



FORM THE FUTURE

# IMPACT REPORT

2023 - 2024

# FOREWORD

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Whoever you are and whatever your background, we are committed to ensuring there's no limit to where your talents and hard work can take you. That starts with connecting young people with inspirational adults. Our network of schools and employers has grown again this year, topping 30,000 young people for the first time.

We've built strong new partnerships with PA Consulting, Railpen and Illumina, and have reconnected with Qualcomm. We continue to work with industry to improve our organisation, including PwC Emerging Leaders and We Make Change. Membership of Social Value UK will help us to establish new ways of measuring our impact.

We were proud to win the contract to deliver ASK Apprenticeships across Cambridgeshire and Suffolk and to continue to work with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Careers Hub. Our work took us to Southampton, too, working with the National Oceanography Centre to develop their outreach strategy.

As we head towards Form the Future's 10th anniversary next June, we are planning a series of conversations with stakeholders to elicit insights and ideas, strengthen how we work together and inform our strategy for the next 10 years.



*Anne Bailey*

Anne Bailey  
Co-Founder & CEO  
Form the Future

# FROM OUR CHAIR

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The Cambridge region is a renowned hub for science and technology, contributing significantly to the UK's economy. Yet for many local residents, especially young people, these opportunities can feel distant.

Form the Future is committed to bridging this divide by fostering social value in our communities. Through diverse programs, we empower young people to explore and shape their futures, equipping them with skills and insights for success. Our platform enables businesses to engage actively with their communities, fostering a cycle of positive impact.

Our work enables tens of thousands of young people around the region to be given exposure to varied career opportunities that can change the direction of their lives in the places being shaped by your strategies. It is about inspiring young people and giving them the runways to fly!

Our mission goes beyond career inspiration; it is about building a community where young people have the confidence and support to thrive. We invite you to join us in expanding horizons, building connections, and ensuring that the region's economic success benefits everyone.



*Prashant Shah*

Prashant Shah  
Co-CEO and Co-Founder,  
o2h Group  
Chair, Form the Future

# WHO WE ARE

Form the Future is a not-for-profit careers and employment company. We help young people find their route through education into employment, and provide employers access to their future talent.

## FOR STUDENTS

We empower young people to explore their skills and interests, understand their future employment options, and make informed career decisions that are right for them.

## FOR SCHOOLS

We provide schools, colleges and other groups with a high-quality, outsourced CEIAG service at each stage of young people's development, meeting the eight Gatsby Benchmarks and statutory requirements.

## FOR EMPLOYERS

We efficiently place local businesses in front of their future talent to showcase their employment opportunities, simultaneously contributing to their CSR and ESG initiatives.



# OUR 2023-24 IMPACT



School Reach



Our reach and impact across Cambridge & South Cambridgeshire accounts for 80% of our activity.

Our work outside of the region is delivered directly to schools or companies requiring our expertise and support.



TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENTS



HOURS OF ONE-TO-ONE CAREER COUNSELLING



SCHOOLS WORKED WITH



EVENTS HELD



NUMBER OF WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS



HOURS OF WORK BY VOLUNTEER AMBASSADORS

# THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

We provide services free-of-charge to our beneficiary students and schools through the funding and sponsorship of our partners. Our work in 2023-24 was only possible with financial support from:



Our partners fund programmes, sponsor events, and cover transport costs, ensuring students can access opportunities. They create outreach initiatives to improve accessibility, promote inclusion, and address social mobility. By engaging employees with young people, they build confidence, develop talent pipelines, and strengthen social capital - all while fulfilling their corporate responsibility and social value goals.



# OUR PROGRAMME

Our multidisciplinary program includes in-school events, careers and apprenticeship guidance, work experience, mentoring, and STEM outreach initiatives, all designed to support young people as they transition from education to employment.

At every stage of their educational journey, we equip them with vital information, skills, and experiences to succeed.



“Form the Future provides incredible experiences and inspiration for our students to venture into worlds previously unknown to them.

They are a beacon of hope for students in Cambridge - shining a light on the aspirational careers available on their doorstep.”

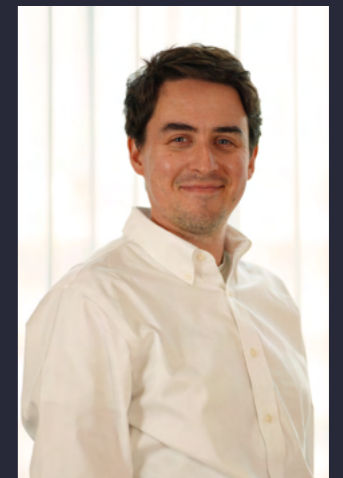
Stephen Robinson, former Careers Leader at Coleridge Community College - currently Assistant Principal at Longsands Academy



In-school activities by percentage number of student engagements, and student feedback score out of 5

“Working at Form the Future enables me to use my career experience to make a difference across a wide geographical area to more students. I enjoy getting into schools and helping young people to realise their potential in careers they never thought possible.”

Peter Buncombe, Senior Programme Coordinator, Form the Future



# OUR PROGRAMME

Throughout the year, our 1:1 careers guidance programme has provided personalised support to a diverse group of students across the region. Our dedicated advisors bring expertise and compassion, empowering students to explore their potential and make informed decisions about their futures.

Working with employee volunteers from our corporate partners, we provide mentoring to inspire and motivate small groups of young people to build confidence and resilience.



98.7%

of students agree that they are now more aware of their study options

93.3%

of students agree that they are now more aware of different careers

97.8%

of students agree that that they are now more motivated about exploring options



Our 2023-24 Insights series for students and parents delivered webinars from 24 employers on the careers available in the key growth sectors for our region: Life Sciences, Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing, Digital, and Agritech. Employers included:

Innovation Agritech Group, G's Fresh, Wyld Networks, ADAS, Institute of Agriculture & Horticulture, Regal Rexnord, Eikon, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, Ramboll, BCW, WSP, Ingleton Wood, TTP, Illumina, Owlstone Medical, Arthur Rank Hospice, Stephen Chapman Software Engineering, Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Trust, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust, Antwerp Dental, Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute, and East of England Radiotherapy Network.

*"Being part of a company dedicated to helping young people find their path from education to employment is rewarding, as I strive to empower them to unlock their potential and build fulfilling careers. Each client is unique and interesting and I enjoy guiding them through critical decisions about their future."*

Susan Earnshaw, Careers Development Professional, Form the Future



## Cambridge LAUNCHPAD

Cambridge LaunchPad is a transformative program proudly managed by Form the Future, dedicated to reshaping perceptions and broadening opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). At a time when life sciences and technology are growing rapidly, we aim to challenge stereotypes and inspire a more inclusive vision of who can excel in these fields.

By bringing together industry leaders, educational institutions, and ambitious young minds, Cambridge LaunchPad creates a collaborative space to spark curiosity, build confidence, and foster diverse talent.

### KEY IMPACT

- 23 schools participating in 25 project days
- 24 industry and academic partners
- 97% of primary school students expressed that they had learnt something new
- 98% of secondary students expressed that they had learnt something new



# 5,938

STUDENTS ENGAGED WITH  
THE PROGRAMME IN 2023-24

## INSPIRING YOUNG SCIENTISTS

The Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute hosted its inaugural Project Day, welcoming twenty Year 9 students from Northstowe Secondary College and Sawston Village College.

The students experienced an engaging day filled with facility tours and interactive sessions. They participated in hands-on activities, learning key cancer research techniques such as histopathology, microscopy, and using virtual reality technology to visualise tissue samples.

Through this unique experience, students explored state-of-the-art facilities, gained insight into the daily work of research scientists, and discovered the exciting opportunities available in STEM careers.

*“One of the most vital aspects of our work at the Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute is developing the next generation of researchers. This starts with inspiring young people to consider, and indeed feel excited to pursue, careers in this challenging but rewarding field.”*

Karen Woodey, Director of Operations at the  
Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute

*“There are more than just biologists working in cancer research, there is a way to apply so many different areas of STEM.”*

Student from Sawston Village College

## EVENTS AND FAIRS

Careers fairs are informative for young people, offering in-person inspiration and vital guidance at key decision-making moments in their education. Meeting professionals face-to-face sparks curiosity, builds confidence, and helps students connect aspirations to real-world opportunities. Starting early, even in primary school, ensures young minds are exposed to diverse career paths, laying a strong foundation for informed choices and ambitious futures.



### PRIMARY SCHOOL CAREERS FAIR

Our third annual primary school careers fair brought together over 450 nine to eleven-year-olds from 9 Cambridgeshire schools to engage with 24 businesses.

This event is key to inspiring very young people about the potential careers in our region, raising their aspirations and challenging stereotypes in the world of work. This unique event was funded by the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

*“Greater Cambridge has so many exciting career opportunities on offer for everyone, and so it was great to see so many young people inspired by what they could do in the future.”*

Niamh Matthews - Assistant Director, Greater Cambridge Partnership



### APPRENTICESHIP CAREERS FAIR 2024

Our Apprenticeship Careers Fair 2024 welcomed over 1,200 students from 14 Cambridgeshire schools to explore opportunities with 26 local employers. The event connected students with potential employers, and ran enablement seminars on Employability Skills by First Intuition, Interview Skills by South Cambridgeshire District Council, and Apprenticeship Opportunities by Marshall Skills Academy.

*“I was delighted to see the amazing success of the 2024 Form the Future Apprenticeship Careers Fair and was blown away by just how many young people visited to find out about career pathways. I would urge local employers of all shapes and sizes to support the 2025 event running during National Apprenticeship Week.”*

Gareth John, Chief Executive, First Intuition





## WORK EXPERIENCE

Form the Future connects young people with valuable work experience, offering placements and internships that bridge education and employment.

These experiences provide critical benefits, from developing essential skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, to offering insight into diverse career paths.

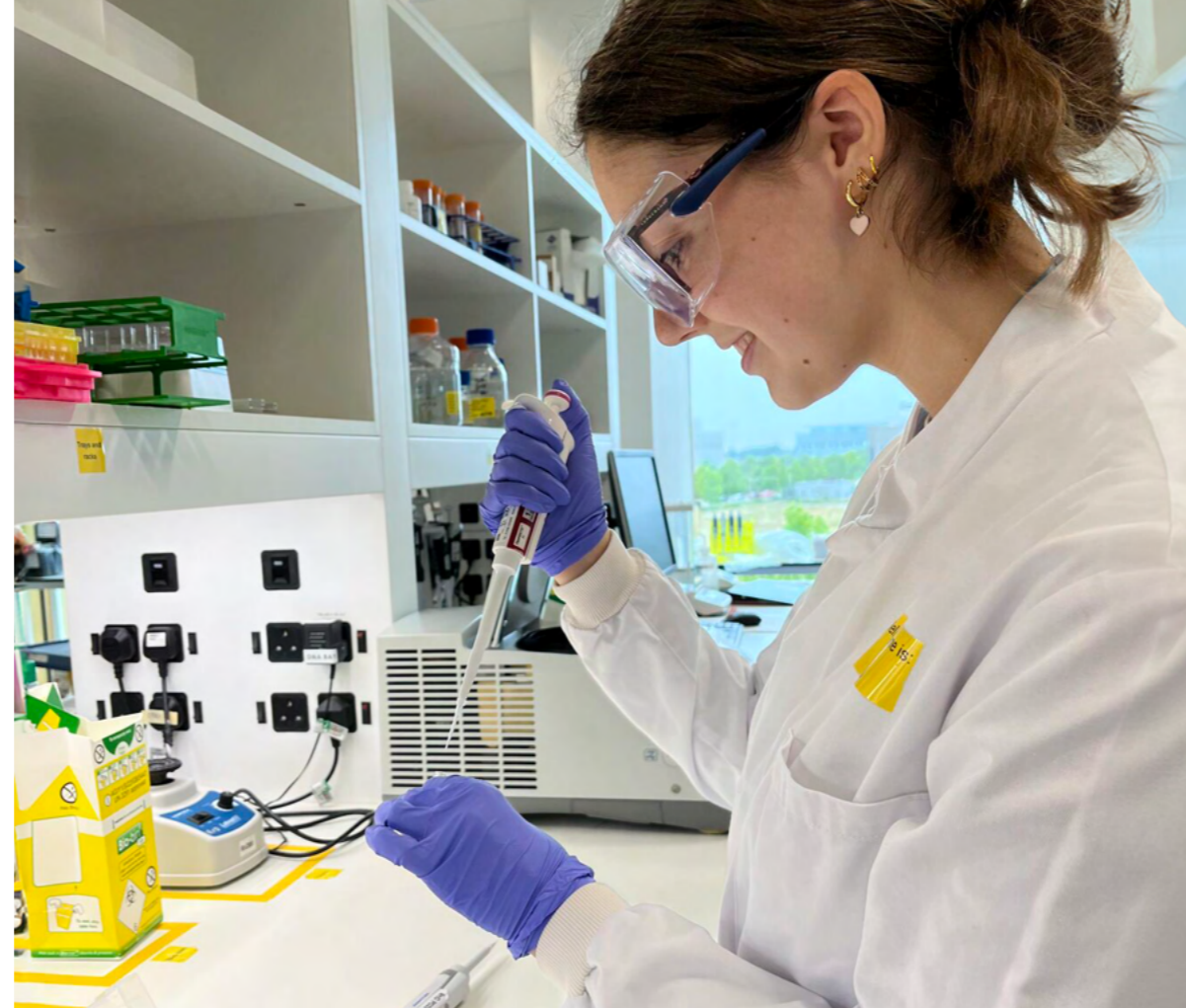
By navigating real work environments, young people gain confidence, adapt to professional challenges, and start building networks with industry professionals.

*"The interpersonal connections I gained between my mentors and leaders of the team was something I cherished truly, even the staff were very accommodating to building up a relationship in which we had common ground."*

Student at abcam

*"Knowing what it's like to function in an adult environment. It felt nice to be treated as an individual rather than a child. This opportunity is extremely helpful as it can be difficult to find work experience in some industries."*

Student at PA Consulting Springboard



*"I have gained lab experience and developed my understanding of some of the different types of research they are doing and its importance as well as developed my interested in this field making me want to pursue a career in science even more."*

Student at MRC LMB

*"Managing the Cambridge Unlocked programme is incredibly rewarding. It is inspiring to see local talent connect with leading organisations, gaining invaluable real-world experience and insights into their potential careers."*

*This programme is all about opening doors for young people who, due to various circumstances, might not otherwise have access to these kinds of opportunities. By building pathways for them to explore and develop their skills, we're not only supporting individual growth but also enriching our community and strengthening the future workforce."*



Therese Pluck, Programme Manager,  
Form the Future

## CAMBRIDGE UNLOCKED

Cambridge Unlocked is a summer programme in association with Cambridge Enterprise and kindly supported by Railpen. Companies provided 16 to 18 year old students with week-long paid internships:

*"I have gained real-world experience and a taste of the accounting sector, the team at PEM were very welcoming and supportive and throughout the week I gained more responsibility and understanding"*

Jack H, student, following his internship with PEM

Bidwells  
Cambridge GaN  
Devices  
Costello Medical  
DefiniGEN  
Green and Purple Ltd  
Mills & Reeve LLP  
Mishcon de Reya LLP  
PEM  
Socius  
Xampla Limited

## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

During 2023-24, we continued to develop our thought leadership in education, careers, and employment, fostering collaboration across sectors to bridge the gap between education and the workplace. Through our flagship Annual Conference, networking events, and professional development sessions, we brought together educators, careers professionals, employers, and policymakers to explore the latest trends and share insights.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE

In December 2023, our Annual Conference attracted over 300 delegates to a day exploring the future of work and the impact on young people. Our headline sponsors, Railpen, First Intuition, First Ascent and the Cambridge and Peterborough Careers Hub, supported us in providing a day of keynotes, panel discussions, seminars and workshops across four stages. Over 50 expert panellists and speakers contributed to a full agenda, ensuring that the Form the Future Annual Conference remains a key thought leadership event in this sector.



### TEACHER CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We delivered two teacher CPD workshops in 2023-24: one addressing recruitment practices and organisation values, the other looking at interview tasks and methods of candidate assessment. Each session gave the teaching and careers education professionals the opportunity to hear from employers, take part in interactive tasks, and network with peers.

Thank you to Coleridge Community College and Tees Law for kindly hosting these events.

“The small, simple but significant encounters are often what bring our impact home to me. A staff member from Tees Law explained to Careers Leads that many of their staff joined straight after A Levels, then gained qualifications and in-role learning. This is a challenge to the stereotype of requiring a law degree to join the profession. Those Careers Leads can now let their students know that a career in law is not reserved for university graduates, but can be pursued from the moment they complete sixth form.”

David Brockway, Product Development Manager, Form the Future



## PARTNER STORIES

Corporate partners are vital to our mission of supporting young people, providing funding, mentorship, and opportunities that shape their futures. In return, partners benefit by attracting talent, enhancing their employer brand, and demonstrating commitment to corporate social responsibility and social value. Engaging with young people also fosters employee development, strengthens team morale, and inspires a deeper connection to their community.



### RAILPEN AND SOCIUS

Railpen and development partner Socius worked with Form the Future to engage young people at two of their new developments in Cambridge: Devonshire Gardens and Botanic Place. Working with both primary and secondary schools, the attending students were introduced to the concepts of sustainable development. Students met with a wide range of inspirational people involved in property development, working with the architects, planners, structural engineers, designers, environmental consultants and other professionals.

Thanks to Mills & Reeve for hosting the project day at Botanic House, allowing the students to have a bird's eye view of the development.

### ILLUMINA

In April, Form the Future was thrilled to join Illumina at their headquarters in Cambridge to celebrate DNA Day 2024.

Continuing our work bridging the chasm between students and role models in industry, we brought 150 students aged 9-11 from Godmanchester Bridge Academy, Ridgefield Primary School, and Alconbury Primary School. These students engaged in hands-on science activities, including extracting DNA from strawberries, meeting real scientists and learning about their jobs, and a unique opportunity touring Illumina's state-of-the-art laboratory.

A special highlight of the day was HRH The Princess Royal's visit to the event. Princess Anne's presence underscored the importance of genomics and STEM education, inspiring young learners to explore the world of science.



*"We are immensely grateful for Illumina's support as our corporate partner, enabling us to engage primary school students in stimulating STEM activities. Their funding and dedication to releasing staff to work alongside us are instrumental in inspiring young minds. They are fostering a belief that a future in STEM is within reach, particularly those from families where there's no connection to STEM."*

Anne Bailey - Co-Founder & CEO, Form the Future

# AMBASSADORS

At the heart of Form the Future is our expanding community of Ambassadors - dedicated professionals who volunteer their time to inspire young people by sharing insights about their careers.

Through in-school workshops, sector-specific webinars, and employer project days, our Ambassadors play a pivotal role in empowering the next generation.

As our network grows, so does our impact, with each Ambassador helping to challenge gender and other stereotypes, showing young people a diverse range of career possibilities and pathways.

## CURIOUS TO KNOW MORE?

Take a look at the Form the Future website to learn more. There is no minimum time commitment, and we welcome volunteers from all backgrounds, roles and sectors to become Ambassadors and help us to inspire the next generation.

# 2,308

HOURS OF INSPIRATION TO YOUNG PEOPLE

# 370

AMBASSADORS WERE ACTIVE IN 2023-24



"I enjoy the direct connection being an Ambassador gives me to young people. The Form the Future activities are so valuable, but possibly more important is the exposure we're giving young people to different ways to think about the world of work.

When I was in school and university myself, opportunities to explore career options and advice was sporadic at best. It makes me feel good to be representing my profession, both as a writer and as a freelancer, so that students today are more aware of the options available."

Ellie Senior, founder of Ellie Senior Copywriting

"The potential of our Ambassador community to have real impact on young people's future work and life is huge. It just takes that one inspiring encounter to spark something that then changes a person's entire future trajectory. Supporting Ambassadors to do this to the best of their ability alongside witnessing the reciprocal benefits they gain professionally, personally and for their own organisations, feels like a real privilege."

Dawn Easby Thwaites, Ambassador Engagement Manager, Form the Future



# SOCIAL VALUE

Social value in schools outreach is vital for inspiring the next generation, addressing accessibility, social mobility, and inclusion. In Cambridge, a region of rapid growth yet stark inequality, our work aims to bridge the gap by providing young people with inspiration and opportunities.

Form the Future is committed to developing programmes that drive this inclusive regional growth. In 2023-24, we launched our new impact statements, published to every corporate partner and funder, highlighting the impact generated by our work together. We also became members of Social Value UK.

In 2024-25, we will be redeveloping our systems and processes to ensure that we can capture and report on our work in a more precise and effective way, thus fulfilling the requirements of national social value reporting frameworks and social return on investment (SROI) calculations.



## SROI

£2.50 for every £1 invested<sup>1</sup>

For STEM, £31.50 for every £1 invested<sup>2</sup>

## COST OF NEET

If we prevent just 1% becoming NEET in a single year, that will save £19 million over their lifetimes<sup>3</sup>

## WORK EXPERIENCE

The SROI of a work experience placement can be up to £30,749<sup>4</sup>, yet significant numbers of students miss out on this opportunity

<sup>1</sup> iCeGS, University of Derby <sup>2</sup> Institute for Fiscal Studies <sup>3</sup> Audit Commission <sup>4</sup> Elevate EBP

## SUPPORTERS LIST

We are also extremely grateful to our supporters, who provide us with access to their people and in-kind support:

Allia  
AELP  
AstraZeneca  
Babraham Institute  
Birketts  
BDB Pitmans  
BGL Group  
BT  
Business Weekly  
Cambridge Academy of Science and Technology  
Cambridge Regional College  
Cambridge Tech Podcast  
CCVS  
Cambridge Independent  
Cambridge Wireless  
Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Charles Stanley  
CIMSPA  
COEL  
Green Jobs Foundation  
Hays  
Informa  
Inspire2Ignite  
IfATE  
Ingleton Wood  
Kameo Recruitment

Marshall Skills Academy  
Mills & Reeve  
Milton Road Primary School  
o2h  
One Nucleus  
Owers Warwick Architects  
Parkside Community College  
Robinson College, Cambridge  
StartCodon  
Somersault  
Tees Law  
UCAS  
Unity Campus  
University of Lincoln  
We Make Change  
Wellcome Connecting Science  
Willis Towers Watson

University of Cambridge:  
Cambridge Enterprise  
Cambridge University Museums  
Department of Chemical Engineering & Biotechnology  
Department of Engineering  
Institute of Astronomy  
Judge Business School  
Cambridge Thinklab  
Cambridge Zero

# LOOKING AHEAD

## WE HAVE EXCITING PLANS MOVING INTO 2025

In June 2025, Form the Future will celebrate a decade of empowering young people with the skills, tools, and opportunities to make informed career choices, no matter what their background.

 **FORM THE FUTURE**  
CELEBRATING **10** YEARS OF  
IMPACT AND COLLABORATION



To honour this milestone and set out our vision for the next decade, we are launching two campaigns:

**Embark on a programme** of consultation and stakeholder engagement to ensure that Form the Future's impact continues on for the next decade.

**Give 10** - an invitation for individuals, schools, and employers to support our mission in impactful ways.

### AS AN INDIVIDUAL

Give 10 minutes to sign up to our newsletter

Give 10 hours to become a volunteer Ambassador

### AS AN EMPLOYER

10 days gives a student a fortnight's work experience

10 days of employee volunteering can reach 1,500 students across 10 schools

£10 a month for a year funds two careers guidance sessions

### AS A SCHOOL

Organise 10 career sessions

Invite 10 guest speakers to inspire students

### DONATIONS

£10 gives a student a chance to take part in an Enterprise Day

£1000 provides two young people at risk with a mentor for a year

£10,000 enables 30 students to experience STEM Project Days with local STEM organisations

Through these collective efforts, we can create a powerful network of support and opportunity, making 2025 a year of lasting impact. Join us in shaping the future for young people in our region!

Look out for more information about our Give 10 Campaign on our website, social media and email newsletters. Subscribe here - [www.formthefuture.org.uk/newsletter](http://www.formthefuture.org.uk/newsletter)

Whether you are a school, a business, or just want to help out, contact us to learn how you can be part of Form the Future - Call **01223 781296** or email [info@formthefuture.org.uk](mailto:info@formthefuture.org.uk)



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