



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Amid the economic challenges facing us all, the Our Future Derby programme offers a wonderful opportunity to celebrate what schools and employers are doing together to make a real difference to children's lives and inspire many more employers to follow their lead.

A GROUND-BREAKING programme piloted in Derby - which aims to inspire primary school pupils and challenge the way they think about the world of work - is being rolled out across the East Midlands after being hailed a great success in its first 2 years. It is now being launched across the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership area, which covers Derby city, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

The Our Future primary programme is designed to enhance social mobility, improve gender equality and expand opportunities for primary school children in 33 primary schools. Through a series of interactive and engaging career-related learning activities, the Our Future primary programme, is broadening horizons, breaking down stereotypes, and supporting schools during a challenging time to motivate children and help them see the relevance of their learning in a changing world of work.

**Due to overwhelming demand from schools and employers we are urging even more employers of all sizes and sectors to register to take part in the programme as an inspiring volunteer.**

"While every part of the UK has been affected by Covid-19 and Great Britain's exit from Europe, cities, towns and villages play a particularly important role in social and economy recovery," said international education and policy expert Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE

"Research shows that children's aspirations are often shaped, moulded and restricted by gender stereotyping, socio-economic background and the people they meet in their local area. Over the last two years, the Our Future Derby programme worked in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the city, inspiring volunteers, teachers and senior leaders, too. In 2021, it supported at least 7,500 children and teachers through a range of inspirational career-related learning activities. From this, we know what works and what more needs to be done to improve children's life chances."

**Latest projections suggest that the impact of the pandemic will widen the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers, likely reversing progress made to narrow the gap since 2011.**

The delivery team [Education and Employers](#) and [Learn By Design](#), have created strong links with many organisations and sectors including inter alia: Manufacturers, Digital Technology firms, Emergency Services, and Creative Industries, as well as smaller businesses in the East Midlands. During lockdown hundreds of volunteers gave their time virtually and directly into the classrooms.

An [independent](#) report by Dr Hughes found that although 86% of pupils agreed 'Girls and boys can do the same job', the findings showed that the jobs identified by both groups demonstrate unconscious gender bias - boys opting for engineer, youtuber, army compared to more girls opting for jobs as an artist, singer, actor and dancer.

- 23% of boys harbour ambitions to become a footballer, with the top choice of career for girls being a teacher. The pandemic, though, has increased the number of youngsters keen to join the healthcare sector; doctor appears as a desired profession for both boys and girls.
- 75% of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals or eligible for Pupil Premium agreed with the statement 'I can do any job I want when I grow up' but unconscious bias exists across all categories of pupils involved in the study.
- 100% of head teachers and Careers Champions agreed that the Our Future Derby programme met their expectations.
- 97% of volunteers are prepared to sign up to a future event.

Paul Appleton, head teacher at Cherry Tree Hill Primary School, in Chaddesden, said: "We have to open the children's eyes to the world of work at primary school."

"We try hard with our younger children to instil in them everything which employers are looking for; teamwork, presentation, working together. We will continue to fly the flag for this programme; the sessions we have been involved with have enabled our children to see how they can develop transferable skills to use in the workplace. It's opened their eyes to the range of career choices in front of them and our approach to careers education has evolved and is now interwoven into our curriculum."

"Thank you so much for the Let's talk rubbish workshop with my class. The children were fascinated to learn the waste facts and the jobs in waste. I have a little boy in my class who is on the Autistic spectrum. It looked like he wasn't listening or absorbing the information. His one-to-one Teaching Assistant came back from her appointment after your session and it amazed us all when he relayed the facts back to her about waste! He told her he wants to become an Engineer like the lady he saw on the screen!" says a teacher from Landau Forte Moorhead.

In May 2021, the Minister of State for Universities announced that Derby would receive an additional £1.25m for the current academic year, of which £200,000 is to be spent on careers and skills twinning work across the region. This additional year will enable the continuation of the important work which has already taken place, help to sustain long-term improvements and outcomes and support the recovery from the pandemic, levelling up standards across England. To find out how Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham or Nottinghamshire schools or multi academy trusts can get involved – email: [laurencroll@bydesign-group.co.uk](mailto:laurencroll@bydesign-group.co.uk)

### **PROGRAMME NOTES**

- Raises the aspirations of all pupils including those on pupil premium, free school meals and from different ethnic backgrounds to close the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- Funded by the Department for Education Opportunity Area, the Our Future Derby programme was launched in 2019 by Derby City Council. It was hoped that the initiative, which has received additional funding to continue its good work until August 2022, would connect youngsters across the Derby Opportunity Area – including Boulton, Chaddesden, Derwent, Normanton, Sinfin and Abbey – with the world of work, opening their eyes to their future possibilities. Opportunity Areas are social mobility cold spots where the Department for Education is prioritising resources and bringing local and national partners together. Derby was identified as an Opportunity Area in October 2016.

### **ENDS**

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