



[Research](#) has shown that education and employers have a great deal to gain from working together, ensuring that young people achieve their potential and that we have the future talent pipeline for economic prosperity. Encounters with the world of work have been proven to help broaden young people's horizons, raise aspirations, challenge gender and ethnic stereotypes, increase motivation, improve attainment, reduce the likelihood of them becoming unemployed and increase their earning potential.

Recognising this, the UK Government together with the leaders of main bodies representing education and employers, sought to find a way to ensure that all young people had the opportunity to engage with employers. What was needed was a low-cost way of connecting schools and volunteers on a national scale which was effective, efficient and equitable. A way which would enable teachers to quickly and easily find volunteers from the world of work that most suited their requirements and the needs of their students, and which would allow focussed support for the schools and young people who needed it most.

Extensive consultation took place between the government, education, employers, and charities resulting in the development of *Inspiring the Future*<sup>™</sup> by the charity [Education and Employers](#). Launched in July 2012 the innovative approach used the same cutting-edge technology which has revolutionised how we connect, how we buy and sell products, arrange our travel, share ideas, and meet new people. The on-line system uses Salesforce's Customer Relation Management software with integrated mapping from Ordnance Survey. It makes it quick and easy for people from the world of work to signal their willingness to volunteer - and for teachers to contact them. See how it works [here](#).

The initial focus was on secondary schools but in 2014 a primary version, *Primary Futures*<sup>™</sup> was launched. Since then, new research has shown just how important starting early is which is summarised in this [report](#). The on-line match-making system is supported by a wide range of resources and guidance for teachers, employers and volunteers. Teachers can search for volunteers by their occupation, subjects they studied, routes they took (e.g. apprenticeship or HE), gender or the ways in which they would like to help (e.g. career insight talks, careers fairs, interview practice), choose who they want to contact and simply send them a message or an invitation to an event through the secure system.

And teachers have access to an amazing diversity of volunteers from the world of work – people doing a wide range of jobs – from apps designers to zoologists and from all levels – apprentices to CEOs. Many employers and sector bodies include *Inspiring the Future* on their intranet and promote via newsletters and intranets. They are able to access reports showing the staff who have signed up and the impact they are having. The ask of volunteers is a very simple one - could you give from 'an hour a year' to inspire the next generation. With so many schools and volunteers involved, it is easy to run national or local campaigns raising young people's understandings of particular professions and economic sectors, allowing the labour market to signal more effectively and efficiently to today's students. It is also possible to target the most disadvantaged schools and give them easy access to brilliant volunteers. The [Inspiring Governance](#) programme which uses the same technology platform also gives people an opportunity to undertake a deeper, more strategic volunteering role on a school board. And there are clear benefits to volunteers - the '[Value of Volunteering](#)' report shows employees who volunteer in education are more motivated, more productive and have a greater sense of well-being.

Since 2012, over 2.5 million interactions between people in work and young people have taken place. In the UK, 85% of secondary schools, 4,500 primary schools and 73,000 volunteers from over 5,000 employers have registered. A comprehensive suite of dynamic dashboards has been developed which allow real time monitoring of activity on the platform and in-depth impact analysis as well as the ability to generate bespoke reports for funders, local and national government, education authorities and employers. The approach has been replicated in other countries including by the [New Zealand Government](#) which is rolling out *Inspiring the Future* to all primary and secondary schools.



And the [virtual programmes](#) Education and Employers have developed means that as well as young people being able to meet people in their local community they can also connect with employers /employees online, across the whole of the country. It means that young people wherever they live can get to opportunity to meet an incredible diversity of role models in way that has never been possible before. It is set to revolutionise how young people meet and interact with employers.