

PRESS RELEASE – For immediate release
Saturday 15 August 2015

London’s most disengaged young people celebrate success at prestigious graduation ceremony hosted by investment bank Nomura

On Friday 14 August, 330 young people who were high risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) celebrated amazing academic and vocational achievements at a graduation ceremony hosted by the investment bank Nomura, at its headquarters in the City of London.

The Nomura Charitable Trust has been a ThinkForward partner since 2012 and 50 of its employees have supported the charity as volunteers.

Identified at age 13 as being ‘most disengaged’, these young people were predicted to leave school at age 16 with no qualifications or prospects for employment. They are the first group to graduate from ThinkForward’s breakthrough programme which provides them with five years of intensive one-to-one support from a highly qualified Progression Coach. The programme operates in 14 schools across Islington, Tower Hamlets and Hackney.

ThinkForward aims to prevent disengaged young people from becoming NEET by dismantling the barriers that stop them from progressing from education into employment. The destinations of this first group of 330 graduates demonstrates ThinkForward’s success.

Class of 2015: Breakdown of achievements and destinations of 330 ThinkForward graduates	%
Overall percentage in further education, employment or training	91
Already in employment	22
Going to university	19
Achieved at least 5 GCSE grades A*-C, having been predicted grade E in English and Maths at the start of the programme	80
Achieved A-level or equivalent qualifications	25

Commenting on the significance of this inaugural ceremony, Charlie Green, private equity investor and ThinkForward’s Chair said: “Our class of 2015 are proof that, given the right support, the most disengaged young people can develop aspirations and achieve their ambitions. For this reason we felt it was important to give them the opportunity to create their own graduation event to celebrate their incredible achievements.”

Emphasizing the need for ThinkForward to continue delivering an impact on young lives, Kevin Munday, ThinkForward Managing Director, explained why the programme is effective. He said:

“Almost one million young people in the UK are not in education, employment or training with a lifetime cost to society of £35bn. ThinkForward is the only charity offering the most disengaged young people five years of sustained support. Our Progression Coaches enter young people’s lives as a trusted figure who can focus on their emotional well-being, broaden their horizons, and prepare them for the world of work”.

The graduation coincided with the release of A’level results the previous day, giving many of ThinkForward’s young people double cause for celebration.

Amari Dias, 19, from Islington passed Applied Science BTEC exams with triple distinction, which is equivalent to A'level grades: A*-A*-A. After studying radiography at university he would like to become a therapeutic radiographer. Summing up the most important lessons he has learned while being on the programme, Amari said: "I've become more confident and open minded, which has made me more comfortable talking to people. I've also learnt that if you are focused you can achieve anything."

Jelice Thompson, 18, from Hackney passed her business studies BTEC exams with triple merit and is going to study business management and psychology at St Mary's Twickenham University. While on the programme she went on a barrister course and is thankful to her Coach for broadening her horizons. She said: 'Being on ThinkForward has been an amazing experience and my coach helped me to become the person I am today. I've learnt that no matter what there will always be opportunities to explore.'

Chloe Parker, 17, from Tower Hamlets is currently doing a business administration apprenticeship and was on the organising committee for the graduation event. Since joining ThinkForward, Chloe has gained Maths, English and vocational qualifications and feels she has become a much more confident person. She said: "Without my Coach helping me to build my confidence and showing me opportunities, I wouldn't have got this job. The other important lesson over the last five years has been not to give up."

-ENDS-

For media enquiries and photographs from the event contact:

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Notes to editors

1. **ThinkForward** ensures that young people who are disengaged from or underperforming at school receive the support they need to transition successfully into higher education or sustained employment. It does this by providing them with an experienced and trusted Progression Coach, who provides long-term personalised support, helping them to overcome challenges in and out of school and to build employability skills and confidence.
2. ThinkForward was founded by Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation and is delivered in partnership with Tomorrow's People. For more information visit www.think-forward.org.uk
3. Charlie Green is ThinkForward's Chair and was involved in creating the programme in 2011. He is also a Trustee of Impetus - The Private Equity Foundation. He is currently a non-executive director of several small businesses for whom he has raised new growth capital. He was previously a partner at Candover, a private equity firm, and prior to that a director of Morgan Grenfell and Deutsche Bank.
4. The Nomura Charitable Trust has been a ThinkForward partner since 2012, sponsoring the delivery of the programme in Oaklands School, Tower Hamlets. As well as providing funding, over 50 of their employees have been involved, as workshop facilitators, business mentors and

work experience supervisors. The bank supported the graduation event by hosting it in their offices.

5. Other city donors supporting ThinkForward include Barclays, EY, ICG, Credit Suisse, JP Morgan, UBS and RR Donnelley.