



# FastFutures Programme Impact report

Cohort 1: September to December 2020



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**Thank you**

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*"We are delighted with the impact that FastFutures is already having on young people's lives and careers, and this could not have been achieved without our Employer Partners. These organisations saw the challenge facing young people, and responded quickly to our request for the funding needed to build and run the programme, and make it free for our learners. Their contribution through mentoring, leadership panels, and mock interviews provide some of the most valuable and unique components of the 12 weeks. Their collective commitment to Diversity & Inclusion and to supporting young people means that as FastFutures graduates start out in their professional lives they already possess key digital skills, an understanding of the modern business world, a network, and an improved confidence they can take into interviews and their first jobs."*

**- Manoj Badale, Co-founder, Blenheim Chalcot**

*"FastFutures has been built to bridge the gap between education and work at a time when the employment landscape is extremely tough, but we are encouraged by feedback from our first 1,000 graduates that they now feel more employable and are being selected for more interviews – with a good number already finding their way into work. The challenging situation facing young people is unlikely to change in the next couple of years – particularly for those from underrepresented backgrounds –, and with UK employers still struggling with the digital skills gap, we remain firmly committed to continuing our work to increase the employability of young talent by developing thousands more in 2021."*

**- Matthew Ansbro, Managing Director, FastFutures**



# The challenge

## Summary

### The Need for Digital Skills and Diversity

The country has never been more in need of digital skills training - A reported **17.3m** working people do not have the essential digital skills required for work, and **within 20 years, 90% of all jobs will require digital skills**

**40%** of employers cite lack of skills as main reason for not filling entry level roles (Source: CBI)

There is also a wealth of evidence that achieving diversity – of thought, gender and culture – increases revenue and fosters innovation in organisations.

Diversity and inclusion is no longer a moral imperative but a business necessity for improved performance. A 2018 study by Boston Consulting Group revealed that “increasing the diversity of leadership teams leads to more and better innovation and improved financial performance.”

Inclusive companies are **1.7 times** more likely to be leaders in their sector [Source: Josh Bersin]

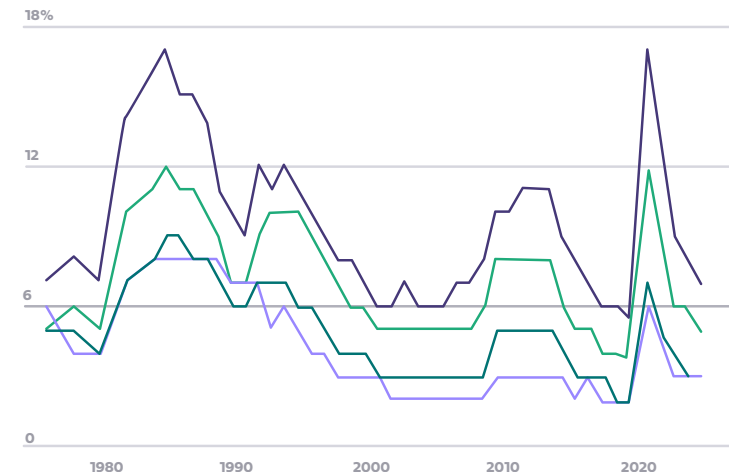
Companies with above-average diversity produced a greater proportion of revenue from innovation (**45% of total**) than from companies with below average diversity (**26%**) [Source: BCG]

### Youth Unemployment at a Record High

And at the same time, youth unemployment among 18-29 year olds is set to hit the highest levels since the mid '80s.

Unemployment among 18-to 29-year olds is set to hit the highest levels since the mid-80s

All 18-25 30-49 50-64



**1 in 10**

people aged 16-25 lost their job since the pandemic began

**47%**

of young people believe education has not prepared them for work

**3%**

of young adults (16-24 yrs old) are not using the internet

**58%**

young people have seen their earnings fall in 2020

**90%**

of young adults (16-24 yrs old) have access to a smartphone

**x2**

young workers twice as likely to have lost their jobs during COVID

**1 in 6**

companies cancelled their internship programmes in 2020

**500,000**

aged 18-24 are claiming benefits (up 124% in the last year)

# Our story so far

FastFutures' mission is to increase the employability of young talent from diverse backgrounds by preparing them for the digital workplace. We guarantee **fair and equitable** access to employers when they are particularly hard to reach due to the pandemic.

## Employer Partners



## Summary

### 6-month snapshot

June 2020

Our founder employer partners come on board to sponsor the programme and support the 'COVID generation', in particular those from underrepresented backgrounds who would suffer the most from a barren employment landscape.

18th August 2020

We receive **6000 applications** from across the UK. Successful applicants are selected based on cognitive skills and behavioural traits, such as: **Curiosity, Emotional Recognition, Determination, Resilience, Self Belief, Self Monitoring, Self Discipline**

31st November 2020

We receive a further **5400 applications** for Cohort 2.

18th January 2021

Cohort 2 begins with 1100 learners on the programme.

May 2020

It becomes clear that education leavers would be one of the hardest hit groups from the pandemic, **Blenheim Chalcot and its ventures Avado and Hive Learning** begin to set FastFutures in motion.

28th July 2020

With our founding partners' backing us, we launch FastFutures opening our first application window

21st September 2020

FastFutures Cohort 1 begins with 1000 learners on programme.

17th December 2020

Inaugural FastFutures Graduation Ceremony for Cohort 1.



# Our first cohort in review

## Summary

### We're proud to support learners from diverse backgrounds



10% are LGBTQIA



47% are BAME



7% have learning difficulties or a disability



61% are female and 34% are male



55% have a low socio-economic status (in the top 50% of social deprivation deciles)

# 1000

learners, with a 76% completion rate

# 57

is our NPS Score, putting us in the 'Excellent category'

# 4.4/5

Overall rating

# 92%+

would rate the overall experience Good or Excellent

# 97%

said they feel more employable as a result of **FastFutures**

# 1/3

By the time of graduation, around a third reported they had already been accepted for more interviews and were performing better in them, and 15% had already obtained jobs

# 96%

said that being exposed to different communities and perspectives while on FastFutures changed their views and opinions

## Press Highlights



# The programme

## Summary

	18 Jan	25 Jan	1 Feb	8 Feb	15 Feb	22 Feb	1 Mar	8 Mar	15 Mar	22 Mar	29 Mar	5 Apr	12 Apr
	Get Started	Unlocking the power of digital and data		Marketing made easy		Finance fundamentals		Working with great teams		Adapt and innovate		Bring it together	Graduation
Overview	All that you need to get stuck in and succeed on the programme	Questions that we'll answer										Final reflections on the course, diversity & personal growth	Graduation ceremony
		How can we use data to make rational decisions? How can we use data to report effectively?		What do customers really want? How do we reach them?		How do we know a company is in good shape financially? How do we decide if an investment is good value for money?		What makes a great team? How can I work effectively with others?		How can we adapt faster? How can we test our innovations? How can we keep a project on-track?			
Social Learning Hub		Personal Growth					Diversity & Inclusion						
Key skills developed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complex problem solving</li> <li>Critical thinking</li> <li>Judgment and decision making</li> <li>Digital literacy &amp; computational thinking</li> <li>Creative and innovative mindset</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complex problem solving</li> <li>Coordinating with others</li> <li>Service orientation</li> <li>Cognitive Flexibility</li> <li>Creative and innovative mindset</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complex problem solving</li> <li>Critical thinking</li> <li>Judgment and decision making</li> <li>Negotiation</li> <li>Digital literacy &amp; computational thinking</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People management</li> <li>Coordinating with others</li> <li>Service orientation</li> <li>Cognitive flexibility</li> <li>Emotional and social intelligence</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical thinking</li> <li>Coordinating with others</li> <li>Judgement and decision making</li> <li>Cognitive flexibility</li> <li>Creative and innovative mindset</li> </ul>			
Employer engagement		Mentor session 1 FastTalk 1 Business leader session		Virtual site visit		Mentor session 2 FastTalk 2 Business leader session		Virtual site visit		Mentor session 3 FastTalk 2		Mock interviews	

We have carefully designed a blended approach to our learning programme so that those with learning difficulties still have multiple ways to learn.

During the 12-weeks they go through five 2-week modules, designed by Avado Learning, underpinned by 2 modules to embed these practices in their personal lives, designed by Hive Learning.

All learning is supported and enhanced by real-world examples and how they will apply their knowledge in the workplace. Every module has at least one of the following:

- A 'Business Case', submitted by our employer partners, an example of a real challenge their teams are working on
- A Fast Talk, hearing from industry thought leaders on specific topics relating to the module they're working on
- A 1:1 mentoring session with someone from our employer partners
- A leadership Q&A panel given by top CEOs and senior leaders from our employer network
- A virtual site visit that interviews current employees about 'a day in the life of' their role
- A mock interview, run by our employer partners, to give them tangible experience before graduation

# Employer Engagement

## Summary

### A snapshot of some of the live sessions delivered by our Employer Partners

#### *Leadership Q&A Panels*

**Leadership Q&A with Simon Rogerson, CEO of Octopus, Nigel Wilson, CEO of L&G, Emma Hardaker-Jones, Group HR Director, L&G, and Cindy Hoots, CIO of AstraZeneca Global**

"All of them provided a great outlook into professional life by sharing their own experiences and making it relatable for the audience. It was quite inspiring to hear people of such a high calibre talk about how they understand people of our age need to make mistakes to progress as I feel this is a common misconception."



**4.9/5**  
Rated

#### *Leadership Q&A Panels*

**Leadership Q&A with Nick Hampton, CEO Tate & Lyle and Imran Nawaz, CFO of Tate and Lyle**

"Great advice from all the gentleman present today! It hit home and will do my best to implement what inspired me today!"

"Great to hear from professionals with so much experience and amazing advice. Very insightful and helpful"



**4.6/5**  
Rated



### A Day in the Life



#### BT's Day in the Life of

"I'm really inspired by the sharing sessions of Dr. Rob and Dr. Nicola who share insights and the latest technology used in the current markets! As I'm also a tech-lover, I hope I have the chance to connect and learn from them in the future!"

"I thought it was really brilliant. Given me so much to think about it terms of career progression"

**4.6/5**  
Rated



#### AO's Day in the Life of

"Really nice insight to how you can apply some of the modules we've learnt on Fast Futures."

"Very insightful to learn about the different departments and their procedures"

"It was clearly structured and it was nice hearing from different teams within the business and an apprentice who is our age"

**4.4/5**  
Rated

# FastFutures Learner Journey

## Stories

**We asked learners what FastFutures meant to them when they began in September...**

*The pandemic has made it difficult for a lot of graduates to gain jobs after university, I think what this programme offers is an opportunity to build on the skills I've picked up at school and university.*

*Due to the pandemic, it's been very difficult to find a job. This opportunity with FastFutures allows young and ambitious people, like myself, the chance to acquire new skills for business.*

*When I was in my late teens, I fell ill with an autoimmune disease which meant that I had to drop out of my second year of A-levels, missing my chance to go to uni and study business. I couldn't believe my luck when I found this programme, it really seems like a second chance for people like me.*





# FastFutures Learner Journey

Stories

**And we caught up with them in December to hear about their journey...**

My journey with FastFutures has been intense but very beneficial, I've learned a lot of skills in such a short period of time.

I think FastFutures has provided me with a lot of unexpected moments, I didn't think it would be this good. Being able to use practical ways of learning for a visual learner has helped so much more than the textbooks at university or school. I would definitely recommend it to anyone.

FastFutures for me was an eye-opening experience. The course itself is very informative and crams a lot of knowledge into a short time span. It has solidified my pre-existing passion for marketing, and I will definitely try to pursue a career in it, all thanks to FastFutures.





# FastFutures Learner Journey

Stories

We asked what 3 words describe FastFutures

**Transformative,  
fun & educational.**

**Dynamic,  
relevant & fun.**

**Unique, challenging  
& incredibly fun.**



"I just want to once again say thank you for this experience. This programme has blown my mind and been more than I anticipated. **I will cherish this experience forever** and I hope that by the time I have advanced in my career I can come back and contribute as a mentor or similar, people deserve this opportunity and **I am so grateful.**"

"It has been **really valuable** in many ways, from having a mentor, the content, leadership Q&As. I feel much more prepared for the working world, and have some great talking points in interviews that I've already applied."

"The expectations I had on this course was to learn digital business and technology skills in demand from employers that are currently low in supply. I had no idea how in-depth the topics would be and how enjoyable the learning process would be throughout the programme. I can say with absolute certainty that **any expectations I had coming into the programme have been far exceeded** by the end of it"



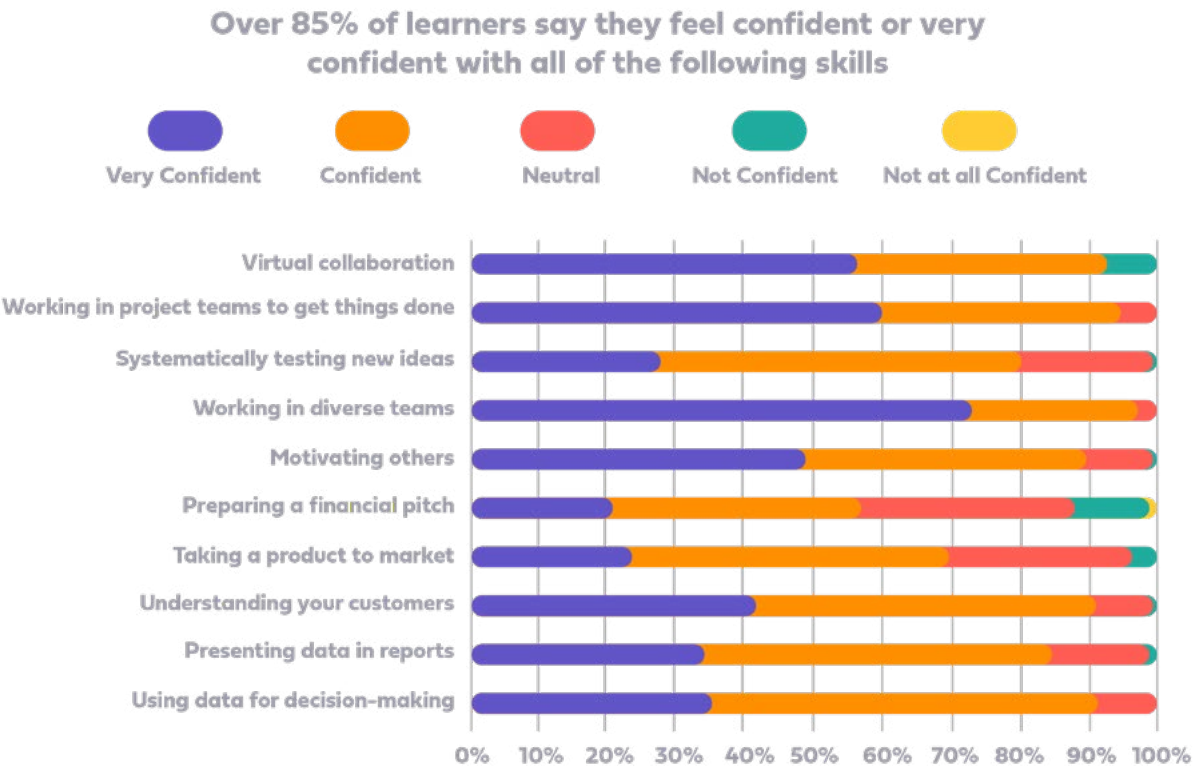


# Employability Impact

Impact

When our 1000 learners started on programme in September, we asked them how confident they felt with the following skills. We asked again when they left in December, and found that over 85% of learners say they feel more confident, with specific skills such as preparing financial pitches and taking a product to market seeing the highest increase in confidence delta.

Before they graduated in December 2020, **13%** of our learners had already obtained jobs, **31%** said that FastFutures had already helped them get more interviews and perform better in them.



97%

said they feel more employable as a result of FastFutures.

92%

believe they will be able to apply the learnings from the programme in the workplace, and now with a better grasp of these skills

95%

said that being exposed to different communities and perspectives while on FastFutures changed their views and opinions, and half said that they've been talking about what they're learning with their friends and family.



# Challenging Perceptions

## Mentoring

With regards to career choices, **72%** said that their views on which job/industry they'd like to work in changed during the programme, with **64%** saying they're now even more likely to apply to jobs at our Employer Partners' firms.

“ ”

*"I have never really considered finding a way to work in the banking industry given my university degree, but I am now able to understand that its not all numbers and finance, there are many roles, many which involve more admin and something that I would feel more confident doing."*

“ ”

*"I was not aware of the existence of many of the partner companies, and now I feel closer to them just for the simple fact they they are interested in the development of the new generation."*

“ ”

*"Seeing people higher up in the companies being so willing to engage in a programme like this and offering support to people in our situation made me think very highly of the companies. They also made the prospect of working with them/for them less daunting"*

“ ”

*"I had not really heard of the work carried out by Blenheim Chalcot, Legal & General or Octopus Group. However, after hearing from the people who work there and being so inspired, I would be much more likely to consider a future career/ role with FastFutures partner employers."*



### Mentees

**All of the 1000 learners on programme have a mentor in one of our partner organisations, who they meet with at least 3 times throughout the 12 weeks.**

*"I wouldn't have seriously considered starting my own business as a potential career option for me if it weren't for the meetings with my mentor"*

*"It was my mentor who pushed me to go for the interview [which I then got]. Following this, one of our sessions was during my first week at work where she helped me navigate a daunting time. We now have decided to remain in contact. I would not be in the position I am in now without the support and advice I received from her."*

*"[My mentor] helped motivate me to look properly into what was required for my career regarding next steps. I am way more prepared now than I would have been!"*

### Mentors

**Mentors also got in touch to say what a huge impact mentoring has had on their confidence and mindset.**

*"I have had a positive shift in confidence. I have also really enjoyed it, they have been brilliant mentees and have had good questions to ask"*

*"It has felt great watching the mentee grow between each session, in part due to the online workshops the programme provides, and due to setting clear goals and achieving them each session. I feel good inside."*

*"I have been very lucky to be matched up perfectly! We make a great team, Grace is so receptive to guidance, keen to learn and take advantage of opportunities. A pleasure to mentor."*

**Mentees rated** their experience consistently highly at...

**4.7/5** 

**Mentors rated** the experience similarly highly at **4.3/5** and **65%** said that mentoring for FastFutures challenged their perspectives and taught them something new.

**59%**

of learners said their mentors made them think differently & challenged their perceptions

**59%**

said their mentors improved their CV and LinkedIn profiles

**53%**

said their mentors improved their confidence



### **Sol-Priya Albrigtsen, FastFutures Graduate, 21**

The mentoring process was so valuable for me to gain perspective during a very challenging time. My mentor encouraged me to seek out jobs I was passionate about, while also giving me the confidence to speak more about my achievements and hobbies at interviews. **This actually helped me stand out to employers**, because I was telling them things about myself I didn't think they would initially be interested in. **All this ultimately lead up to me landing a job I now enjoy and am thriving in.** The most valuable thing to came out of the mentoring sessions **was a new sense of confidence I had lost during the pandemic, and the encouragement to go after roles I know I would love.**



### **Janet Crawford, AstraZeneca**

**Sol-Priya absolutely threw herself into the process, was open to all discussions, ideas etc and took a number of these on board. Her results speak for themselves, having secured a position in a role that she wished for.** I am delighted for her and wish her continued success. I think one of the main things from my perspective is guiding the mentee to really push themselves out of their comfort zone and take a chance.





### Emmanuel Omole, FastFutures Graduate, 20

Having a mentor on the FastFutures programme meant that I had the opportunity to talk to someone about my personal and professional development. My mentor was very helpful in providing improvements for the structure and content of my CV, as well as my cover letter. He also gave me the valuable opportunity to speak to a member of the finance department at Octopus. Through this, I was able to gain an insight into the possible career paths for an accounting graduate. This was my first time being a mentee, but my mentor made the mentoring sessions feel very comfortable and informative, where we were both learning new things about each other. **Overall, I believe my mentor was a crucial step towards my continuous development and enhancing my career potential.**



### Taylor Fitzhugh, Octopus Investments

**Mentoring on FastFutures is undoubtedly one of the best professional things I have done for multiple reasons.** The first being I had the opportunity to meet Emmanuel, my mentee, a **very personable, intelligent man who was an absolute pleasure to work with and build a relationship with.** The second is that it helped me understand the skills that I have to offer, the talents I have picked up throughout my career so far and also how to use them to someone else's benefit. I was able to offer my recruitment knowledge to Emmanuel and help him on his way to securing his first finance role in what no doubt will be a successful career.

# Insights from the Social Hub

## Insight

Underpinning all of the 5 Business Skills Modules, the learners also spend 12 weeks going through 2 modules related to Personal Growth and Diversity & Inclusion on a platform we call 'The Social Hub'. These modules are delivered by social learning experts, Hive Learning, and encourage group-based learning and reflection.

**94%** of participants reported they will carry out the actions in the learning pathways.

**97%**

of the learners agree or strongly agree that the tools in the learning pathways will positively impact their skills for the workplace.

**These tools included managing stress and personal wellbeing, having discussions around diversity and difference, being an ally & an active anti-racist, developing self-awareness, & many more.**

## Mental Health

“ ”

*“Having struggled with anxiety for most of my life, entering into my adult years and knowing that this could possibly affect me in the work place is an extremely anxiety fill thought itself. Work places have done a lot, but still have a lot to do in order to make people from all works of life with all different mental health needs feel accepted.”*

“ ”

*“I think that mental health training should be a crucial part of any job - knowing how to handle different situations and knowing when to spot some signs of a person suffering with mental health may be beneficial to both employers and employees & everyday life as it may help people to judge less.”*

**96%**

of participants have experienced mental health challenges, either directly or indirectly and some worry about how this may affect them in the workplace.

**88%**

of participants said they would rather tell their work they had a migraine over saying they were too depressed to get out of bed.

**73%**

of participants said they would rather tell their work they injured their back over them having a panic attack.

**86%**

of learners said they find it hard to switch off at the end of the day.

## Diversity and Inclusion

### Insight 1:

With such high levels of diversity on the programme, it was also saddening to hear that **68% of the learner group had personally experienced a micromessage**, with a further **11% witnessing one directed at someone else**.

**83% of the group said that they had experienced some or many forms of marginalisation.**

### Insight 2:

Most learners are keen to have conversations about race but some fear of saying the wrong thing.

**61% of learners say they fear they'll say the wrong thing when discussing race or differences.**

### Insight 3:

Our learners fully understand the value of diverse and inclusive teams but feel there's work to be done in the corporate space to act authentically:

“ ”

*I've definitely seen a lot of companies and celebrities jump on the BLM or LGBTQ+ 'trend' and it becomes apparent that they are only doing this for public approval or to tick a check box essentially. For example, changing their logo to a rainbow version for Pride but doing nothing to support the LGBTQ+ community in a practical way that actually benefits them.*

“ ”

*As specific company D&I policies, targets, and initiatives become more common in the workplace, it seems that sadly more and more companies are adopting these for PR and treat them as check box exercises. Employees and consumers could all take a more active role in ensuring that the business is genuinely invested in D&I and this means that building a culture and hiring people with a determination to put ideas into action.”*



# The Social Hub Itself

Insight

Learners said that the content on FastFutures, especially on the Social Hub, was fundamental in challenging their opinions and influencing their behaviour, in their personal and professional life, when it comes to mental health and diversity & inclusion.

The top takeaways learners had from the Social Hub were:

- How to talk about mental health and managing stress
- Understanding the business benefits of diverse and inclusive companies
- Spotting and talking about different types of bias
- Treating everyone as an individual and understanding other groups
- Self-education (on being anti-racist)
- Being open-minded about feedback
- Reflecting on mistakes and failures often & recognising vulnerability as a strength
- Using privilege to give others an equitable outcome

95%

said that being exposed to different communities and perspectives while on FastFutures changed their opinions.

“ “ ” ”

*“Mental health has been a struggle for me and I believe the social hub has allowed me to recognise some of the social queues when approaching people and also addressing for myself.”*

“ “ ” ”

*“[My biggest takeaway is] that we all have unconscious biases that we need to seek to change within ourselves and others to make the world a better and more inclusive place for everyone.”*

“ “ ” ”

*“My biggest takeaway was concerning business-start ups, and how there is a gender bias against women, particularly in tech and the digital world, which discredits their technical knowledge, particularly in business pitches. When female business start-ups are given support from VCs, however, they tend to marginally generate more revenue than male start-ups.”*

“ “ ” ”

*“I love how it teaches us how to improve the workplace environment by changing the stereotypes we’ve been taught growing up.”*



# And finally, thank you to our supporters.

Thank you

The difference we make to the lives of our learners would not be possible without the generous support of partners. A huge thank you to all of our delivery partners, employer sponsors, our outreach partners and team.

**Do you represent or work with communities and networks to help us reach young people who will benefit from FastFutures? Get in touch!**

**Please email [sponsor.fastfutures@avadolearning.com](mailto:sponsor.fastfutures@avadolearning.com)**

## Become a FastFutures Employer Partner

If you would like to know more about FastFutures or want to help us to support thousands of young people, please get in touch:



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ARCTIC SHORES



FINSBURY



Trinnovo



Hive Learning

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