

Connectr Early Engagement: Our Impact: 2025–2026 Academic Year



An exciting time full of challenge and opportunity

1,400+

young people took part in Connectr Early Engagement managed work experience events in July alone.



While NEETs may be at their highest level in a decade, it's encouraging to see such a focus across government and industry to address this – we've seen first-hand how ambitious firms are at scaling their offerings, with 1,400+ young people taking part in Connectr Early Engagement managed work experience events in July alone.

We're proud to support students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, levelling the playing field and helping prevent them from becoming NEET. We're keen to use the current momentum to support you in your work with this population and deliver on the government's ambitions. This goes beyond secondary school and 6th form interventions – primary careers engagement is a valuable way to raise aspirations and begin careers conversations early – our annual primary volunteering day is a great example of how easy it is to make a difference. If you'd like to join in next year, let us know!

And some shout-outs...

... for all those who roll up their sleeves and get involved. We couldn't mention everyone, but whether you're an educator or employer, we definitely couldn't do it without you. And let's hear it for our hard-working team who are relentless in making sure young people get the vital career interventions they need to transition from education to employment. Thank you to you all.

Want to get involved?

If you're not already involved in our work but would like to be, or you're curious about further opportunities for you or your team, let us know! Get in touch with your Connectr Early Engagement contact or Rachel Morar, and they'll be thrilled to help.

Our year in numbers

This academic year, you collectively helped us reach...

4,245

students with in-person events.



43.2%

identified as female

71.1%

identified as from a minority ethnic background

~1 in 10

disclosed a disability

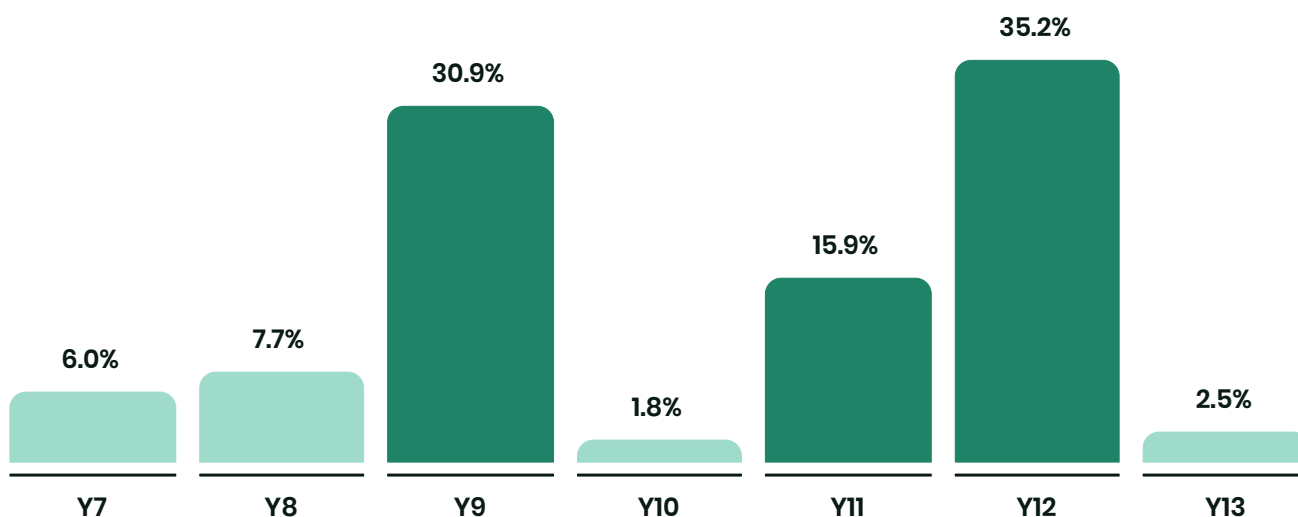
46.2%

were, or had previously been, eligible for Free School Meals

38%

of year 12 and 13 students were eligible for a sixth form bursary

Students by year group



Events + expert facilitators = learnings that stick



Average event score

8.1/10

based on how much students would recommend the event to others – with 85% giving a score of at least 7.

91%

found those delivering events helpful and engaging

85%

developed their understanding of careers they weren't aware of before

Essential career skills nurtured

Which skills did students develop at their event?



Deciding their next steps

After their event, students told us they...

69%

felt clearer about their future options



73%

were more likely to pursue a career in the sector



64%

were more likely to consider a career at the host company



Meet the changemakers

As a social enterprise, our programmes succeed thanks to the focused, passionate leaders who throw themselves at these opportunities. Here are some of those people:



Kathryn Baddeley



Created Discover Tech, a way to supercharge work experience capacity in the digital and tech sectors.

Discover Tech led to speaking opportunities on our ISE panel and HR World panel



Phil Sartain



Supersized Discover Finance to a 260-student event at Mansion House, creating our first ever 'City Edition' event.

Shortlisted as Early Talent Changemaker of the Year at this year's ISE Awards



Helen Alkin



Restructured BDO's approach to pipelining by creating a multi-touchpoint journey for young people from KS3 upwards.



Dr Stuart Hill



Created a hyper-local programme to build their talent pipeline and established a mutually beneficial partnership with a local SEND school.



Alison Walker



Launched Trustworthy AI in Education – a Deloitte/TeachFirst collaboration giving teachers much-needed skills for getting better value from AI tools.



James Harper



Has consistently supported Discover Finance since its inception and championed Discover Finance Wales, expanding the programme year on year.

Our 2025–26 employer partners



Collaboration, everywhere

Collaboration has been at the core of everything we've done this year – most visibly with the firms who took part in Discover Finance and Discover Tech programmes. But did you know we've also been busy aligning with the government and skills bodies to help build young people's skills?

Discover Tech is supported by TechFirst, the government's flagship tech skills programme opening pathways into the sector.

TechFirst

Members of **The Careers and Enterprise Company** team spoke at our events, outlining how our programmes align with Equalex.

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

“Be resilient. There is nothing wrong with failure... let's get up and try again”

The Rt Hon The Lady Mayor of London Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley DBE, who hosted students alongside Aon for Discover Finance: City Edition at Mansion House.



Spreading the message, sharing the opportunities

There's no time to rest easy! When we're not busy implementing programmes, we're spreading the word with events and award nominations.

ISE Award finalist

Discover Finance for 'Collaboration for Impact in Early Talent' at the ISE Awards 2026.

Discover Finance May Roundtable

Focused on the impact of AI on early careers hiring. Generously hosted at BDO in Birmingham, with Phil Sartain from Aon and attended by multiple finance firms.

Mansion House senior leaders breakfast

Hosted by Aon and The Rt Hon The Lady Mayor of London Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley DBE, alongside hosting 260 students at Discover Finance: City Edition.

ISE Student Recruitment Conference workshop

Facilitated by Charlotte Dudley (Connectr Early Engagement) with Kathryn Baddeley (Cisco), Erica Chamberlain (Careers and Enterprise Company) and Jane Baker (BDO).

HR World Webinar

Chaired by Simon Reichwald (Untapped Talent) with Kathryn Baddeley (Cisco), Marnie Bourne (Careers and Enterprise Company) and Kate Hawthorne (FDM Group).



Want to know more?
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