

Wolverhampton Employability Day

Young people, aged 14 to 16, in Wolverhampton and nearby areas, and their parents and carers, had the opportunity to gain invaluable information, advice and guidance from roughly two dozen professionals, from the local Black community, and a similar number of local employers at the Employability Day held on 22 February, in the iconic Molineux stadium.

The event, the first of its kind in the City, was organised by the Foundation for Reach Society in association with the Wesleyan Holiness Church, in order to demonstrate how the young people could be inspired via ready access to professionals and employers. Slightly more than 200 young people and parents registered for this employability experience.

The attendees could enjoy two themed workshops, and had access to a panel of professionals, from the Black community, which included Brian Mitchell, CFO, Grace Foods UK; Cllr Sandra Samuels, City of Wolverhampton; Lorna McGregor, Deputy Headteacher; Dr Petula Nurse, Senior Lecturer, University of Wolverhampton; Keith Fraser, retired West Midlands Police Service; and Bishop Llewellyn Graham, CEO, Nehemiah Housing Association.

The attendees interacted with a cohort of slightly more than 20 exhibitors on the day which included the TSB; Grace Foods UK; KPMG; HS2 and its National College for High Speed Rail; the University of Wolverhampton; the University of Worcester; 4 training providers such as the Black Country Consortium, EEF, In-Comm Training and Connexions; and the uniformed services for the defense of the nation – the British Army, the Royal Air Force, the Royal Navy and Welbeck College.

Other significant exhibitors present were the African Caribbean Community Initiative (the ACCI), RAFFA, Midland Metro Alliance, the West Midland Ambulance Service, the West Midland UTC, Wolverhampton Wanderers FC, and Reach Society.

Richard Cooper, a director of the Foundation for Reach Society, said: “The pilot project undertaken with the Wesleyan Holiness Church has taken more than 9 months from concept to delivery. It attracted local Black professionals and employers to support the idea; and reached out to young people and their parents or carers to register for the event. The positive response from all stakeholders on the day is confirmation that an inspirational event of this type can add value to the beneficiaries.”

The Foundation for Reach Society is the outreach team from Reach Society which was set up as a social enterprise in 2010 to encourage, motivate and inspire young people, especially those from the Black community, to raise their educational attainment via greater contact with professionals.

Dwain Neil, chairman of Reach Society, said: “The whole point of today’s Employability Day was to demonstrate that the model of inspirational events pioneered in London over 7 years, could be tailored to suit the City of Wolverhampton, and indeed to fit other urban areas across the UK.”