

youth futures

FOUNDATION



Research Officer

Recruitment Pack

Date: February 2025

Welcome

Youth Futures Foundation was established in 2019 with the clear mandate to address the cycle of systemic employment disparities, discrimination and disadvantage that marginalised young people in England face. In our first five years we have built the evidence to better understand why these different employment outcomes exist, and their long-term impact on our young people. The stark reality remains, however, that a staggering 1 in 8 young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET), with those from marginalised backgrounds facing even greater barriers than their peers.

The challenge is big but so is the prize for getting it right, not only for young individuals but our society and economy at large. To get there our country needs clear ambition, which is why the heart of our new strategy sets the goal that England should aim to have the lowest NEET rate in the OECD by 2050; a statement of intent we hope others will join us in calling for.

As we look to the future, it is right we set direction for the unique and privileged role Youth Futures plays as the What Works Centre for youth employment. Not just in building the evidence base on the barriers and solutions to this persistent challenge; but in proactively influencing those who hold the levers of change in policy and practice to unlock a generation of talent.

Established as a small start-up with a big mission, Youth Futures' early years saw the organisation adapt swiftly and decisively. Less

than six months into operations, we – like so many others – were navigating a global pandemic that brought with it an unprecedented challenge for the labour market, young people and the front-line organisations supporting them. I am enormously proud of everything the team were able to learn and achieve during this period, and way they adapted to support those most in need at the time.

We promote strong coordination and partnership working across government, funders, delivery organisations and employers. Our flagship £16 million Connected Futures Fund aims to address the fragmentation of youth employment and skills delivery in the places that need it most, so that young people furthest from the job market receive consistent high-quality support to address complex needs.

We continue to strengthen our organisation and team as we grow and evolve and this role will play a crucial part in supporting the organisation in achieving its vision, mission and business goals. If you are passionate about creating a better future for young people, we look forward to hearing from you.



Barry Fletcher, CEO

About us

Who we are

Youth Futures Foundation is the national What Works Centre for youth employment, with a specific focus on marginalised young people. We are part of the national What Works Network of organisations committed to generating and collating the best evidence to identify, analyse and target the critical challenges facing our country.

What we do

Youth Futures Foundation is the What Works Centre for youth employment. At Youth Futures, we work directly with government, employers, civil society organisations and young people themselves to influence policy and practice. Alongside our partners, grantees and young people, we have put our collective efforts into identifying the most effective strategies and tools to get us moving in a better direction.

In 2023, our team grew across our three locations in London, Birmingham and Leeds, and we welcomed new board and committee members with a breadth of skills and experience. A second cohort of Future Voices Group Ambassadors have also joined us, bringing with them their lived experience and fresh perspectives so crucial to our success. We believe all of this puts us in a unique position to change the system that currently does not serve young people well.

One of our most important innovations in 2023, the Data Dashboard brings together the latest youth labour market data and our own research, combining the best evidence on youth employment from across the UK and internationally. It is our way of making the evidence visible to policy makers and influencers to help them make informed decisions for change.

In 2024, we are continuing to implement and evaluate interventions to deepen our understanding of what works to get young people into employment. As we do so, we will expand our investigation of the underlying, multi-faceted causes of youth unemployment and grow the evidence base for action. And we will continue to bring that evidence to the right people, in the right way, to help make change a reality.

Vision, Mission and 'North star' goals

Vision and Mission



A vision that speaks to our core beliefs and aspirations for all young people.

An action-orientated mission as a What Works centre focussing on young people facing marginalisation.

'North Star' goals



Two 'north star' goals to set long term ambition for us and others. They speak to the impact needed for the future to be different for a marginalised young person born today when entering working life.]

Our values

We are bold

We want to disrupt the status quo and transform the youth-employment system

We are always learning

We are evidence-driven, we innovate and we aren't afraid to fail

We are inclusive

We embrace, celebrate and

champion diversity in all its forms – it's core to who we are

We are collaborative

We build partnerships and share power to increase the collective impact

We are determined

We are relentless in our pursuit of a better future for all young people



Equity, diversity and inclusion statement

The young people we aim to serve - and the challenges they face - are all unique. We need to build a team that reflects this diversity, is highly skilled and committed. Our commitment to inclusion across all protected characteristics, experiences and socioeconomic background forms the cornerstone of our work.

We work hard to ensure we have a diverse and inclusive workforce. We use identity-blind software for all our permanent recruitment campaigns to reduce unconscious bias during recruitment. We have flexible working policies which are kept under review and many of the more flexible working practices we adopted during lockdown have been retained. The recruitment of our team around our three hubs of Birmingham, Leeds and London has enabled us to attract a greater diversity of talent than simply focusing recruitment in one city.

In building the Board, the Future Voices Group, and making external appointments to the Grants Committee, we have also ensured our governance and advisory structures contain a broad diversity of background and experience.

We are committed to encouraging an open, collaborative, safe and inclusive working environment. We have an EDI committee, formed of a group of employees, with a senior leadership team lead, who have a keen interest or experience of EDI and work together on issues or concerns related to equity, diversity and inclusion at work. The committee address and implement proactive strategies relating to EDI, support policy reviews and revisions, be the employees voice to Senior Leadership Team members and share feedback for continual improvement on our organisational wide values and commitment to EDI.

We are Disability Confident and have committed to ensuring that we attract, recruit, retain, support and develop disabled people in the workplace. We aim to continually improve and develop our talent attraction and inclusive recruitment practices to be reflective of our organisational behaviours and culture.

We are committed to the charter as an employer positive about mental health in the workplace and are a Mindful Employer.

We are a Living Wage Employer, as we believe a hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay. Our base rate of hourly pay is in line with the London Living Wage.





2023 in numbers

£15m

additional Dormant Assets funding awarded for our Building Futures programme

20

new Future Voices Group ambassadors welcomed in the second cohort

811

employers representing SMEs*, public sector and large corporates engaged through our partnerships with DFN Project Search, Workwhile, Re:Generate and Youth Employment UK

£5.2m

cumulative total committed to the largest ever range of youth employment evaluations in England through our What Works programme

8,640

visits to our Youth Employment Toolkit

3,250

ethnically minoritised young people surveyed on their experiences of learning and employment

2,149

views of our Data Dashboard

25,301

cumulative total of young people engaged

£29m

in cumulative grant funding awarded to 173 grantees

27

research and evaluation papers published

02

grant schemes designed and launched, taking our evidence and putting it into action

07

youth employment interventions featured in our Youth Employment Toolkit, bringing the best evidence to decision makers

01

employer engagement strategy developed in consultation with Employer Advisory Board members, the Youth Futures Foundation Board and the Future Voices Group

Unless otherwise stated, this report and these figures cover the period from January to December 2023. *SMEs are small-to-medium-sized enterprises



Role description

RESEARCH OFFICER IMPACT AND EVIDENCE DIRECTORATE

Term: Permanent - Full Time –37.5 hours per week

We offer flexible working and consider alternative patterns of work

Salary: £27,008 to £29,610 per annum (with service anniversary incremental pay increases)

Reporting to: Research Manager

Direct reports: None

Location: This role can be based at any of our hubs located in London, Birmingham or Leeds. We currently operate a hybrid model of two-days per week in the office and three-days from home. You must also be prepared to travel to the other hubs and other locations as required for the purpose of this role, which may occasionally require overnight stays.

Who we are

Youth Futures Foundation is the national What Works Centre for youth employment, with a specific focus on marginalised young people.

What we do

We find and generate high-quality evidence to better understand England's youth unemployment and inactivity challenge, and most importantly to learn what solutions work to address this. We do this through bringing together the best evidence already in existence and build on this by conducting original research and testing and evaluating promising interventions to produce much needed new evidence where there are gaps.

We put evidence into action with policy makers, employers and funders who have the means to make direct impactful change for young people. We do this through translating the evidence practically for stakeholders to use and understand, and through partnerships and engagement to influence, inform and support them as decision makers to back evidence-based interventions that work.

Youth Inclusion

Throughout our work, we proudly involve the voices, perspectives and participation of young people experiencing marginalisation, through our Future Voices Group, our young Board members and beyond. We believe that the young people who are most affected by the system have invaluable perspective and experience, and therefore must be at the heart of efforts to change it.

We actively ensure that all young people engaged with Youth Futures Foundation meaningfully influence our work and advocate within the employment system while also developing their skills and personal outcomes. Our Future Voices Group programme harnesses these insights to craft impactful narratives that influence the knowledge, practice and behaviour of key actors and audiences within the system such as policymakers and employers. The group also participate in decision-making and projects throughout Youth Futures.

JOB DESCRIPTION

We are looking for a dynamic Research Officer to support the creation and collation of research and evidence that has a transformative effect on the youth employment ecosystem.

You will work with the Research Managers and other members of the Impact and Evidence team to support the design, delivery and management of commissioned and in-house research projects striving to understand the complex, systemic issues faced by marginalised young people in their employment journey, as well as potential solutions.

This is an exciting opportunity to work directly with young people on research projects. A part of the role will also be working with other teams, such as policy and communications, to translate complex research and evaluation findings into accessible, user-centred outputs and briefings for internal and external use.

Key responsibilities

Support the Youth Futures approach to research and impact, including:

- ❖ Supporting the Research Managers to track and monitor the status of research projects,
- ❖ Supporting the delivery of commissioned research projects, e.g. coordinating commissioned researchers, organising meetings, quality assuring project outputs,
- ❖ Conducting literature reviews and/or desk-based research on topics related to youth employment outcomes for marginalised groups for a variety of purposes, e.g. initial scoping for research tenders,
- ❖ Supporting evidence curation, including resources such as Youth Futures' Youth Employment Toolkit and Evidence and Gap Map,
- ❖ Supporting the delivery of in-house research projects on youth employment and related themes,
- ❖ Translating research outputs into accessible, user-friendly content for internal and external use (such as research briefings, executive summaries and presentations), working with research, evaluation, policy and communications team members,
- ❖ Sharing updates and findings of research projects internally and externally, through internal communications channels and external events,
- ❖ Creating and maintaining a database of research contacts who are active our field,
- ❖ Keeping up to date with relevant publications and research in our field

PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge, experience and abilities		
Knowledge of quantitative and/or qualitative research methods	X	
An understanding of key issues and principles in social research	X	
A track record in supporting different stages of research projects	X	
Relevant qualification in an economic, social science or related discipline - or on-the-job experience or training	X	
Apply effective administration skills to successfully manage and prioritise tasks to ensure key milestones are met	X	
Knowledge, understanding, and/or a strong interest in youth related issues and/or employment, education and skills and/or the barriers faced by marginalised people	X	
Experience in effectively communicating research findings and producing user-friendly content for different audiences	X	
Experience of working effectively as a member of a busy team	X	
Experience of working with diverse stakeholder groups and co-ordinating activities	X	
Ability to build effective working relationships across teams and wider networks	X	
Experience in review and evidence synthesis methods, such as literature reviews and/or rapid evidence assessments		X
Experience of participatory research		X

	Essential	Desirable
Skills & competencies		
Strong analytical skills, ability to critically appraise, analyse and summarise research outputs and literature	X	
Excellent writing and communication skills, ability to turn complex information into plain English for non-specialist audiences	X	
A collaborative, flexible team member who understands when to take the initiative and work independently, and collaborate with others	X	
Good organisational and time management skills, ability to manage own workload, prioritise tasks and competing demands and deliver high-quality work in a fast-paced environment	X	
Strong IT skills, including use of MS Office applications (Teams, Word, Excel, PowerPoint etc), or equivalent, shared online folders, calendars and contacts	X	

MINDSET

- ❖ a genuine personal commitment to Youth Futures mission, vision and values applying these to everyday working
- ❖ to thrive when operating in a growing and evolving organisation
- ❖ a proactive and flexible approach
- ❖ a positive and can-do attitude, willing to roll sleeves up to get into details where necessary
- ❖ a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, demonstrating inclusiveness, collaboration and respect
- ❖ a commitment to our employee code of conduct and behaviours
- ❖ to contribute to and help build a strong, positive team culture
- ❖ follow internal policies, processes and practices

THINGS TO KNOW

As part of Youth Futures Foundation's safeguarding policy, all employees are subject to a basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, some positions may require an enhanced level disclosure.

The young people we aim to serve – and the challenges they face - are all unique. We are looking to build a team that reflects this diversity. Our commitment to inclusion across race, gender, age, class, religion, identity, and experience forms the cornerstone of our work. We are an equal opportunities employer, Mindful Employer, Disability Confident and welcome applications from all sections of the community.

We are particularly keen to encourage people with lived experience of the challenges facing young people in the labour market, and committed to supporting you in your application. Please contact us if you require any additional support.

Internally, we encourage an open, collaborative and inclusive working environment.

Summary of benefits and general T&C's

Probationary Period - all offers of employment are subject to a six month probationary period. Regular reviews will be undertaken during this period.

Holiday Year – 1st January to 31st December.

Holiday entitlement – holiday is issued in hours 210 per year equivalent to 28 days holiday, plus 8 statutory bank holidays. Entitlement is pro-rata for part-time employees. Holiday can be requested via the HRIS BreatheHR system. We are also flexible for employees to work on occasional public holidays (except Christmas, Boxing or New Year's Day) in lieu of taking a day off to celebrate an alternative significant religious day. Please discuss this further with line manager or Head of People.

Hours of work – are as specified within individual contracts of employment. Our standard working hours are 37.5 per week, standard working hours are 9:00am – 5:30pm including one hour lunch.

Lunch break – lunch breaks are a minimum of 30-minutes. Refreshment facilities are provided in each of our hub locations.

Flexible working – we offer a range of different working patterns such as variable start / finish times, part-time or compressed hours. Please speak with your line manager or Head of People to discuss any variation to working pattern or hours. Requests for flexible working can be made informally or formally.

Location – each employee will be given a hub location as their place of work, London, Birmingham or Leeds. There is a requirement to visit or work from other hub locations as necessary, including to attend the periodic face to face, all staff away days (which involve an overnight stay).

Hybrid working – we currently offer an arrangement that allows you to work three days per week from home. However, if your home working situation or general working preference means that you prefer to work in an office, there is no upper limit to the number of days working in the office. We provide all relevant home office equipment to ensure you are properly equipped to work effectively from home. A catalogue of equipment is offered for you to select the required equipment.

Volunteering days – we offer three paid volunteering days per year, pro-rata for part time employees, unless otherwise agreed at our discretion each year (January to December) to allow employees to undertake voluntary/charitable work. This time can be split into half days. Volunteering time is recorded on the HRIS BreatheHR system.

Personal/professional training allowance – a personal training allowance of £750 is allocated to each employee per year to use in a variety of methods such as conferences, events, books, journals, professional subscriptions/memberships, contribution to qualifications, coaching, to support with CPD, and £250 per head for functional teams to pool and engage in collective training.

Salaries – salaries are paid via BACS direct into bank accounts on the 25th of each month, where the 25th falls on a weekend, payment will be made the Friday before. Payslips are issued electronically via Xero.

Pay structure – we have a nine point incremental pay structure, which enables an employee to move annually up the scale each service anniversary.

Enhanced Maternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave Pay - weeks 1 to 26 on full pay, weeks 27 to 39 on Standard Maternity Pay (SMP), weeks 40 to 52 unpaid (eligible at 6 months service).

Enhanced Paternity/Partner leave - three weeks at full pay.

Absence reporting – employees are expected to contact their line manager and/or Head of People to notify of any absence at your earliest possible opportunity and by no later than 10:00am. Absence is recorded on the HRIS BreatheHR system.

Sickness absence payments – for the first 6 months of service you will receive a maximum of four weeks full pay, after 6 months you may receive up to 12 weeks full pay. After this period the below income protection policy will then apply.

Emergency leave – up to 5 days of paid leave each year is available to enable an employee to deal with an emergency. These are not to be taken as consecutive days of absence, but to give the time to deal with a personal emergency and make any relevant alternative arrangements.

Medical/Dental appointments – reasonable paid time off is granted where such appointments are not able to be made outside of working hours.

Income protection – provides replacement income if an employee is absent from work through long-term illness or injury. After 13 weeks of absence, the income protection plan provides 75% of basic salary for a two-year period. Provided by AIG.

WeCare – through Canada Life you have access to similar health and wellbeing support through their WeCare programme which offers 24/7 online GP, mental health support and virtual wellbeing. <https://www.canadalife.co.uk/workplace-protection/support-services/wecare/>

Employee Assistance Programme – A 24-hour helpline with access to a range of legal, consultancy, 24/7 crisis assistance support and signposting. Provided by Assured Health.

Health Cash Benefit – a cash plan insurance policy that helps cover the cost of everyday health care, such as dental, optical and therapies. The plan reimburses some or all of the cost of routine and/or unforeseen healthcare costs and appointments. Full details of entitlements and support available will be issued to you direct from the provider Medicash. Totalling £995/year.

Group Life Assurance – a policy which enables employees to provide a tax-free lump sum benefit payment, and/or a longer-term income to their family and dependants in the event of death whilst in Service. Cover provided by Canada Life. Payment is based on 4 x basic salary.

Season Ticket Loan – An interest free loan for a 6 month or 12-month season ticket with monthly deductions from salary.

Travel card loan – the company can provide financial support to purchase travel cards. This is then deducted on a monthly basis from salary for an agreed time period.

Pension – There is an auto-enrolment pension scheme provided by People's Pension. If you meet the auto-enrolment criteria, you will automatically become a member of the scheme. Youth Futures Foundation pay an employer contribution of 6%, with an employee contribution of 5% of salary. An opt in to an additional 2% matched contribution can be made with a contribution totalling 15%. Membership details will be issued to you upon commencement. You can choose to opt out the scheme should you wish.

Cycle to Work Scheme – Provided through the Bike2Work Scheme.

<https://www.bike2workscheme.co.uk/> Allows you to buy commuter bikes and cycling accessories through us, so you spread the cost and making savings through a tax break. For more information on the scheme and to obtain our company pin to register please speak to our Head of People.

Expenses - Reasonable expenses incurred in line with the Travel & Expense Policy will be reimbursed against receipts. Expenses can be claimed back via the Zoho app.

Dress Code – dress for the day. We expect that you will dress appropriately for the work in which you are carrying out.

How to apply

To apply for the role please visit [BeApplied](#)

Applied is our online recruitment platform.

Applied offers a more effective approach to hiring – removing any bias. Applications are anonymised for the shortlisting process and candidates are assessed on their answers to set questions that are skill-based relevant to the role.

Applied enables you to complete your application in stages before final submission.

Our application process requires you to answer a set number of questions approx. 5 per application. With a limit of 250 words per question. You will then be asked to submit your CV to accompany your application. One of the questions will ask you to summarise your suitability for the role.

Please note: you will be asked to confirm that you are answering the questions yourself and that answers are not plagiarised or automatically generated by any AI software before you start your application. **Use of ChatGPT or other similar software will be identified and scoring penalised.**

Your personal information, supplied for the purposes of recruitment will be held and processed by Youth Futures Foundation for this purpose only. For further details please view our privacy policy [Privacy Policy - Youth Futures Foundation.](#)

Recruitment timetable

Deadline for applications: 2 March 2025 at 23:59

Interviews: w/c 10 March 2025

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact Lisa Metcalf, Head of People

Lisa.metcalf@youthfuturesfoundation.org

Queries

If you have any questions regarding this vacancy or would like to find out more, please contact Lisa Metcalf, Head of People

Lisa.metcalf@youthfuturesfoundation.org

