



Patrons: Prof. Sir K. Olisa, Ms M. Rollins OBE, Prof. T. Williams, J. Budu-Aggrey, & Dr N. Frater

The 2026 Careers Conference Report

On Tuesday, 7th April, in the first year of the Sir Geoff Palmer Era, Reach Society once again showcased opportunities and talented volunteers in the Black community at the 14th annual Careers Conference. The registration level for the day was roughly 700 young people, aged 13 to 24, and some parents, which was similar to last year.

Perhaps the high point of the event was the “**Yes We Can**” or **YWC interlude** in which a Panel of five engaged the young people and their parents or carers. The youngest panellist, **Tia Cooke**, was roughly 20, and she is a physics undergrad at Durham University. The other four panellists were highly experienced and successful men and women; and all shared their thoughts in response to the question: of does having resilience matter? Then they took several questions from the young people.

This year the YWC interlude guests were: **Professor Frank Chinegwundoh MBE**, Consultant Urologist; **Tia Cooke**, Physics Undergrad, Durham; **Dr Nelda Frater**, President, Independent Medical Faculty (IMF) and Director of Frater Clinic; **Winston Bygrave**, Baptist Minister & Retired High School, Deputy Head; and **Olajumoke Fawibe**, Strategy Advisor, Deloitte LLB.

As is our custom, the proactive young people who asked questions of the Panellists were rewarded with books chosen from the Society's collection.

Once again the event was heavily subscribed with 21 exhibitors all of whom were eager to be involved in face to face engagement with the attendees. This year we welcomed back the **Voice Newspaper**; and **AoJ UK Trust** appeared for the first time; plus we rolled out a new feature which we styled as the **Table of Entrepreneurs** (which allowed all attendees to explore the topic with a team of business owners).

The other exhibitors had been before and they included: Alpha BSE; Amos Bursary; British Army; Chartered Trading Standards Institute, CTSI; Deloitte LLP; Durham University; Imperial College London; the IMF, King's College London, KCL; London Black Educators Network, Manhood Academy, LBEN; RAFFA; Reach Society (including the STEMM team); and the Royal Air Force.

This year the STEMM (science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine) team were once again very busy; they were surrounded by attendees from the moment the event started through to the end of the day.

The Perfect 10 Workshops were also rolled out on the day; and once again they proved to be very popular. The featured essential messages and themes came from a diverse range of facilitators namely:

- **Imperial College** showcased their opportunities for young people;
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- **RAF and British Army** showcased the careers, streams and pathways on offer;
- **Amos Bursary** young people once again showcased their qualifications, talents and skills to the delight of the attendees;
- **The Michelle Obama Qualities** session reminded attendees that girls and young women must fully develop their potential;
- **The Chartered Trading Standards Institute**, CTSI, showcased a range of hidden heroes of the regulatory services.
- **Rosalind Yarde** highlighted the media, journalism and communication.
- **Dr Dwain. A. Neil OBE** spoke of "Dreams from My Life: My Autobiography".
- **Project Symbol:** featured Sir Geoff Palmer's life and legacy; and.
- **Deloitte LLB:** highlighted how to stand-out from the crowd.

Lastly, several oral and written testimonials were again received from participants - such as attendees, exhibitors, volunteer role models, workshop facilitators and the Panellists. In short, this was another memorable inspirational day that impacted many young people and their family members.

Dr Dwain A Neil OBE, Reach Society, Chairman (April 2026)