

Senior Policy Officer

Details

Working hours: Full-time, 37.5 hours per week

Salary: £32,000 – £34,000 FTE depending on experience

Location: Kettering, with scope for flexible working for the right candidate

Department: Policy and Research

Reports to: Policy and Research Director

About the role

Youth Employment UK is seeking a Senior Policy Officer to join our Policy and Research department at an important moment for youth employment policy.

The Policy and Research function builds Youth Employment UK's evidence, insight and policy influence by bringing together youth voice, employer voice and system intelligence. It ensures Youth Employment UK is known as the youth employment expert body and a strategic partner to national, regional and local government, employers, members and the wider youth employment sector.

The Senior Policy Officer will strengthen Youth Employment UK's policy and insight capacity by helping gather, analyse and communicate evidence from young people, employers, members and the wider youth employment system.

Working with the Policy and Research Director, the role will support Youth Employment UK to develop high-quality policy positions, recommendations, briefings and reports, and to strengthen our reputation as a leading source of insight and practical solutions for youth employment.

This is a policy-focused role with strong research literacy. It is not a technical academic research post, but the postholder will need to be confident interpreting evidence, drawing out implications, writing clearly, and translating insight into practical recommendations for different audiences.

Key responsibilities

1. Policy analysis, insight and recommendations

- Monitor youth employment, education, skills, employment support, labour market, welfare and devolution policy developments.
- Track relevant government, parliamentary, regional, think tank, charity, NGO and voluntary sector activity.
- Produce clear and timely policy briefings for the CEO, SLT, members and external stakeholders.
- Analyse policy and research developments through the lens of young people, employers and Youth Employment UK's evidence base.
- Support the development of Youth Employment UK policy positions, recommendations and messages.
- Draft consultation responses, policy submissions, briefings, blogs and stakeholder-facing materials.
- Help identify opportunities for Youth Employment UK to influence policy, practice and system change.

2. Youth voice and research engagement

- Support the design and delivery of Youth Voice Sessions and other research sessions with groups of young people.
- Help ensure Youth Employment UK's youth voice insight remains current, credible and central to our policy work.
- Work with Youth Ambassadors and young people to gather insight that informs policy positions, reports and recommendations.
- Analyse and summarise youth voice findings for use in briefings, reports, presentations and stakeholder materials.
- Work closely with colleagues to ensure sessions are well planned, inclusive, purposeful and properly followed up.

3. Youth Voice Census and research outputs

- Support delivery of the Youth Voice Census national report and regional / Combined Authority reports.
- Draft sections of reports, briefings, blogs and presentations using Census findings.
- Help translate Census findings into policy recommendations, member insight and stakeholder messages.
- Support the mobilisation of Census findings with government, Combined Authorities, employers, members and sector partners.

- Work with internal and external colleagues to ensure research outputs are accurate, well written and useful.

4. Employer voice, Benchmark and member insight

- Support Youth Employment UK's Good Youth Employment Benchmark by conducting employer interviews and writing employer-facing reports.
- Draft recommendations for employers on improving youth employment practice.
- Identify themes, case studies and examples of good practice from employer and member insight.
- Help translate employer insight into policy recommendations, member value and system-level learning.
- Support consultations and discussions with members and employers to understand their views on youth employment policy and practice.

5. Public affairs, stakeholder and regional intelligence

- Support Youth Employment UK's public affairs activity, including APPG, Connected Communities and other policy forums.
- Prepare briefings and materials for government, parliamentary, Combined Authority, mayoral and stakeholder meetings.
- Support stakeholder mapping across national government, regional and local government, other UK nations, think tanks, charities, NGOs, employers and voluntary sector partners.
- Track follow-up actions, opportunities and intelligence from stakeholder meetings and policy events.
- Help ensure external learning and opportunities are brought back into Youth Employment UK and used to inform our policy and influencing work.

6. Content, communication and internal enablement

- Write clearly and engagingly for a range of audiences, including young people, employers, members, policymakers, funders and colleagues.
- Produce policy blogs, research summaries, Friday Five content, member briefings and internal updates.
- Work with Marketing, Sales and Youth Voice colleagues to turn policy and research insight into useful content and member value.
- Support colleagues with evidence, talking points and policy context where they are speaking to members, partners, government or the media.

7. Working as part of the Policy and Research team

- Work closely with the Policy and Research Director, Policy and Research Coordinator and wider team.
 - Keep agreed trackers, workplans and systems up to date.
 - Escalate risks to quality, deadlines, capacity or external expectations early.
 - Contribute to a collaborative, high-quality and well-organised department rhythm.
 - Support a clear distinction between policy analysis, coordination, stakeholder engagement and project delivery responsibilities.
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About you

We are looking for someone with strong policy judgement, excellent writing skills, professional curiosity and a commitment to improving systems for young people.

Policy, research and public affairs

You will bring:

- experience in policy, public affairs, research, youth employment, education, skills, employment support, social policy or a related area;
- strong ability to monitor, analyse and explain policy developments;
- good understanding of how policy is made and influenced at national, regional or local level;
- research literacy and confidence working with evidence, data, reports and lived experience insight;
- ability to turn complex information into clear briefings, recommendations and practical outputs;
- curiosity about youth employment, labour market change, education, skills, devolution and system reform;
- confidence engaging with a range of stakeholders, such as young people, employers, members, policymakers, charities, NGOs, think tanks or public bodies.

We welcome candidates who have developed these skills through work, volunteering, apprenticeships, lived experience, formal study or a combination of routes. A degree is not required.

Writing, communication and quality

You will be:

- an excellent writer, able to produce clear and engaging content for different audiences;
- confident drafting reports, briefings, blogs, submissions, recommendations and stakeholder materials;
- able to communicate research and policy insight clearly and accurately;
- attentive to detail and committed to high-quality work;
- able to adapt tone and content for internal, member, employer, policy and public audiences.

Project and self-management

You will be:

- organised and able to manage competing priorities and deadlines;
- comfortable working independently and collaboratively;
- proactive in raising risks, questions or support needs early;
- able to work with agreed systems, plans and processes;
- willing to learn, take feedback and develop in the role.

Commitment to young people

You will be:

- passionate about improving employment, education and transition outcomes for young people;
- committed to using youth voice and employer insight to shape better policy and practice;
- interested in building Youth Employment UK's role as a trusted expert body and strategic partner;
- aligned with Youth Employment UK's values and mission.

Working conditions

- 37.5 hours per week, unless another agreement is in place.
- Hours of work can be managed between 8am and 6pm.
- Our main office is based in Kettering, near the train station.
- We are open to discussing flexible working options with the right candidate.
- Some travel may be required for events, meetings and stakeholder engagement.

Benefits

- Competitive salary.
- Standard company pension.
- 25 days annual leave plus Bank Holidays, increasing to 26 days after 12 months' service.
- 2 volunteering days per year.
- 2 additional wellbeing days per year.
- Onsite parking, available on a first come, first served basis.
- Personal development opportunities.
- Free breakfast and lunch options when in the office.
- Team activities and events.
- Dog-friendly office.

How to apply

Please send your CV and a cover letter of no more than two pages to Ruth Wilson at ruth@youthemployment.org.uk.

Your cover letter should explain your relevant experience, motivation for applying, and how your skills align with the role. We encourage applicants to use clear subheadings linked to the role requirements.

Recruitment process

Stage 1: Application review

We will review CVs and cover letters against the role requirements.

Stage 2: Informal first interview

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an initial interview with the Policy and Research Director. This will explore relevant experience, motivation, alignment with Youth Employment UK's mission, and expectations around salary and working arrangements.

Stage 3: In-person interview and task

Final candidates will be invited to an in-person interview at our Kettering office. This will include a policy-related task, a competency-based interview, and an opportunity to meet members of the team.

All employment at Youth Employment UK is subject to references and DBS checks being received.

We are committed to equal opportunities and inclusion. Please let us know if there are adaptations we can make to support your application.

If you have any queries about the organisation or role, please contact us at info@youthemployment.org.uk.