









# THE BLAKEMORE FOUNDATION

The Blakemore Foundation is a charitable trust established by the Blakemore family to support good causes across A. F. Blakemore's trading area.

During 2018 the Blakemore Foundation donated **£444,923** to **7,633** good causes across the company's trading area of England and Wales.

The Blakemore Foundation offers

four types of grant, which are:

1. **Monetary:** Can be awarded up to £200. These grants support essential facilities, appeals and ongoing community services.
2. **In-kind:** Can be awarded up to £200. These support events with a donation of food, drink, toiletries or supplies from our company owned SPAR stores.
3. **Match-fund:** Can be awarded

- up to £200. These match fundraising by an A.F. Blakemore employee for a good cause.
- 4. **Independent Retailer Scheme:** Can be awarded up to £200. These aim to support all our independent retailers fundraising or ongoing charitable work.



# KEY STATISTICS

NUMBER OF DONATIONS



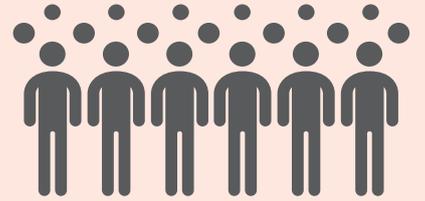
7,633

AMOUNT DONATED



£444,923

MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTED



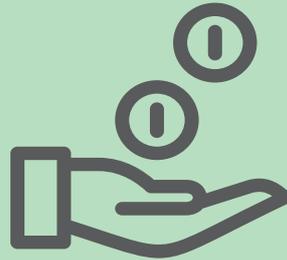
798,387

AMOUNT FUNDRAISED



£502,415

AMOUNT OF LEVERAGE FUNDING



£966,242

AMOUNT AWARDED TO EDUCATIONAL GOOD CAUSES



£97,850

1,681



DONATIONS AWARDED TO EDUCATIONAL GOOD CAUSES

AMOUNT AWARDED TO ENVIRONMENTAL GOOD CAUSES



£10,154

AMOUNT FUNDRAISED FOR THE

**NSPCC**

£388,328



# BRANCHING OUT



Branching Out is a community education programme, aimed to inspire, engage and motivate people into the world of work, whilst enabling A.F. Blakemore to recruit and grow talent within the business.



## KEY ASPECTS:

- Improve the employability skills of young people and the workforce of tomorrow.
- Spread awareness of A.F. Blakemore to local communities and the variety of career opportunities we provide – this is specifically relevant to our Apprenticeship and Graduate campaigns.
- In turn we are increasingly using Apprentices and Graduate recruits to participate in Branching Out activity to aid their development and motivate young people to consider the sector.
- Utilise the Apprenticeship Levy and encourage staff to continue their learning whilst in the business.



The Blakemore Branching Out programme starts with INSPIRE. This aims to support young people across four or more key interventions, enabling them to gain the necessary skills to enter employment successfully, provide insight into the world of work and ultimately help reduce youth unemployment.

A.F. Blakemore employees work with schools and other education bodies across its trading area to offer a more strategic approach to employability includes reading support, workplace insights, employability workshops, career support and work experience.

Around 60% of young people are leaving school without the necessary skills to enter the world of work. The City and Guilds Group published that by 2020 there is going to be a shortage of 40,000 skilled jobs within the UK, many of those skills are required at A.F. Blakemore.

A.F. Blakemore has developed strong links with schools for over ten years and in that time the volunteering programme has grown significantly and been nationally recognised with a number of Business in the Community Responsible Business Awards.

The recruitment of young people is vital to ensure the long-term sustainability of A.F. Blakemore.

With the increase of a group focus on succession planning, the recruitment of young people can play a large part in filling talent gaps within the business.

There are three structured ways in which A.F. Blakemore offer accessible entry routes for young people to enter the business

- 1. Graduate Scheme**
- 2. Apprenticeships**
- 3. Internships**

A.F. Blakemore is committed to nurture and develop their own talent and provide opportunities for young people entering the business and starting their career with us. Alongside current staff of all ages to train on the job and gain Apprenticeship qualifications to develop them into future leaders.





# **INSPIRE**

## **Purpose**

To have a nationally recognised community programme that enables young people to maximise their potential and support A.F. Blakemore in the recruitment and development of future talent.

## **KEY BENEFITS**

# **LOYAL WORKFORCE**

**INCREASED  
REPUTATION**

**DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR EXISTING EMPLOYEES**

**PR**

# **DEVELOP**

**PIPELINE OF FUTURE TALENT**

**IMPROVED ATTAINMENT  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

## Menu of Opportunities

To support the Branching Out programme the opportunities listed below are available to young people across the companies trading area. The opportunities will grow with the business as well as the schools it engages with.

 Opportunity 	 Description 	 Staff Development area 
<b>Reading Partnerships</b>	Volunteers commit to spending one hour every other week of a school term helping to improve a child's literacy skills.	Communication Confidence Organisational Skills Time Management
<b>Workplace Insight</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study Tour</li> <li>• Career Talks (Internal and external)</li> </ul>	A one off event where a tour of the site and facilities are offered. This could support an element of the schools curriculum.	Communication Organisational Skills Confidence Practical Skills
<b>Employability Workshop</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enterprise Days</li> <li>• CV Writing</li> <li>• Practice Interviews</li> <li>• Skills &amp; Attitudes Training</li> <li>• Mock Assessment Centre</li> </ul>	Typically a one day event hosted at a school with the focus on increasing employability skills.	Communication Confidence Organisational Skills Knowledge of Business
<b>Career Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Career Fairs</li> <li>• Breaking down Stereotypes</li> </ul>	Offering career advice and guidance to aid people into work. This could be done through attending a career fair to promoting job opportunities or providing one to one mentoring.	Confidence Knowledge of Business Communication Time Management
<b>Work Experience</b>	Meaningful work placement over one to two weeks or one day a week for six weeks giving a true insight into a department within the business.	Knowledge of Business Communication Organisational Skills Coaching



## Heath Park Curriculum Project

A.F. Blakemore has partnered with Heath Park School to develop a recruitment and selection module for Year 13 students studying BTEC Business Studies Level 3.

Through a series of visits to the school, students were given an insight into the recruitment and selection process. Sessions included an overview of the business and the recruitment challenges they face, an introduction to HR and a presentation from a HR Officer.

The school wanted students to have first-hand experience of a real life recruitment and selection process. The business was keen to have input from the students on the effectiveness of it's recruitment and selection process to help identify potential improvements.



As part of the students learning they were then given live job adverts and C.V's and had to shortlist the candidates and pick one applicant they believed should get the role. The recruiting manager attending the session explained who got the job and a why. The programme finished with the young people applying for a graduate role within A.F. Blakemore, completing a practice interview and taking part in a mock assessment centre.

## The Jane Lane School

Students from Year 11 at The Jane Lane School in Walsall were given an insight in to the movement of stock from Logistics through to a SPAR store to highlight the importance of customer service, health and safety and what job opportunities were available to them as school leavers.

Moving forward, employees working in business admin roles will go to visit the school and speak to students completing BTEC Business Admin.

Following on from this students will be taking part in work placements over a six week period, getting hands on experience of the world of work.



## Black Country Impact

More than 100 young people have been helped into work as a result of a partnership between Black Country Impact and Blakemore Logistics.

Black Country Impact offers help to 16 to 29-year-olds in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton who are currently not in employment, education or training. All young people registered through the scheme are provided with interview preparation training, a two week work experience trial and if successful are offered a full time position with the company.

**Andrew Bastable commented:**

“ I’ve been at Blakemore’s for five months now, having previously been out of work for seven months. Blakemore’s has really helped me and it is a great place to work, with good pay and progression. ”

## The Westminster School

A.F. Blakemore's partnership with The Westminster School in Rowley Regis began with an enterprise event run by Wholesale Distribution.

The event saw a group of students pitch ideas for a vacant unit that was going to be turned in to a shop. Following on from the enterprise event students received a study tour to have an insight into the roles and customer base along with a workshop on skills and attitudes needed for the workplace. In preparation to launch supported internships and apprenticeships a group of five students were given a study tour of Blakemore Logistics, ambient and chilled operation. Since the partnership was established three young people have started their journey as supported interns which will then lead on to a supported apprenticeship in warehousing within the business.

## Mentoring

Over a 12 month period a total of 17 employee mentors have supported students at Wednesfield High, Pool Hayes, South Wolverhampton Bilston Academy, Ellowes Hall and Ormiston Forge School.

The mentors worked with a group of year 10 pupils and supported them across the following areas:

- Goal setting
- Communication and networking
- Career progression
- Career paths – group mentoring session
- The workplace
- Recruitment and applications
- Brand you
- Interview preparation
- Mock interviews
- Moving on, moving up

Students participating in the programme were selected as they would benefit from additional support or focus on career/future, they were achieving C/D (3/4) border for English and Maths and had limited access to the world of work.



“ My work trial with Black Country Impact worked well and got me this opportunity to get into a well-paid job. There's no looking back now. ”

**Councillor Patrick Harley,** leader of Dudley Council, said:

“ This is a fantastic example of the work Black Country Impact is doing to get young people in our region into work. Through the relationships they have expertly built up with businesses and training providers, they can get a foot in the door for young people that they otherwise might not get. ”

“ It's partnership working at its very best, and it's allowing a Black Country firm to give jobs and a first foot on the employment ladder to Black Country folk. ”



# RECRUIT

## Purpose

“To attract and recruit a diverse talent pool into A.F. Blakemore that reflects the communities we serve.”



### Recruitment Process

A key part of the Branching Out Recruit strategy is to make sure that A.F. Blakemore has a recruitment process which is honest, open and transparent for young people. The aim of this is that young people are given the opportunity to shine and don't face barriers at the first stage of gaining employment.



### Application stage

At application stage young people are given full visibility on what they should expect when applying for a job with the business and a breakdown of each part of the recruitment process.



### Interview stage

Recruiting managers across the business are encouraged when interviewing young people to look at their potential not experience. A great example of this is the Graduate first stage interview questions which are focused around achievements and examples demonstrated at school or during work experience not previous employment.

Also, interview questions specific to apprenticeship recruitment have been created so that it can be monitored, controlled and tailored specifically to the young people applying for the roles.

## Apprenticeship Recruitment

In 2017 A.F. Blakemore relaunched a new Apprenticeship Scheme in response to the Government Apprenticeship Levy. A strong emphasis was placed on the importance of external recruitment into warehouse & distribution and LGV driver apprenticeship schemes within the business. These have been introduced to encourage more young people to consider a career with A.F. Blakemore and help promote roles suffering national shortages such as warehousing and transport.

In addition, roles such as customer service, business admin and I.T apprenticeships have been offered as part of the scheme.

Since the relaunch 84 apprentices have been recruited externally into the business.



## Graduate Recruitment

The A.F. Blakemore Graduate Programme was launched in 2015 with the purpose to attract and develop a diverse talent pool of future leaders to support the growth of a sustainable business. A.F. Blakemore offers two routes to enter the business via the Graduate Programme which are, an annual large recruitment drive aiming to recruit a minimum of four graduates and ad hoc recruitment of graduates throughout the year in line with the business needs. Graduate roles come in the form of specialism focus e.g. HR, marketing, sales, accounts or role specific.

Since its launch, 27 graduates have joined the programme.



## Purpose

“To nurture and develop talent and provide opportunities for young people entering the business and starting their career with us alongside current staff to train on the job and gain Apprenticeship qualifications to develop them into future leaders.”

### Graduate Development programme

After commencing their employment, graduates go through an induction consisting of a company overview, project management training, community volunteering activity, and experience of customer facing roles within Logistics, SPAR stores and a selection of business workshops with key people from across the business. Over a period of two years, graduates are given practical and theoretical experience consisting of:

- **Bespoke three-day Leading the Blakemore Way Leadership Development training and subsequent coaching back in the work place**
- **Project Lite**
- **Presentation Skills**
- **Process Operator**
- **Equality, Inclusion and Diversity awareness session**

Additional to this, graduates are given specific targeted development in line with job role e.g. Excel, facilitation and coaching skills workshops.

Graduates are allocated a mentor during the 24 month period and offer individual sessions every other month to discuss successes, issues and opportunities.





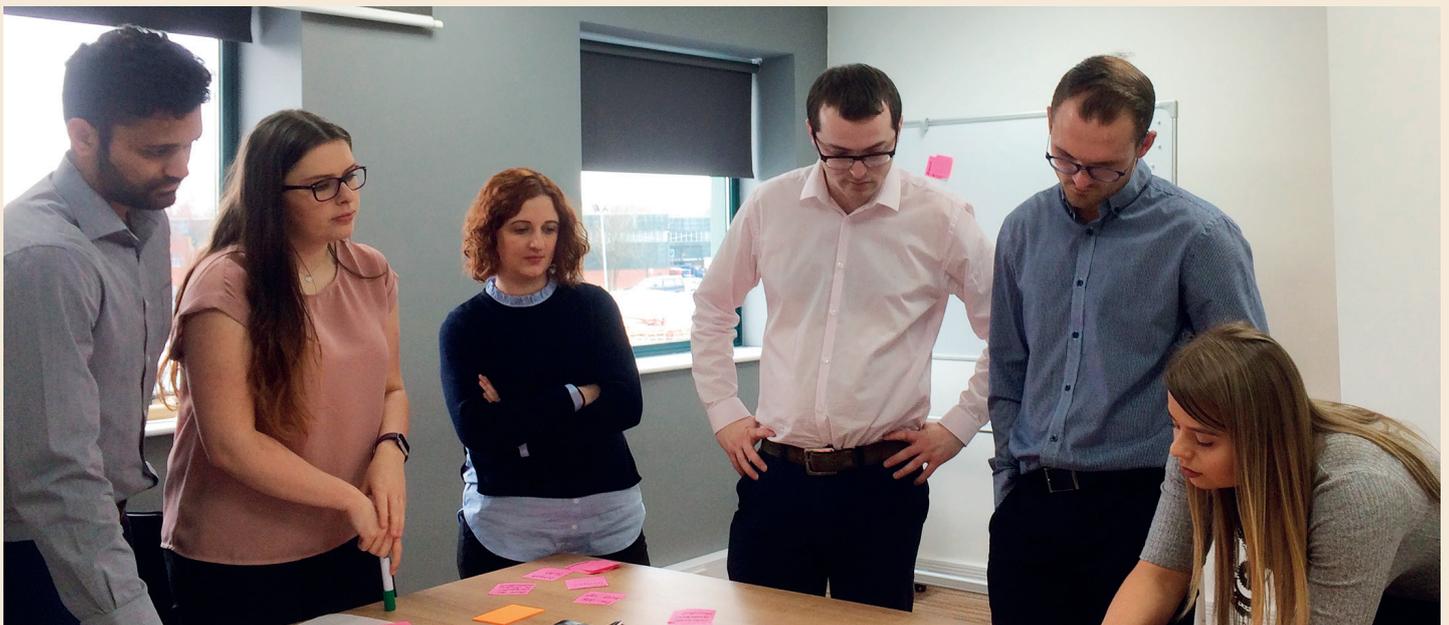
### Apprenticeships (16 – 25) external recruitment.

After commencing their employment all apprentices are given a full company induction as well as a visual outline of their step by step monthly plan on how they will successfully complete their apprenticeship.

A three day Effective Team Member course is also delivered for all apprentices. The course combines elements of the ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management) Level 2 Certificate in Effective Team Member Skills with our company values and incorporated some of the tools found in Leading the Blakemore Way.

The key outcomes expected for the apprentice are:

- A solid understanding of team working and what makes a good team.
- Understanding of tools to analyse and improve their own performance and develop a range of leadership skills including Leading the Blakemore Way.





## Internal Apprenticeships

The 18-month ILM Level 3 Diploma in Management Apprenticeship, launched with its first cohort in February 2018. The Apprenticeship aims to help colleagues develop a range of essential management skills and build on their leadership capability.

The course has been developed by A.F. Blakemore and Blakemore Retail's learning & development teams in conjunction with apprenticeship provider Performance Through People (PTP).

Encompassing nine two-day sessions and a series of work-based skills assessments, the programme has been built around the themes of **Improve, Inspire, Innovate** and **Implement**. Core units focus on leadership and management, communication, finance, self-awareness and problem solving amongst others.

Delegates are selected via an open, anonymised application process followed by an assessment centre that is focussed upon leadership behaviours and knowledge of the company values.

Colleagues from all divisions across the A.F. Blakemore Group are welcome to apply for the programme. To be eligible for consideration, applicants need to:

- Be a supervisor or line manager
- Have experience of managing teams or projects
- Have at least 12 months' experience of working for the company
- Have attended a Leading the Blakemore Way programme
- Be driven and have the required commitment to complete an 18-month, nationally recognised, accredited programme

## Effective Team Member

Forty apprentices have participated in the company's Effective Team Member course to enhance their key workplace skills and build effective teams across the business.

The programme has been developed to combine elements of the ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management) Level 2 Certificate in Effective Team Member Skills with the company values.

The course is aimed at company apprentices and covers the importance of communication, leadership, problem solving and 'Working the Blakemore Way'.



The three-day course gave delegates a taste of the company's Leading the Blakemore Way leadership programme and included elements of customer service and equality and diversity training to further

aid personal development within the business. Upon completion of the course, candidates will receive a Certificate of Achievement endorsed by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM).

“ The course was entertaining and informative and we were able to get involved in a range of activities to support our learning. ”

Comments from delegates:

“ I found the topics we covered interesting and worthwhile. I think that learning about leadership techniques in particular will really help me in my role. ”

# FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

A.F. Blakemore has the following strategic objectives for Branching Out in support of the company's vision

13,500



Young people inspired by the programme



Develop skills and capabilities of our existing and future workforce

2,000



members of staff engaged in the programme

Host

400



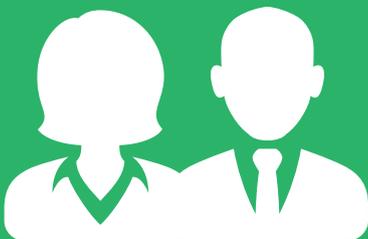
meaningful work placements

50

young people recruited in to the business



Staff completing Apprentices



Management Apprenticeship offered to all staff levels



Recruitment channels are transparent and inclusive



A.F. Blakemore is seen as an employer of choice for young people.



