



ENGINEERING INSPIRATION

PROMOTING ENGINEERING, PLANNING AND THE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY TO SCHOOLS

Background

Tackling skills shortages in the transport sector - a challenge now and for the future – is an important aim for Transport for London (TfL).

TfL's skills and employment strategy aims to encourage schoolchildren to consider career paths in transport. It's an aspiration that extends to children with special educational needs and others not-in-education, employment or training. It covers disengaged youth, ex-offenders, looked-after-children and those with refugee status.

London Transport Museum (LTM), as part of its role as an educational and heritage charity, is supporting TfL in its efforts to raise awareness of the kind of work opportunities that arise. The museum's learning department is providing educational activities to support young people in their studies and encourage them to consider careers in the transport industry via apprenticeships, traineeships and graduate schemes.

Key themes

A wide range of programmes and events support the project's theme of building skills and raising awareness. A common thread across them all is using the museum's collection to help youngsters develop interest or a skill in engineering or transport planning. By enabling school children to meet, talk to, and work with engineers and planners, youngsters are given the chance to obtain practical experience of real-life working scenarios and to gain insight into the world of work.

'TfL Inspire' involves secondary school children visiting a TfL depot where they meet members of TfL's 'ambassadors' programme – professionals who describe the nature of their work, their experience, and make themselves available to answer any questions put their way about the work they do. A practical 'eggsperiment', requiring the safe transport of an egg over a set distance, requires innovation, teamwork, budgeting, client liaison and good practical sense.



“We used the museum's collection to help hone in on research skills, tasking participants to find out about a company and different job roles. The museum was like having a physical website to explore. They did really well presenting their findings to the group, noticeably developing in confidence.”

A London Transport Museum trainer

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Other engagement activity, such as that supported by the Luke Rees-Pulley Trust charity, provides opportunities for students to develop practical skills, using museum materials to learn about issues such as tunneling, or tilting buses.

In 'DEEP' – the diploma of engineering engagement programme – the museum is building on a successful pilot project to support 14-19 year old students studying for the new engineering diploma in secondary schools. Four schools have taken part to date, visiting the museum and receiving outreach sessions in their own classrooms.

These activities also seek to ensure that disadvantaged and under-represented groups benefit from employment, training and skills opportunities that become available through TfL, its supply chain or TfL-related projects. An initiative called 'route into work' is beginning in order to better equip disadvantaged young people to secure apprenticeships, in collaboration with the London Apprenticeship Company. The aim is to foster understanding of work and help socially-excluded groups develop the confidence and skills required.

Outcomes

Encouraging young people to consider opportunities in transport and engineering is a continual process, and the fruits of efforts made today may only be evident in years to come. However, each event and programme increases the pool of people with insight into what is needed and what is on offer.

More than 700 young people and 60 teachers have taken part in a TfL Inspire initiative in ten separate events. Those involved certainly enjoy the experience. When asked to describe the best part of a TfL Inspire day, girls from Bullers Wood School in Bromley highlighted 'working in a team, carrying out the braking eggsperiment, and asking the ambassadors questions about their job'.

Route into work is proving inspirational. Many participants have found things they were interested in. Five companies have met the participants and 11 young people to date have applied for positions.

It is not just the children who benefit from this wide range of programmes. Sixty-four ambassadors have been involved since the start-up of TfL Inspire. Many have made clear their willingness to be involved again. Their enthusiasm demonstrates the capacity for life-long learning in roles that challenge and inspire.

“The young people are really keen to move on from the Route Into Work programme into work and some of them are ready to do so. It would be fantastic to see them progress – be it on work, apprenticeships or voluntary experience.”

**Rebecca Ash
Marketing and Projects
Manager, London
Apprenticeship Company**

From a Route into work participant: “The content is clearly put together. I took the information in. It’s not boring – it’s catchy, interesting and useful for my future”.

From the Route into work trainers: “It’s going well. We’re working with some really good young people whom we feel are ready for an apprenticeship”.

For any additional information on this case study or other TfL related work in this area, please contact the supplier skills team at supplierskills@TfL.gov.uk.