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Impact report

For the year ended 31st December 2025

Baker Dearing
Educational Trust



Mission

Baker Dearing Educational Trust is a UK charity established in 2010 to transform technical education and improve the life chances of young people.

Our mission is to empower every young person with a high-quality, employer-guided technical education that equips them with the skills, attributes and opportunities to thrive in life and work.

While the charity's initial focus was to originate and support the opening of University Technical Colleges (UTCs), our role has evolved. Today we support UTCs and other educational organisations to deliver high-quality technical education that connects education with industry, fosters innovation and creates opportunities for social mobility.

This work bridges the worlds of education and employment by bringing together schools, employers, universities and policymakers to ensure young people gain the knowledge, experience and networks they need to succeed.

During 2025:

- 44 UTCs supported
- 86.4% 'good' or 'outstanding' at Ofsted
- 30 CPD and networking events
- 2 new national employer partners
- 560 Baker Award recipients
- 1400 studying T Levels
- 97.5% T Level pass rate
- 30 MP visits to UTCs
- 8 parliamentary debates
- Improved life chances for 21,000 students

“Having spent years in Parliament and as Skills Minister, I've witnessed first-hand how Baker Dearing has become a genuine force for change in technical education — opening doors for young people who might otherwise have been left behind.

“The dedication and commitment of the Baker Dearing team have been the bedrock of the UTC programme's growth and resilience. Their work is not just valued — it is recognised and respected across government and industry alike.

“UTCs have outstanding outcomes and are real ladders of opportunity. I am excited about the road ahead — bringing the transformative power of a UTC education to even more young people across the country.”

— Rt Hon Robert Halfon

The challenge facing technical education

The UK faces growing skills shortages in key sectors such as engineering, construction, healthcare and digital technology. At the same time, emerging technologies and the transition to a green economy are increasing demand for advanced technical skills.

Yet access to high-quality technical education is declining and too many young people are leaving education without the skills or employer connections needed for modern careers.



Technical subjects provide a crucial foundation for apprenticeships, higher technical qualifications and skilled employment. However, many schools face barriers to delivering them, including the cost of specialist equipment and accountability measures that prioritise academic subjects.

Similarly, meaningful engagement with employers remains limited across much of the education system. Without stronger links between education and industry, many young people lack awareness of technical career pathways and the practical skills employers need.

University Technical Colleges were established to address these challenges by providing employer-led technical education for 14–19 year-olds. However, delivering this model requires expertise, collaboration and support that individual schools cannot easily provide alone.

Baker Dearing works with employers, universities, ministers, and schools to provide more young people with access to a high-quality, employer-led education, which will drive economic growth and address key shortages. This includes through the University Technical College network, the UTC Sleeve, the Baker Award for Technical Education, and our work on the Greater Manchester Baccalaureate.

¹ Campaign for the Arts, 2025; ² Careers and Enterprise Company, 2025; ³ Policy Exchange, 2025; ⁴ Executive Survey 2026, Make UK

Creating impact

Inputs

Support from employers, universities, trusts and foundations enables Baker Dearing to bring together expertise from across education and industry.

Activities

Baker Dearing:

- strengthens the national UTC network through CPD, events and shared best practice
- develops employer partnerships that create real industry experiences for students
- expands access to technical education through initiatives such as the Baker Award and UTC Sleeves
- supports regional and international partners through consultancy and collaboration
- influences national policy to support employer-guided technical education.

Outputs

Through this work we help deliver:

- stronger employer partnerships across technical education
- professional development and collaboration for teachers and leaders
- innovative technical education programmes and initiatives
- increased awareness of technical pathways among policymakers and industry.

Outcomes

These activities lead to:

Students

- improved attendance, engagement and progress
- stronger employability skills and clearer career pathways
- increased access to employer experiences and technical opportunities

UTCs and staff

- higher-performing institutions, including stronger Ofsted outcomes
- improved staff expertise, retention and collaboration
- greater organisational sustainability and engagement

Employers

- a stronger pipeline of skilled, work-ready young people
- more opportunities to shape education and engage with future talent

Wider system

- stronger employer partnerships across technical education
- increased recognition and support for technical pathways

Impact

Together, these outcomes help ensure that more young people progress into apprenticeships, higher technical education and skilled employment – strengthening the talent pipeline for industry and supporting economic growth.

Key strategic priorities

Baker Dearing works with schools, employers, universities and policymakers to expand access to high-quality, employer-guided technical education. Our work combines national leadership for the UTC programme with innovation and policy influence across the wider education system via three key strategic priorities.

1. Strengthening the UTC programme

Baker Dearing supports the 44 UTCs across England, which together educate around 21,000 students. Delivering this distinctive model of education requires national leadership and coordination. Without Baker Dearing, individual UTCs would struggle to address several systemic challenges:

Knowledge gap:

UTCs deliver a unique model of employer-guided education to which many teachers and leaders are new.

Capability gap:

Recruiting specialist teachers and developing strong employer partnerships requires ongoing support and shared expertise.

Funding gap:

UTCs deliver a more intensive curriculum with specialist equipment but receive the same funding as mainstream schools.

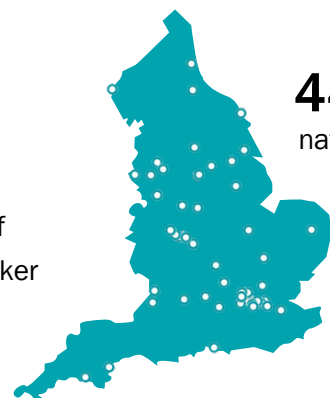
Awareness gap:

As relatively new institutions, UTCs must continually build awareness among students, parents, employers and policymakers.

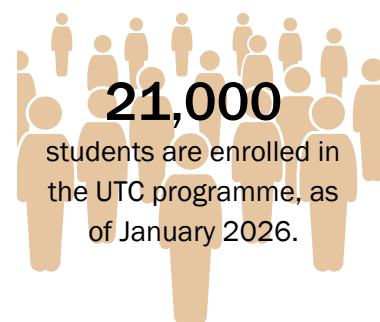
Conformity gap:

Unchecked, UTCs drift towards a mainstream curriculum due to external and internal pressures.

Baker Dearing has the institutional memory of what works in UTCs which informs effective support for UTC staff, either directly or by connecting them with other UTCs. We identify and share best practice across all 44 UTCs through training sessions and events. Additionally, Baker Dearing manages employer projects and competitions centrally, which not only reduces costs but also strengthens the UTC community.



44 UTCs nationally.



“Baker Dearing, in my opinion, has been the reason that the UTC model/movement is gaining in strength and has succeeded where other similar initiatives have fallen. Being part of a larger group and able to learn from each other and position UTCs to make such a difference to students who have a passion for STEM and working with employers in an innovative and profound manner is truly transformational.”

– Joanne Harper, CEO, Activate Learning Education Trust

Furthermore, Baker Dearing promotes UTCs, advocates for their interests with the government, and lobbies for policy changes that support the UTC mission. As the steward of the UTC brand, it ensures that all UTCs meet the necessary standards through regulation and enforcement.

2. Expanding access to employer-guided technical education

While UTCs demonstrate the power of employer-guided technical education, most young people in England still have limited access to this type of learning. Many schools lack the industry partnerships, curriculum expertise or resources needed to embed meaningful employer engagement in their programmes.

Baker Dearing therefore works to extend the reach of this model beyond UTCs through initiatives such as:


- The Baker Award for Technical Education which celebrates students who engage with employers, develop technical and employability skills, and can articulate their career plans.
- UTC Sleeves, which involve developing a high-quality, employer-led technical pathway within a mainstream school, to spread the benefits of a UTC education more widely.
- Affiliate partnerships such as the one we have with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) for the Greater Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc). We have developed an MBacc Award to drive students' involvement in technical education and employment preparation.

3. Influencing wider education policy

The success of technical education depends not only on individual schools but on the wider policy environment. Decisions about curriculum, qualifications, inspection and funding all shape whether schools are able to offer strong technical pathways.

Baker Dearing works closely with government, Ofsted, employers and sector partners to ensure that employer-guided technical education is recognised and supported within national policy.

Through research, advocacy and engagement with policymakers, we help shape an education system that values technical routes alongside academic ones and enables more young people to progress into apprenticeships, higher technical education and skilled employment.



“What I value most about Baker Dearing is the genuine support it provides to UTC principals... it’s often the informal advice and connections that make the biggest difference. The team is consistently responsive and knowledgeable, offering guidance, practical help, or simply moral support when it’s needed most. This level of accessibility is so helpful in the day-to-day challenges of leadership.”

– Hannah Wilson, Principal, UTC Leeds

1. Strengthening the UTC programme

Professional development and networks

We organise national events, conferences and training programmes that allow UTC staff to share best practice, learn from industry partners and strengthen their delivery of technical education. Our CPD programmes address areas where specialist training is otherwise unavailable, such as engineering education, employer-led projects and the implementation of new technical qualifications.

Baker Dearing also facilitates networks of principals, teachers and governors, ensuring knowledge and innovation are shared across the UTC system. In 2025 we delivered 30 CPD and networking events, covering functions from data managers, finance professionals, marketing and student recruitment, employer engagement leads, subject specialisms and UTC senior leadership and governors.

The CPD we offer is not available elsewhere.

“The anecdotal examples of latest practice and first-hand knowledge were VERY useful.”

– Engineering CPD attendee



“Best conference so far for me. It gave me a good balance of what, why and how as well as linking into the political landscape.”

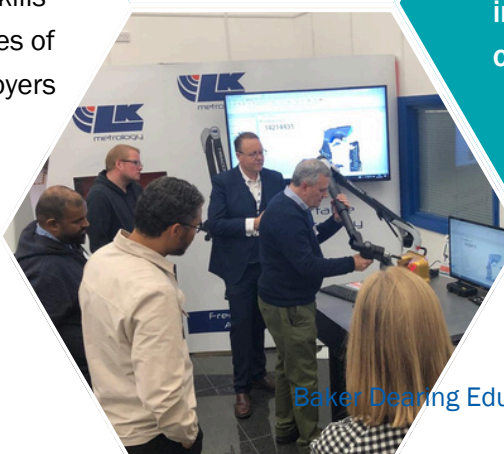
– Summer leadership conference attendee

“It has given me a good understanding of how to structure it into our school curriculum.”

– Engineering CPD attendee

Engineering CPD programme

A prime example of this is our ongoing Engineering CPD programme which we launched in 2025. We have tied technical provision closer to industry and improved UTC staff's understanding of industry skills needs, equipment, and standards through a series of “industry insight” days visiting engineering employers across the country. This has been made possible through the generous support of the Gene Haas Foundation and the programme is expanding in 2026 with additional support from the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851.



National employer partnerships

Employers are central to the UTC model. Baker Dearing develops partnerships with major companies that provide employer projects, industry insight and opportunities for students across multiple UTCs. In the past year, two large companies – Amazon and Morgan Sindall Infrastructure – have developed national partnerships with Baker Dearing, with further partnerships currently in development. These collaborations strengthen the distinctive employer-guided learning experience that UTCs offer, with employers providing governors for UTCs, support for events and providing coverage across all regions.

“It is only by seeing in person what University Technical Colleges can do, that you get an appreciation of the value and nature of a high-quality technical education which is so evidently transforming the life-chances of so many young people. We remain steadfast in our commitment to this partnership, and to helping create more pathways for more young people to achieve their full potential.”

– John Bumphrey, Amazon

“Morgan Sindall Infrastructure understands the fundamental value delivered by UTCs in creating opportunities and pathways into employment, which helps us build a future workforce with the skills our sector needs to thrive. As a business, we invest in UTCs because, first and foremost, it makes good business sense.”

– Gary Shuttleworth, Morgan Sindall Infrastructure

We have also delivered exciting employer-led projects for students to develop employability and be inspired by technical roles.

In addition to our continuing collaboration with STEM Racing, Baker Dearing organised the third UTC Health Tech Challenge in 2026. Eighty students from 10 UTCs developed and presented solutions to modern health problems: mental health, neurodevelopmental conditions, and long-term conditions. Solutions presented by the students include an AI-powered wheelchair. The challenge was supported by Sheffield Children’s NHS Foundation Trust, the National Centre for Child Health Technology, and a panel of industry judges.

Baker Dearing also facilitated a collaboration between UTC Derby Pride Park and smart home professionals association CEDIA. This involved students partaking in an independent living technology competition with a local smart home employer. Students and staff also visited a major smart home technology trade show in Barcelona, helping inform students about careers and technological trends.



Supporting excellence and accountability

Baker Dearing monitors the quality and integrity of the UTC model through the UTC Charter, trustee visits and performance data. We provide advice and challenge to UTC leaders, helping them deliver strong outcomes for students while maintaining the distinctive employer-led curriculum.

This collective support helps ensure that UTCs continue to deliver strong Ofsted outcomes and outstanding destinations for their students.

Across the UTC network:

86.4% of UTCs are rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted compared with 57% in 2015/16

31.8% are rated 'outstanding' or have 'outstanding' features

Recent Ofsted reports highlight the strength of the UTC model, with 2 UTCs inspected under the new inspection framework receiving 'exceptional' in at least one area.

“Some pupils arrive at school with substantial gaps in their knowledge or previous school experience. Leaders do everything in their power to reduce these barriers so that all pupils can thrive and succeed. This enables pupils to access the demanding curriculum and gain secure knowledge and skills.”

– Ofsted report into London Design and Engineering UTC, published January 2026, which rated the UTC as 'exceptional' in five categories.



“Pupils belong to a vibrant, thriving community at school, which makes sure that they develop and achieve incredibly high aspirations. Disadvantaged pupils benefit greatly. The school's work to support pupils' progression into further training, education or employment is highly effective.”

– Ofsted report into UTC Portsmouth, published January 2026, which rated the UTC as 'exceptional' in personal development and wellbeing.

2. Growing access to employer-guided technical education

While UTCs remain central to our work, Baker Dearing is expanding its reach so more young people can benefit from employer-guided technical education.

Baker Award for Technical Education

Phase 1 of the new Baker Award has delivered strong early impact across the University Technical College sector, recognising the achievements of 560 students across 14 UTCs. The award provides a structured framework for celebrating students' progress in employability and technical learning, helping to prepare them for further education, apprenticeships, and employment.



The award has attracted the sponsorship of leading employers and awarding bodies, including JCB, Amazon, Zurich Engineering, EAL, and the support of multiple other national organisations.

Students achieved awards across three levels, demonstrating strong engagement across the programme: 144 students at Level 1; 223 students at Level 2; 193 students at Level 3.

Building on the success of Phase 1, the Baker Award significantly expanded in 2025. Thirty-one UTCs and 2 schools committed to delivering Phase 2, more than doubling participation from the initial cohort. This growth reflects strong sector confidence in the Baker Award as a meaningful mechanism for recognising employability skills and technical achievement.

“The ceremony itself was a valuable opportunity to connect with industry professionals, listen to their career journeys, and gain insight into how technical skills continue to shape the future workforce and working world that we will be going into. I’m excited to keep building on the skills, knowledge, and connections I’ve gained.”

– Taylor Everitt, Thomas Telford UTC

“The Baker Award has opened my eyes to different opportunities available. I think employers will be more likely to hire me because this award adds volume to my qualifications. It has made me more confident and open to talking to people.”

– Ernest Venge, UTC Leeds



UTC Sleeves

Baker Dearing created the UTC Sleeve model and our promotion to employers and government means a UTC Sleeve is due to open in Barrow-in-Furness this September 2026. Baker Dearing successfully worked with stakeholders to find an appropriate venue school, has helped model the curriculum on local employer needs, and has engaged key large employers.


We have developed a national UTC Sleeve strategy, which means more young people should be able to access transformative technical education in their area soon. Further UTC Sleeves are in development for Manchester and the West Midlands, but multiple multi-academy trusts are interested in the initiative. This is because the UTC Sleeve provides a proven means of raising school students' awareness and ambitions for a STEM career.

The Policy Exchange report, *From School To The Skilled Workforce*, cited polling that revealed 80% of students and 89% of parents now believe practical experience is more important than academic qualifications for securing a technical career.

Consultancy and regional partnerships

Baker Dearing also supports other education providers through consultancy and regional partnerships.

For example, in Autumn 2025, Baker Dearing began an exciting partnership with the GMCA to develop the MBacc Award. This award, due to rollout in academic year 2026/7, will celebrate young people who develop their employability and technical skills, much like the Baker Award. We have secured the help of partners to help create the award and support its implementation, in collaboration with the GMCA and partners including AtkinsRéalis.



"The [training] session was engaging and well structured, and the wider partnership has been extremely positive. The team's commitment to tackling a complex challenge and genuinely listening to the system has been clear throughout."

– Client speaking about the GMCA consultancy work

Baker Dearing International was established to expand Baker Dearing's reach internationally alongside these UK-based regional projects.

Together these initiatives enable Baker Dearing to expand the reach and influence of employer-guided technical education beyond the UTC programme.

T Levels

UTCs have become centres of T Level excellence, with over two-thirds now delivering the gold-standard technical qualifications to over 1,400 students currently.

97.5% UTC pass rate for T Levels, versus a 91.4% national rate.

92.5% UTC retention rate for T Level students, versus 73% nationally.

72% of UTC T Level students progress to higher or degree-level apprenticeships, versus 64% nationally.

Baker Dearing is brokering support from large employer partners for UTCs to develop a 'one-stop shop' model for T Level work placements across the country. Baker Dearing also operates a WhatsApp group for UTC T Level leads to share best practice and has delivered training on arranging placements to employer engagement leads.

Thomas Telford UTC student Alina Safonova has secured an assistant project manager apprenticeship at one of Europe's leading railway infrastructure service suppliers, Colas Rail, after completing her design, surveying and planning T Level.

Alina credits the UTC with "pushing me towards what I wanted and in the right direction for my future career to be successful."



3. Influencing policy and the wider education system

Political engagement

Baker Dearing plays an active role in shaping national education policy to ensure technical education is recognised and supported.

Our policy work includes:

- engaging ministers, MPs and policymakers
- contributing evidence and analysis to policy reviews
- working with Ofsted to ensure inspection frameworks reflect the distinctive nature of technical education.

In the past year, our engagement has helped secure an exemption for UTCs from the new National Curriculum. Baker Dearing lobbied ministers, officials, MPs with UTCs in their constituencies, and a target group of peers. Lord Baker lobbied ministers in correspondence, Lords debates and meetings with Baroness Smith, the skills minister. We encouraged UTC principals to lobby their own UTC MPs, and we worked closely with JCB and other employers.

Several political thought leaders further wrote and spoke to ministers. In his weekly column for The Telegraph, Lord Hannan urged ministers to exempt UTCs from the full National Curriculum. At the relevant House of Lords stage of the legislation, ten peers spoke on our behalf and we were supported by the MP for Heathrow UTC when the exemption was backed by the House of Commons.

Baker Dearing has successfully ensured the new Ofsted inspection framework does not unduly malign UTCs. Meetings were held with the Deputy Director of Ofsted, including facilitating a visit to a UTC for

“UTCs are doing a very good job in providing technical education which then leads on to apprenticeships.”

– Baroness Smith, Minister for Skills

“UTCs are making a critical contribution to repairing that skills pipeline – and have the potential to do even more.”

– Former education secretaries Lord Blunkett and Gillian Keegan, and Liberal Democrat education spokesperson in the Lords, Lord Storey CBE (from the foreword to a 2025 Policy Exchange report into the UTC programme)

discussions with principals. Additionally, arrangements were made for two UTCs to participate in trial inspections. This resulted in highly positive outcomes for recently inspected UTCs, including a sweep of 'exceptional' ratings for London Design and Engineering UTC and UTC Portsmouth.

In 2025, Baker Dearing supported around 30 MP visits to UTCs, including ministerial visits by Bridget Phillipson, Education Secretary, the skills minister Baroness Smith of Malvern, and Foreign Office minister Hamish Falcolner. UTCs were also cited in 8 Parliamentary debates.

Thought leadership

Baker Dearing has established itself as a technical education thought leader, based on its reputation of successfully creating and supporting the UTC network. The main means by which Baker Dearing promotes its thought leadership is engagement with the media: in 2025, comments and articles from Baker Dearing were published by The Times, FE Week, and The Manufacturer, among others. We also publish The Blueprint, a monthly podcast for Baker Dearing's external stakeholders, through LinkedIn. The podcast melds input from key political and industry figures such as a former schools minister and PwC's UK Leader of Industrials & Services, with input from UTC leaders. Baker Dearing is also a regular contributor to government consultations and select committee inquiries, helping burnish our thought leadership credentials with political stakeholders.

Alumni board

In 2025, we launched the UTC Alumni Board, made up of a diverse range of former students who are helping build a supportive network of their peers and ensure the voice of young people is at the heart of Baker Dearing decision-making.

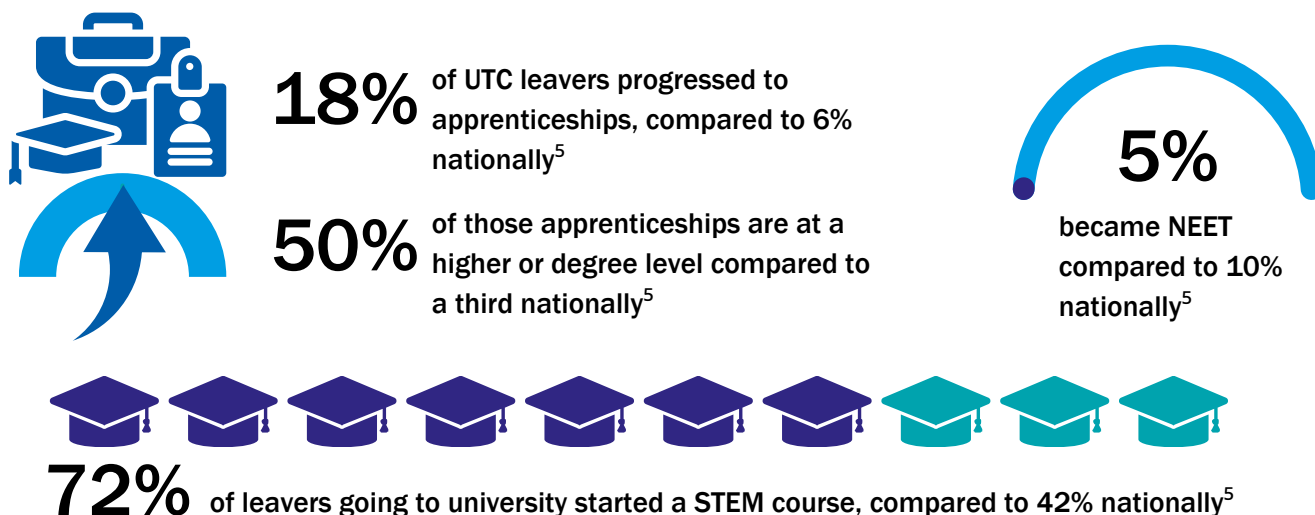


The board's focus is to strengthen the reputation of UTCs, celebrate the achievements of alumni and advise Baker Dearing on how we can better support future UTC students. Ultimately, we want to raise the profile of UTC pathways and showcase the incredible careers our alumni go on to build. Its first major initiative is the development of a podcast series, capturing high-quality interviews with alumni and sharing success stories that highlight the positive impact of a UTC education.



Impact on young people

The strongest measure of Baker Dearing's impact is the success of the UTC programme, and the best measure of their success is their destinations. UTC leavers consistently achieve stronger destinations than national averages. In 2025:

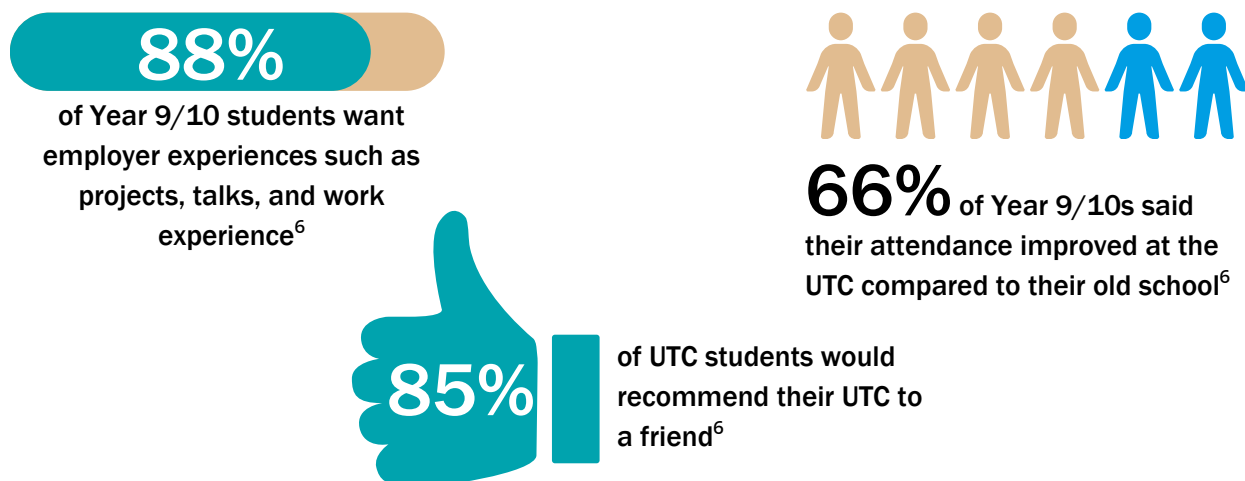


UTCs also deliver particularly strong outcomes for students who may face additional barriers.



These outcomes demonstrate the power of combining technical learning with employer engagement.

Student feedback also highlights the value of employer-guided learning:



⁵ National average for Level 3 leavers from mainstream schools and colleges (summer 2023 - latest); ⁶ UTC student survey, 2025

Alumni stories

A major milestone in Lucie Gresham-Hill's UTC journey was winning a prestigious Arkwright Scholarship, sponsored by R G Carter, following a rigorous aptitude test and interview at Cambridge University's engineering department. By the end of year 13, Lucie, who travelled 30 miles each day to attend UTC Norfolk, had secured three degree apprenticeship offers.

She completed a Level 6 construction management BSc through a degree apprenticeship with Morgan Sindall and is now a build manager with Willmott Dixon Construction.

Lucie says: "Finishing year 13 with three degree apprenticeship offers was proof of how powerful work experience, networking and making a strong impression on employers can be."



Lyla Chandler studied at Energy Coast UTC from 2020 to 2024, where she achieved an Industrial Cadet Gold Award with Arup, completed work experience with Sellafield Ltd, and partook in an employer project with Morgan Sindall Infrastructure which her team won, earning her an interview.

By the end of year 13, Lyla secured a Level 6 project management degree apprenticeship, of which she is now in her second year, with Morgan Sindall Infrastructure – a partner of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust.

She says: "Energy Coast UTC offered me many opportunities to bridge my academic learning to industry experience, preparing me for the world of work by developing my employability skills."

After progressing from Ron Dearing UTC to a Level 6 degree apprenticeship with Spencer Group, Oliver Walkington says he "strongly believes a UTC education model is the framework for successful employer-led education for students."

He studied at the UTC from 2018 to 2020, during which time, he engaged extensively with employer partners. A pivotal moment came with a week-long placement at Spencer Group in 2019, which directly shaped his post-18 pathway.

Oliver graduated from his degree with first-class Honours in 2025. He is now a fully qualified quantity surveyor and undertaking an LLM in construction law and dispute resolution.



Values

Our organisational values shape both what we do and how we do it. They reflect our commitment to transforming young lives through high-quality technical education, while working collaboratively with partners across education, industry and government. By combining ambition with expertise and influence, we aim to create lasting change, ensuring more young people, from all backgrounds, can access opportunities to thrive in life and work.



Social impact

The most measurable impact of employer-guided technical education is the stronger destinations achieved by young people after they leave education.

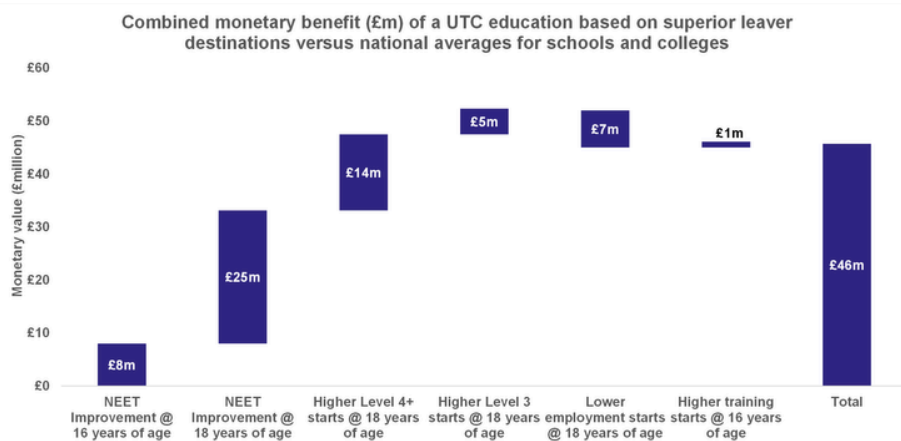
Students from UTCs are significantly more likely to progress into apprenticeships, higher technical education and skilled employment – and far less likely to become not in education, employment or training (NEET).

These improved destinations create real economic and social value.

For example:

- fewer young people becoming NEET reduces long-term costs to the taxpayer
- more young people progressing into higher-level apprenticeships increases lifetime earnings and tax contributions
- more students entering STEM careers helps address national skills shortages.

Reducing NEET figures alone delivers significant value. Lower NEET rates among UTC students are estimated to reduce long-term public costs by c.£33 million (see chart on page 18).



Based on national data and established economic research, the total annual societal benefit associated with UTC student destinations is estimated at: **£46 million per year.**⁷

Baker Dearing’s role in creating this impact

While the majority of this impact is generated through students attending UTCs, Baker Dearing plays a critical role in enabling these outcomes.

UTCs with higher levels of engagement with Baker Dearing (through leadership support, professional development, employer partnerships and national coordination) achieve stronger results.

UTCs with higher engagement with Baker Dearing achieve 16% better outcomes.⁷

To reflect this relationship conservatively, half of this difference (8%) is attributed to Baker Dearing’s contribution to student outcomes.

Social return on investment

When this contribution is compared with the cost of running the charity, it demonstrates a strong return on investment.

Monetary value of Impact of student leaver destinations	Per UTC Value (÷44 UTCs)	Baker Dearing contribution (x 8%), per UTC	
£46m	➔ £1,040,000	➔ £83,500	= 3.7x
UTC Licence Fee, per UTC	Baker Dearing additional £500k fundraising, per UTC	Value of Baker Dearing input, per UTC	
£11,400	+	£11,400	= £22,800

£3.70 of social value created for every £1 invested in Baker Dearing.⁷

This means that investment in Baker Dearing strengthens the system that enables employer-guided technical education to succeed, delivering measurable benefits for young people, employers and the wider economy.

Baker Dearing’s wider work, including policy influence and the expansion of employer-guided technical education beyond UTCs, aims to extend this impact to many more young people.

⁷Baker Dearing Impact Assessment January 2025