ThinkForward

Trustee

Role information pack



About ThinkForward

ThinkForward exists to support young people to create better and brighter futures. We want them to be able to identify, realise and shape their aspirations and be ready to make a successful transition into work.

Young people experiencing barriers such as challenging relationships, living in low-income households, or growing up in areas with a lack of access to opportunities can be confronted with hurdles. Without the right support, these barriers can lead to a high risk of unemployment and long-term effects on career and life chances.

There are more than one million 16-24-year-olds in the UK who are not at school or college, or don’t have a job or training place. Our ambition is to prevent young people becoming one of these statistics.

In 2026, we are supporting more than 1,500 young people.

For more information on ThinkForward, our vision and mission, our programmes and equalities manifesto, please visit our website.



Introduction from our Chair



It has been a pleasure to serve as a ThinkForward trustee for three years, and as Chair since 2024. I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact ThinkForward's programmes have for young people, and I am excited to continue the incredible work the organisation is doing. I truly believe that every young person deserves the chance to achieve their full potential. As we enter our next phase of development with the implementation of our 2025 – 2028 strategy, our vision remains the same: to prevent the next generation of youth unemployment.

Our long-term coaching and employability programmes for under-served young people at key stages in their lives enable them to successfully transition into work. We know our programmes work. 20% more of our graduates successfully get jobs or go on to further training than the national average.

We are looking to recruit new Trustees with the vision and enthusiasm to help us continue to sustain our sector-leading programmes at the same time as support us to drive forward a charity with growth ambitions which are relevant to commissioners, schools and young people.

As a Trustee you will have the belief, passion and resilience to help us succeed in shaping our future whilst managing risk. I'm extremely excited about this opportunity to refresh our Board and I encourage you to consider becoming a Board member of ThinkForward.

- Dr Matthew Tate, ThinkForward Chair

Our values



Our values are more than words; they are the principles that guide our actions and decisions every day. By embodying these values, we create a positive and empowering environment for ourselves, our colleagues, and the young people we serve.

Read more about how our values are embedded in our work here.



Our EDI manifesto



ThinkForward is committed to being a place where all can thrive. We place equity, diversity and inclusion at the heart of all we do as an employer, in our work with young people and within our sphere of influence. We value authenticity, compassion, collaboration, inclusion and innovation, and are intentional about underpinning these values with equity, diversity and inclusion practices.

We are working to create a world where our young people are more likely to thrive, and the absence of uniformity is considered a strength. We are wholeheartedly committed to continuously learning, challenging the status quo and creating a space where people's ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disabilities, learning abilities or socio-economic origins are not the defining characteristics of their potential for success. We ensure that all voices are heard and that each person's strengths are valued and utilised.

To embed our manifesto into ThinkForward practices, our EDI group is committed to continuous implementation and monitoring of key areas including representation, learning and education, policies and procedures, and accountability.

About our programmes

The FutureMe programme provides five years of personalised coaching and employability activities to get young people ready for the world of work. Coaches build trusted relationships, supporting young people to take control, find solutions to challenges, develop skills and create a positive vision for their future. We run this programme in 15 schools in North and East London, Nottingham and Kent.

Our Work Forward programme operates in London, Kent, and Nottingham, working with young adults aged 16 – 24 who reside in low-income households to support them into sustainable paid employment. The programme provides young people with a specialist Progression Coach for up to one year. Coaches offer support through one-to-one coaching sessions, group workshops and facilitating employer connections.





Our impact

82%

Young people who have support from ThinkForward are substantially more likely to enter into and sustain education, employment or training - across our programmes, 82% of young people entered, or sustained, education, employment or training pathways this academic year.

75%

Young people who have support from ThinkForward develop the skills needed for work - across our programmes, 75% of young people made positive progress in their Work Readiness Capabilities, including being Driven and Organised – capabilities our external evaluation found significantly increase the likelihood of young people sustaining education, employment or training (EET).

84%

Young people who attend ThinkForward events gain a better understanding of the world of work, with more than four in five (84%) reporting the events improved their understanding 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of the world.





Our team

Board of Trustees



Matt Tate
Chair



Arnaud Vaganay



Dan Easterbrook



Laura Fauvel



Ryan Cockell



Simon Davidson

Senior Leadership Team



Ashley McCaul
CEO



Robert Posner
Deputy CEO



Charlene Theophile
Director of
Programmes

Kate Delaney
Director of Fundraising &
Strategic Partnerships

Our strategy



Over the next three years, ThinkForward's ambition is to triple its reach and significantly strengthen the evidence for coaching as a proven intervention for under-served young people. At a time when too many young people continue to face barriers to education and employment, our strategy focuses on growing our impact while demonstrating clearly that coaching works.

To achieve this ambition, we will focus on six strategic goals:

- Expanding our reach through programme innovation and partnerships, ensuring more young people can benefit from targeted, personalised coaching.
- Diversifying our income streams, including through major donors, corporate partnerships, commissioning and services, so that our growth is sustainable and resilient.
- Exploring strategic collaborations that enable us to scale our impact and extend the reach of our model.
- Building a robust evidence base that proves the impact and cost-effectiveness of coaching for young people at risk of long-term unemployment or exclusion.
- Publishing independent evaluations and social return on investment analysis to strengthen confidence in our approach.
- Using our insight and evidence to influence policy and support systemic change for young people at high risk of becoming or remaining NEET.

This is an exciting time to join our Board of Trustees, as you will be closely involved with implementing our new strategy.

Youth Participation at ThinkForward



Our youth participation work provides opportunities for young people to share their views and meaningfully engage with our work and programme design. By creating routes for them to express themselves and be involved in decision-making, we aim to develop their confidence, autonomy and work-readiness.

We offer multiple opportunities for young people to use their voices to influence change within ThinkForward. These include: our Youth Advisory Board, our alumni network, social action projects and being involved in the recruitment of all new staff. Our young trustees work with our Youth Advisory Board to provide a feedback loop with the main Board of Trustees.

We also facilitate opportunities for young people to use their voice in external contexts, such as in external consultations and through engagement with other youth organisations.

In 2025, we were awarded the London Youth Gold Quality Mark. This award recognises our commitment to involving young people in decision-making and celebrates the quality of our youth work provision. London Youth has over 500 members and when we received this award, ThinkForwardwere one of only 9 members to have achieved this level of accreditation, demonstrating our dedication to youth participation.



About the role



We are seeking trustees who bring sound judgement, a proportionate and risk-based approach to governance, and a commitment to supporting the organisation to achieve its mission. Our trustees understand the importance of balancing effective oversight with constructive challenge, helping to ensure that ThinkForward remains a safe, sustainable and high-performing charity for the young people we serve.

ThinkForward's board is made up of members, who are recruited, selected and approved by the Board of Trustees. Each trustee serves a three-year term.

What we ask of you:

- Attend at least one Trustee training programme as part of your induction so that you understand the work we deliver
- Attend Trustee meetings, which are held four times per year. These are generally 1.5 hours in duration and are a mix of online and in person meetings in London. Trustees are expected to attend at least three meetings per year.
- In addition, we have a subcommittee structure which also meets throughout the year. You will be asked to join one at least one sub-committee.

What we can offer you:

- An opportunity to develop your governance experience
- Training in safeguarding, equality and diversity
- Additional governance training
- The opportunity to be part of a fantastic charity which is working to prevent the next generation of youth unemployment

Person Specification



We are looking for those who value the potential of young people, are passionate about their growth and development and understand the challenges that some face. An interest in ThinkForward’s work and approach are essential as well as an ambitious outlook for our future.

We are particularly interested in individuals who are willing to use their expertise generously, act as ambassadors for ThinkForward, and support the organisation's continued growth, impact and long-term sustainability.

We welcome applications from individuals who can contribute senior-level expertise and insight in at least one of the following areas:

- Safeguarding policy and practice, with a strong understanding of protecting vulnerable young people and creating safe organisational cultures.
- Public policy, influencing and advocacy, particularly within the charity, education, youth or social mobility sectors.
- Public sector commissioning and contracting, including experience of local authority and central government procurement, commissioning and the delivery of services through the voluntary sector.
- Fundraising and philanthropy, including knowledge of the UK charity funding landscape, strategic income generation, developing sustainable funding partnerships and what healthy fundraising looks like for UK charities today.
- Finance, including an understanding of management and statutory accounts in the charity sector. Formal qualifications not required.
- Employment law best practice, with knowledge regarding employer and employee rights and an understanding of HR and operational procedures that support compliance with those rights.

Application details



To apply, please email your CV and covering letter summarising your motivations for applying for the trustee role, outlining the specialist skills you can bring to the governance of ThinkForward, and addressing the key points in the person specification to jobs@thinkforward.org.uk.

Applicants are asked to provide suitable contact details.

Our CEO, Ashley McCaul, would be delighted to speak to any interested candidates:
Email: ashley.mccaul@thinkforward.org.uk
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/amccaulsfg

We are committed to making our recruitment process accessible. If you require any reasonable adjustments at any stage of the application process, including submitting your application in an alternative format, please contact jobs@thinkforward.org.uk and we'll be happy to help.

At ThinkForward, we might use technology to help us to manage the recruitment process, but we don’t make decisions based on AI. We have a human approach to hiring and all applications are reviewed and assessed by our team. Similarly, what we are most interested in hearing about is your individual motivation, experience, skills and values. AI may be a helpful tool, but typically leads to generic answers, not stand out applications. Please make sure that your responses reflect your own thoughts and experiences.

Our principles

ThinkForward is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and post holders to share this commitment.

ThinkForward is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and applications from individuals are encouraged regardless of age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships.

As a registered Disability Confident employer, ThinkForward has an accessible recruitment process. We offer interviews to all applicants who meet the job requirements and who declare themselves as having a disability. If you need support, such as materials in larger print, dyslexic-friendly fonts or adjustments for the interview, please contact jobs@thinkforward.org.uk and we will ensure you have what you require to successfully complete this process.



ThinkForward

0300 102 4475

info@thinkforward.org.uk

www.thinkforward.org.uk

thinkforward-uk

@thinkforwarduk

@thinkforwarduk.bsky.social



ThinkForward is a charity registered with the Charity Commission.
Registration number 1152862.