



Our strategy for growth

2024–2028





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Unless otherwise stated, all data is from Tutors United's own quantitative and qualitative research (eligibility and progress assessments, surveys, focus groups and interviews).

Our mission

We're Tutors United. **We're on a mission to end the attainment and employability gap through the power of community-based tutoring.**

We support young people to thrive at two key transition points – from primary to secondary school, and from university to employment.





“

It's like school but better...
**Tutors United was a sparkle in
my work and learning.** My
tutor is like Albert Einstein.

Hana

Valedictorian speech at
TU Graduation 2024



Our 2028 vision

After a decade of scaling from a start-up to serving around 800 young people a year, amid constant external change and challenge, we're excited to share our vision for the next phase of Tutors United's journey. Huge thanks to the TU team, trustees, families, tutors and partners for their time and expertise to help us shape this four-year strategy.

By 2028, we aim to reach 1,000 primary school children and employ 160 university students a year, by deepening our delivery within London and expanding across newer areas like the Midlands and Liverpool. We want to harness our cherished existing partnerships with housing associations, while growing support from other community and corporate partners who share our mission to support young people from low-income backgrounds to thrive in education and employment. We will boost our core model with more career development opportunities for young people plus an enhanced offer to support secondary school transition.

To achieve this vision and maintain quality as we scale, we know we need to consolidate first – so year one will focus on strengthening our funding, relationships and systems to build the solid foundations for sustainable growth.



Amy Whitelock Gibbs

CEO
Tutors United

Why we exist

Tutors United was created back in 2012 by our inspiring founder, Joel Buchanan, when he was just 17. Asked to tutor his younger cousin while struggling to find paid, meaningful work experience in the run-up to university, Joel set up TU to solve these twin problems – employing university students to give vital academic support to primary school children.

His model is still the bedrock of TU over a decade later, infused by Joel's passionate, innovative spirit. In many ways the world has changed, with major political, economic and technological shifts, exacerbated by the global pandemic. Yet the core need for accessible, community-based tuition - which couples educational support with employment and training, while bringing people together - remains stark. **We've adapted to change and challenges, but stayed true to Joel's vision and legacy, now reaching over 800 young people each year across London, the South, the Midlands and the East of England.**



Why our work matters now

TU's work is needed now more than ever, with inequalities even more entrenched following the pandemic and recent cost-of-living crisis. The low-income, migrant and multilingual communities we serve face less education, lower employment and more isolation.

Children from statistically disadvantaged backgrounds are **20% less likely to achieve expected standards** in reading, writing, and Maths by the end of primary school – with pupils from low-income families on average 10.3 months behind their wealthier peers. **By the time they sit their GCSEs, this gap is 18.8 months** (ONS, 2023) with a multiplier effect meaning they are less likely to pass their exams aged 16 and in turn less likely to be in education or work aged 21 (Department for Education, 2023). That's why we must act to close the gap in primary school - yet many more children need tuition than can access it.

Disruptions to schooling during Covid-19 reversed previous trends to narrow these inequalities and it could take a decade for the attainment gap to return to pre-pandemic levels (Public Accounts Committee, 2023). The cost of living crisis has made things even worse – our families report being forced to cut back spending on social contact with family and friends plus after-school activities and academic support for their children, compounding educational inequalities and isolation still further.

The employability gap is also stark, with good grades alone often not enough to transition to meaningful employment post-graduation, especially for young people without professional networks or the means to take-up volunteering or paid internships. **Students from low-income backgrounds are less likely to go into professional jobs**, and if they do, more likely to be paid less (Social Mobility Advisory Group – Universities UK, 2016)



479

children on our
waiting list in
2023-24



93%

parents/carers
limited spending on
academic support



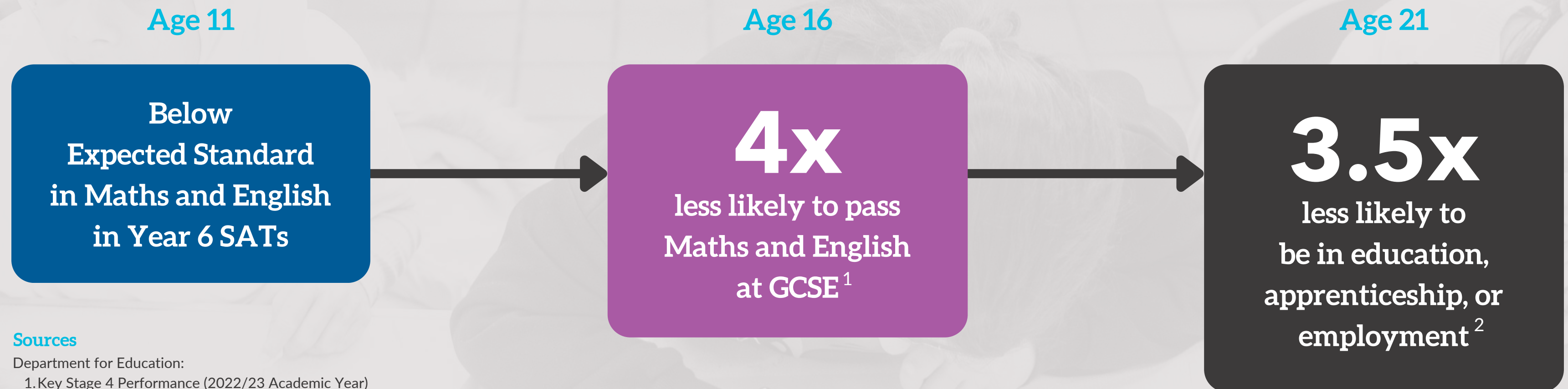
70%

parents/carers cut back
on socialising with
family and friends

Why our work matters for the future

National evidence underlines the strong link between the educational attainment of primary school pupils and career outcomes for young adults. Pupils who finish Key Stage 2 not meeting expected standards in their assessments in Maths and English are 4 times less likely to pass their Maths and English GCSEs. In turn, those pupils will be 3.5 times less likely to be in education, apprenticeships, or employment by age 21.

Career outcomes are always front-of-mind for TU, our housing association and employer partners, and our funders – and the data leaves no doubt that a child's time in primary school, though seemingly years away from the world of work, is a critical moment to intervene to ensure prosperous futures into adulthood.



Sources

Department for Education:

1. Key Stage 4 Performance (2022/23 Academic Year)
2. Longer Term Destinations (2020/21 Academic Year)

Why our model matters

Our unique model delivers effective, evidence-based tutoring in the heart of communities where the need is greatest, while giving university students core skills they need to succeed in graduate employment.

Liverpool

55% of children achieve expected standards in reading, writing and maths vs. 66% in London

Birmingham

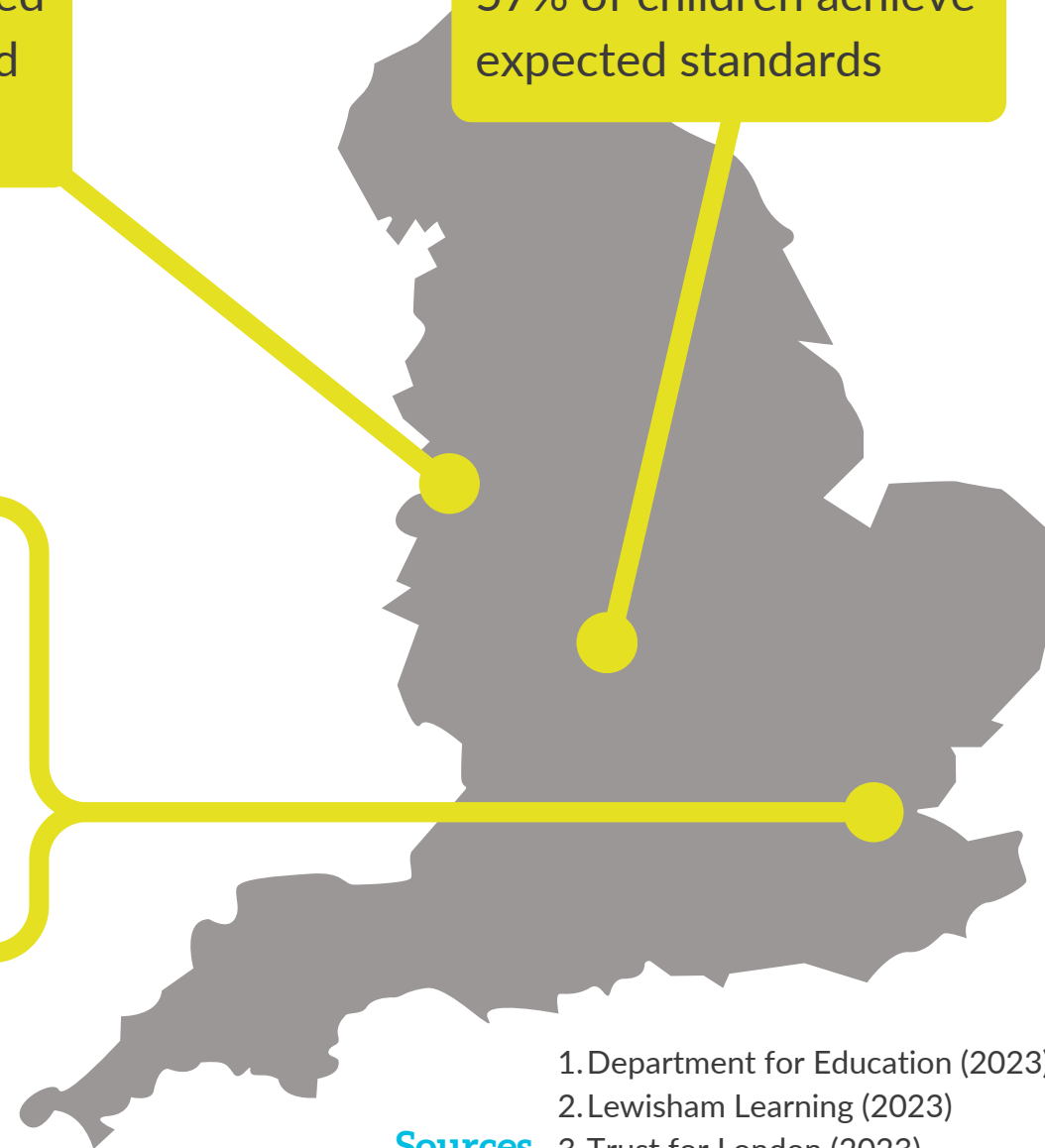
57% of children achieve expected standards

Lewisham

Only 41% of pupils eligible for free school meals achieved expected standards

Tower Hamlets

Highest rate of child poverty in England, with impact on GCSE results



Sources

1. Department for Education (2023)
2. Lewisham Learning (2023)
3. Trust for London (2023)

“

The evidence for the efficacy of tutoring is strong.

[...] targeted, frequent and consistent small-group tuition sessions can help struggling pupils to make around 4 months' additional progress over the course of an academic year. However, tuition is also an expensive intervention and difficult to access by children from disadvantaged communities.

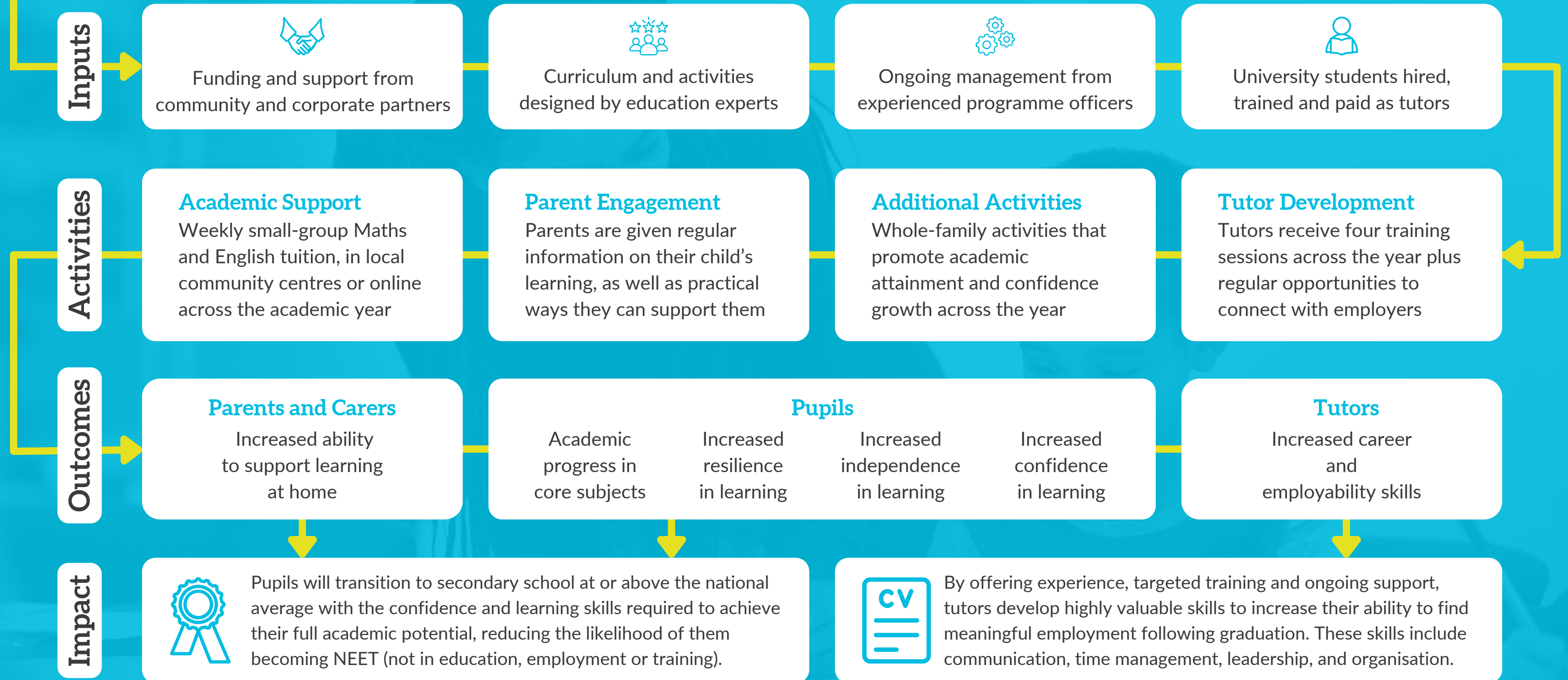
Department for Education (2023)

Top four skills that employers look for in graduate recruitment

- Adaptability
- Problem-solving
- Communication
- Team work

QS Global Employer Survey (2022)

Our Theory of Change



Our track record

From our first five pilot programmes in Hackney and Islington back in 2013-14, we've grown over the past decade to consistently deliver 60+ hubs in the last two academic years, adapting to offer both online and in-person tuition, and reaching diverse, low-income communities right across London and beyond. We're proud of the direct and long-term impact of our programmes.

Growth during our 2021-2024 strategy

Academic year	Pupils	Tutors	Hours of tuition	Hubs	English progress	Maths progress
2021-22	564	103	2,909	45	1.5 sub-levels	44%
2022-23	786	132	3,476	63	1.1 sub-levels	64%
2023-24	683	109	3,080	60	1.2 sub-levels	66%

Long-term impact

92%

parents/carers agreed TU supported their child's transition to Year 7

85%

parents/carers said their child was meeting targets in English in Year 7

89%

parents/carers said their child was meeting targets in Maths in Year 7

77%

tutors gained meaningful employment within 6 months of graduating

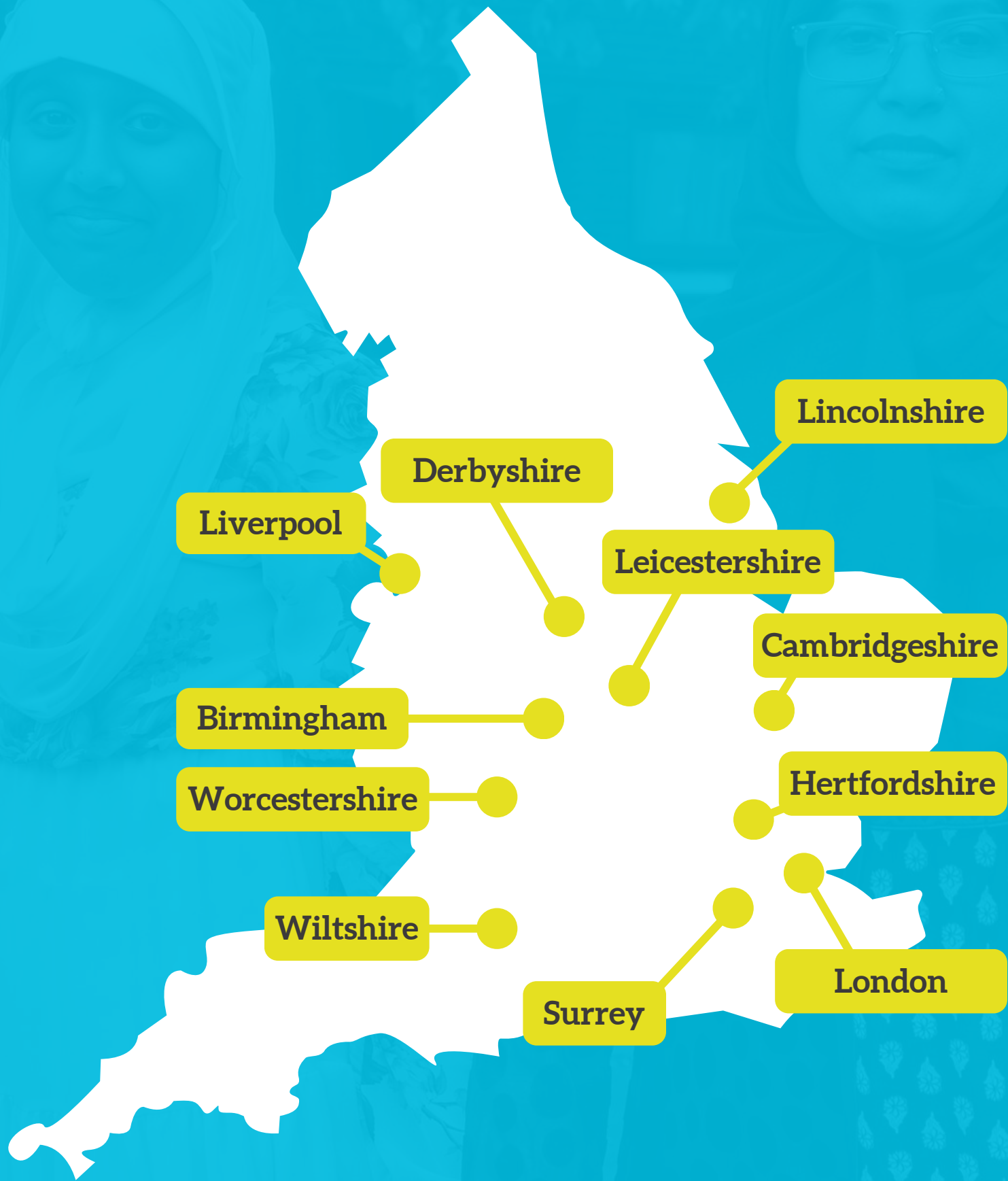
77%

tutors felt their TU experience and training helped them find work

Where we worked in 2023-24

With strong roots in London, we've always been committed to serving communities in other parts of England where the attainment gaps are often greater. We started working outside of London for the first time, in Nottingham and Derby, in 2014, which was TU's second full year of operation. We now serve multiple locations, successfully using online tuition to reach more dispersed communities and adapt delivery to local needs.

Total hubs	60
Face-to-face hubs	35
Online hubs	25
In-London hubs	51
Out-of-London hubs	9





At Clarion Futures we feel proud to be able to work with such a wonderful and empowering partner as Tutors United. The work they are doing with children in our local communities is truly amazing. **We have been able to see the confidence in the Clarion Cohort grow** as the sessions have progressed. Tutors United are such a joy to work with. **They are always full of positive energy and are able to offer solutions to any challenges that arise.**



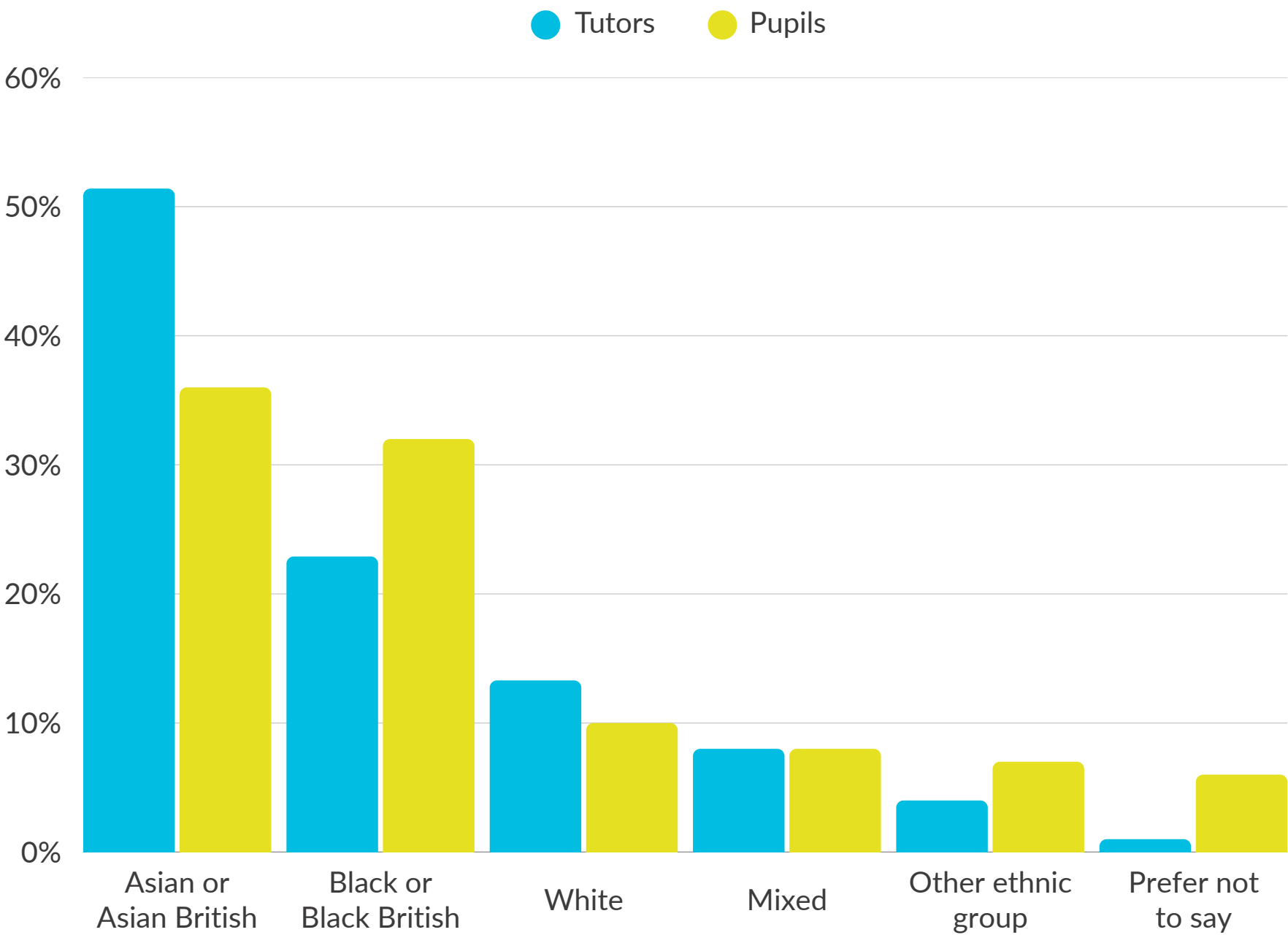
Gavin Shurvinton

Communities Manager - East and North
Clarion Futures Communities





Who we served in 2023-24


We always strive to recruit tutors from similar backgrounds to the pupils they teach, making sure we target young people who need academic and career support the most, while unlocking a powerful role-modelling effect.




Our pupils


 **82%**
household income
below £35,000


 **69%**
eligible for
free school meals


 **77%**
families on
means-tested benefits


 **41%**
speak English as an
additional language

Our tutors

 **52%**
household income
below £35,000

 **34%**
eligible for
free school meals

 **36%**
first in family to
go to university

 **48%**
fluent in another
language to English

Strategy development insights

To inform this 2024-28 strategy, we drew on the rich knowledge and experience of our team, trustees, families, tutors, and partners across a range of sectors. Over 18 months, we reflected internally, analysed our quantitative data, and conducted qualitative workshops, focus groups and interviews with these audiences.

Standout, consistent themes from internal and external stakeholders were:



We have a **highly-valued, relationship-based, impactful core delivery model** that we need to consolidate and preserve as we grow, by sequencing and scaling sustainably.



There is **clear need and scope for growth** - both more depth within existing areas such as London, and breadth into newer areas such as the Midlands and Liverpool.



We need to build a **stronger career development offer** for tutors, combining in-house TU opportunities with a range of corporate and employer partnerships.



We should **boost our core offer for young people**, to support the secondary school transition and combat holiday 'learning loss', and to offer more work opportunities.



We must **strengthen our systems and funding model**, to maximise our 'ingredients' for growth, combat the 'blockers' for growth and ensure our small team can thrive.



Insights from families

With a lot of quantitative data collected from surveys, we analysed the responses and identified some gaps and questions we had for our families. Through phone interviews, we consulted parents and carers from a mix

of programmes – in and out of London, online and face-to-face, longstanding and new hubs – to understand what families value about TU and how we can do better.

Previous data analysis

Final Surveys 2022-23

113 responses: 83% agree that tuition increased pupil's confidence in English or Maths and 94% happy with our service

Information Sessions 2023-24

201 responses: 77% stating that their child would be the first in their family to go to university

Progress Evenings 2023-24

91 responses: 95% agree that the weekly lesson feedback helped the family to understand their child's performance

Additional questions

What do you value most about TU and is the service what you expected? If not, what else would you like to see more of from TU?

If money was not an issue, would you pay for the service that TU provides and if so, how much would you pay?

What words or phrases would you use to describe TU to other parents?

If you could change one thing about TU, what would it be?

Responses from 41 parents

Weekly feedback from tutors
High quality and professional for a free service!
TU's 'vibes' and kindness

Supports school
Flexible and adaptable to family and cultural needs
Good communication

Would pay, £10-£20 mostly

At first no, but now would as can see the difference to child

Friendly

Helpful

Inclusive

Longer or more lessons
Smaller groups

Later start
Other subjects

More homework
More year groups

“

Your unwavering support and dedication have greatly helped my daughter in her English and Maths studies [going into] secondary school. We are truly grateful for your assistance and commitment to my daughter['s] education. **Given our positive experience, my son is also eager to study at Tutors United.** Thank you once again for everything you have done.

Parent / Carer



“

The extra lessons from Tutors United definitely helped [my child] with her Maths. A few months ago, she was below expected and she has worked really hard to get her grades up. **In her SATS, she was only one point away from above expected.** Thank you for the support.

Parent / Carer



Insights from tutors

We gathered insights from over 350 tutors via quantitative survey data and in-depth qualitative research, to explore what they value about their roles, the impact on employability, and areas for improvement.

Quantitative Research

Over 300 survey respondents
from tutors between
2019-24

What our tutors value

Tutors appreciate the satisfaction of making a difference through teaching, connectedness to a community, personalised support from the TU team, strong TU systems, and the transferable skills they gain from tutoring, such as communication, adaptability, time management, problem-solving and confidence. They also value unique opportunities beyond the classroom that enhance their growth e.g. TU internships.

Qualitative Research

Strategy workshop with 43 current tutors
Focus group with 6 current tutors
Interviews with 3 former tutors

Opportunities to improve our tutor impact

Tutors expressed interest in stronger connections with a range of employers and more opportunities outside the classroom to broaden their career horizons, prepare them for employment, and provide tangible experience to draw on in interviews and applications for post-university roles. Some would also like more tutoring hours where possible, to maximise their income and work experience while studying.



“

This organisation is the only one I have worked at that genuinely **puts the development of their employees at the top of their priorities, both as tutors and as university students** seeking to develop skills that will allow them to gain employment after university!



Nefo Yuki-Igbinosa

Online Tutor of the Year

“

I was able to help children who may not have many resources to work with and I have seen an improvement in them, not only their academic performance but also their attitude towards learning.

Khadiza Ahmed

East London Tutor of the Year



Insights from partners and stakeholders

We sought feedback from existing housing association clients and conducted 10 stakeholder interviews with current grant funders, officials at the Department for Education, a local authority, a primary school, other tutoring and youth charities, children's policy and rights experts, and corporates.

Challenges	Opportunities
Scaling up sustainably as a small charity, maintaining quality while avoiding geographical growth in a scattergun or superficial way	Scope to build on our successful London growth in the past decade with a targeted "core cities" approach, modest growth is attractive to funders
Stretched schools budgets: funding mainly goes towards special educational needs and disabilities or extra staff, so little is left for tutoring	Positive policy climate: Labour Government warm to tutoring and keen to drive local investment as part of children's recovery plan
Housing association market: funding pressures plus frequent changes and mergers, increasing need to access match and social value funding	Community-based model and links to housing associations sets us apart from competitors, while tutor employability model appeals to corporates
Need to further maximise our impact at key transition points: e.g. for Year 7 pupils, 6th formers, 18+ who don't go to university	Develop and embed our innovations in 2023-24: Classroom Assistant role for 16-18 year olds and pilot year 6-7 transition programme



Predictably, children from wealthier backgrounds are the main beneficiaries of private tuition, which can exacerbate education inequalities. **I am extremely proud that through the partnership with Tutors United we can offer free tuition for children**, particularly those from low income homes. Offering initiatives, such as this, **helps the housing association build trust with our residents**, increases engagement and contributes towards our community investment and social value programmes.



Kimberley Wadham-Castles

Head of Customer Engagement
Riverside





Ingredients and blockers for growth

Our strategic development and analysis underlines that there are strong 'ingredients' to unlock our future growth, if we can mitigate or overcome current 'blockers' internally and externally that would prevent delivery at scale.

Ingredients

The **scale of unmet need** shown by the post-pandemic learning gap and TU's own waiting list

Our **focused cohort** – we know the pupils and tutors we want to reach, and we achieve this

Our **strong record of delivery and impact** over more than a decade

Our **community approach** rooted in relationships with parents and partners on the ground

A **sellable and scalable model** – we can deliver anywhere and we can adapt to local needs

Blockers

Our **funding model** – traditionally an annual cycle of smaller contracts, mainly from housing associations who support TU but face increasing financial pressures

Our **internal systems and processes** which are still too manual to support quality delivery at scale and need to engage more effectively with families and tutors

Resourcing, workload and capacity – growing the team to match but not overtake delivery and income

The challenge of **targeting new areas** – avoiding superficial growth or minimal impact in multiple areas

Our growth ambition and approach

To capitalise on the ingredients for growth and address the blockers that could stand in our way, our strategy combines modest but ambitious reach goals by year four, with a focus on consolidation to bolster our foundations in year one.

Strategic objectives (2024-28)

- 1** **Grow** to reach more young people than ever before, deepening our work in London and broadening into targeted core areas
- 2** **Sustain** the quality and impact of our programmes as we grow
- 3** **Diversify** our funding and partnerships to drive sustainable multi-year delivery and boost the tutor career development offer
- 4** **Evolve** our core model to maximise the transition from Year 6 to 7 and from education to employment
- 5** **Strengthen** TU to be a more inclusive and efficient organisation, where all staff can thrive and wellbeing is prized

Year one priorities (2024-25)

Liverpool strategy, relationship building and pilot hubs

English progress review to improve assessment of pupils and communication of impact

Systems improvements and automation plus website revamp to support scale-up and parent/carer engagement

Pricing model review and new income strategy to ensure we grow in a financially profitable and operationally sustainable way

Corporate partnerships strategy and relationship building

Embed innovation into core model e.g. Classroom Assistants and year 6 transition pilot

Team skills-mapping and resourcing review

2028 goals

Reach 1,000 primary school children with our tuition programmes

Engage with 1,000 parents and carers to support their child's learning at home

Deliver a third of hubs outside London, focused on Liverpool and the Midlands

Hire, train and pay 160 young people as tutors and classroom assistants

Annual impact goals

80% of pupils make progress in English and/or Maths

75% of pupils, parents and carers report increased confidence in learning

90% of tutors report increased employability skills



Our 2028 goals set out a bold and pragmatic vision for TU's future growth. I'm so proud of how the team has weathered many challenges and adapted our delivery over the years. It is through this, and our fantastic partnerships, that we have evolved from a small start-up to making a lasting difference to the lives and futures of hundreds of young people and families. Now, it's critical we strengthen our foundations, to unlock our scale-up potential whilst maintaining the heart of TU as we grow. **We're excited to work with community and corporate partners to build sustainable, multi-year programmes, increasing our reach across England in targeted local areas and maximising the education and career support we offer.**



Laura Wilson

Chair of the Board of Trustees





TUTORS
UNITED

The logo for Tutors United is centered on the page. It features the word "TUTORS" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with the letters slightly slanted to the right. Below it, the word "UNITED" is written in a smaller, yellow, sans-serif font, with wide letter spacing. The background of the entire page is a blue-tinted photograph of three students (two girls and one boy) sitting at a desk, focused on their work. The girl on the left is wearing a hijab and writing in a notebook. The boy on the right is also writing. A girl in the background is looking down at her work. The overall tone is educational and collaborative.