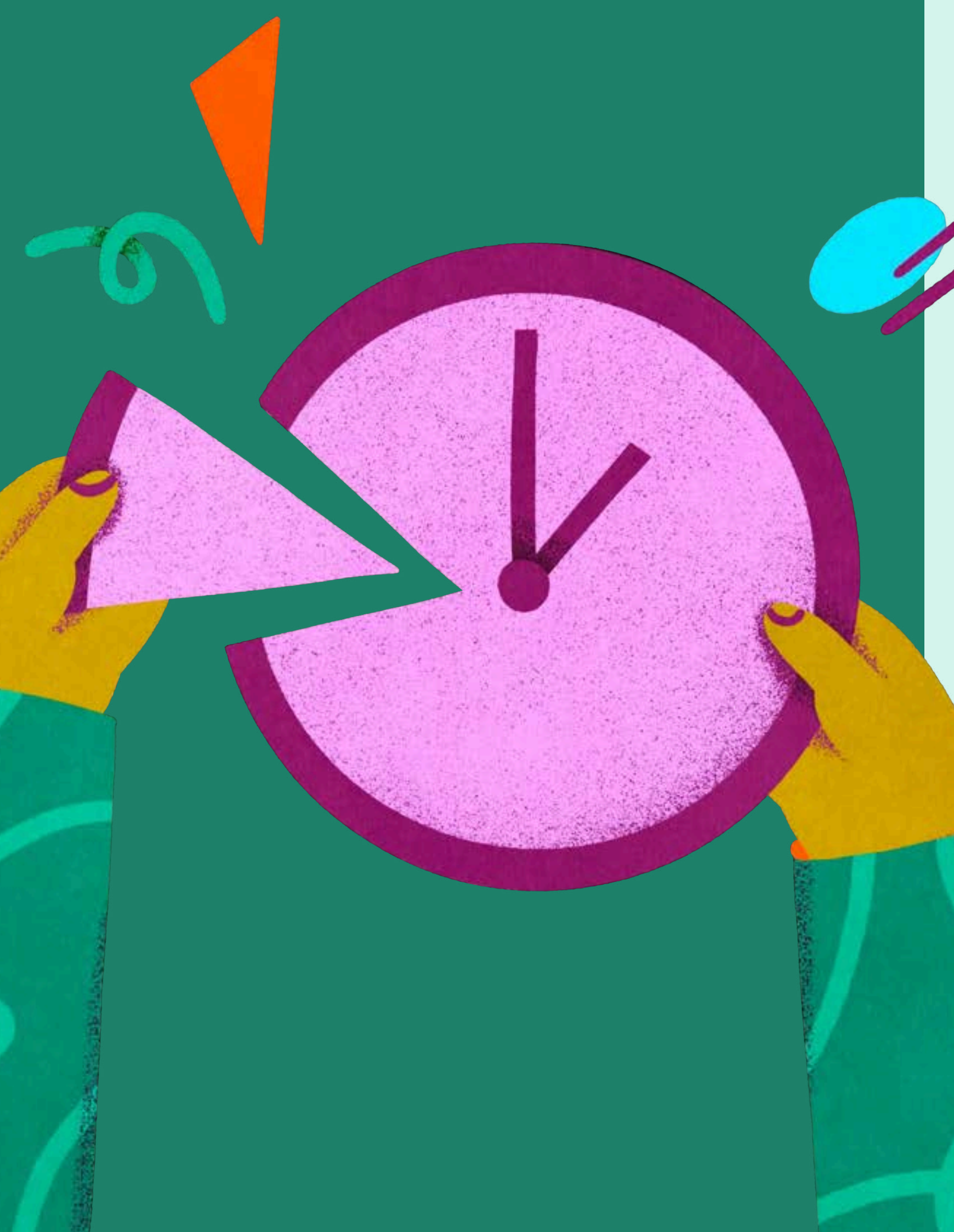
World Wide Technology

CDW

softcat

techUK

That's a wrap:
2024-25
academic year



3,975

Together with our employer partners, we've reached 3,975 students through live activity.

Gender

Gender	Percentage
Female	51%
Male	46%
Other	2%
Non-binary / Transgender	1%

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Percentage
White	28%
Black/Black British	26%
Asian/Asian British	24%
Mixed heritage	9%
Other heritage	8%
Prefer not to say	5%

We've supported teachers to deliver to careers and skills workshops to an additional 31,320 young people through resources.

31,320

Bringing our community together

Meaningful human connections are core to our mission. They provide a vital space to share ideas, challenges and solutions.

Highlights

- ISE Apprentice Conference panel session.
- Attending the ISE Recruitment Conference.
- City of London Discover Finance event.
- Discover Finance lunch.
- Volunteering with our employer partners at a local primary school.
- Networking at DF Edinburgh.
- Cisco Discover Tech stakeholder roundtables.

And the award goes too....

Working in partnership with our employer partners, we've been recognized for our work:

Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Initiative of the Year (winners), Utility Week Awards 2024 – National Grid

Diversity and Inclusion Excellence (winners), Insurance Times Awards 2024 – Aon

Best Educational Programme (Bronze), Corporate Engagement Awards 2025 – National Grid

Pre-Recruitment Programme of the Year (winners), UK Social Mobility Awards 2025 – Aon

In the press

The Times article 'Pensions sector seeks Gen Z talent' saw Phoenix Group CPO Sara Thompson quoted talking about Discover Finance: "Young people are our future customers so it's essential for us to embrace them into our workforce and challenge us with their fresh thinking. The greater diversity we can achieve in our workforce, the better we can represent our customer base."

Aon's contribution to building a diverse talent pipeline, featured in Insurance Business magazine: Aon's UK work experience initiative reaches more than 1,500 students



Aon Insurance Awards Winners

We're Connectr Early Engagement

We're here to shift the dial on social mobility by connecting employers with young people, schools and colleges.

We plan and deliver school and college engagement programmes that empower disadvantaged young people, by giving them the career skills, tools and inspiration they need to shape their future and succeed.

We support employers to inspire the next generation of talent, support their local communities and to build local, diverse pipelines for their early careers roles.



Our team

Cross-sector collaboration providing bigger social impact together

Discover Finance is a financial services collaboration that tackles social mobility.

This 2-3 day rotational work experience programme gives students from diverse backgrounds first-hand experience inside top finance firms. It's a valuable chance to connect with professionals and explore the breadth of roles and career paths within the industry.

Y1 highlights

We've hosted over 200 students across six rotations in four locations, with seven firms.

5 x Discover Finance West Midlands attendees progressed to interview for an apprenticeship with host company LGPS Central – and 1 candidate has now started in role!

Y1 impact by location

Cardiff: 96% of attendees said Discover Finance developed their understanding of different types of careers which they was not aware of before.

West Midlands: 100% of attendees said Discover Finance made them feel clearer about their future options.

Edinburgh: 54% of students identified as female.

London: 92% of students met at least two of the social mobility eligibility criteria.

Discover Finance will continue in 2025/2026 across Cardiff, London, Leeds, West Midlands and Edinburgh – with more locations to be confirmed.

Interested in taking part?
Email charlotte@connectr.com

With thanks to industry support from:

 Phoenix

 AON

 Legal & General

 ABI

 LGPS Central Limited

 CITY OF LONDON



 Principality
Building Society
Cymdeithas Adeiladu

Inspiring younger children to think big

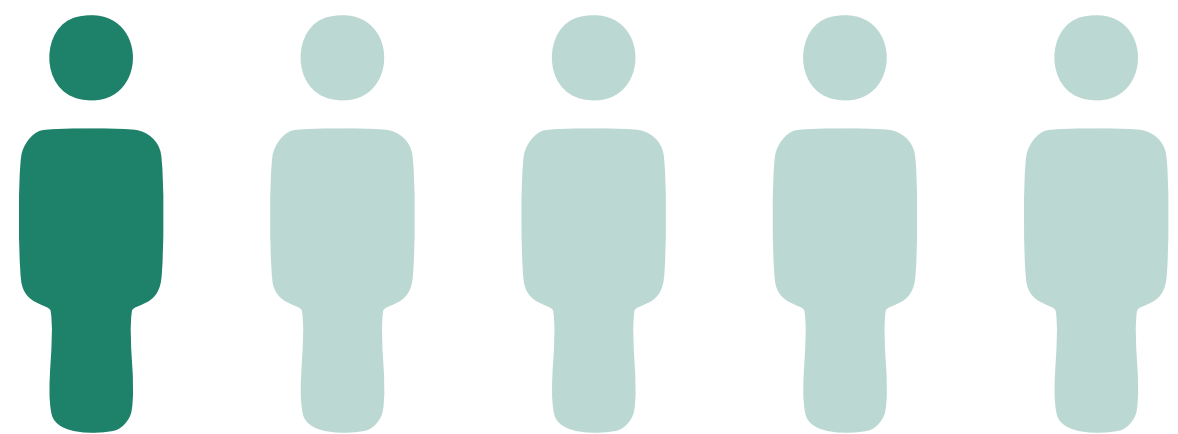
Spotlight on Primary careers engagement

Every Social Mobility Day, we gather our networks and support a school near the Connectr offices. This year, we visited a Primary school; they're often overlooked in careers discussions but can play an important role in raising aspirations.

Students had a wild time guessing our volunteers' jobs: accountants became bank robbers, advertisers became bouncers, and one engineer became Leonardo DiCaprio from Titanic. The creativity and enthusiasm reinforced just how important it is to engage younger children.



Looking to the future



From this year's Educator Pulse Survey, just 1 in 5 teachers said they feel confident talking to students about the skills needed in an AI-driven workplace.

There's never a dull moment at Connectr Early Engagement. As well as continuing to support our partners' excellent work and connecting educators and employers, we're cooking up some exciting new programmes that address two hot topics for young people and those who support them: entrepreneurship and AI-readiness.

We're partnering with big industry names. Our entrepreneurship programme supports students considering an entrepreneurial route post-education. The AI-readiness programme addresses the gaping hole in AI literacy within education, heightened in schools serving low-income communities.

Want to know more?
charlotte@connectr.com