Youth Futures Foundation Impact Report 2021



Contents

- 01 Introducing Youth Futures Foundation
- 02 CEO and Chair's statement
- 04 2020 in numbers
- 06 Our vision, mission and values
- 07 Our long-term impact
- 08 Identifying what works
- 12 Investing in potential
- 22 Igniting change
- 30 Our three year strategy
- 32 Working together

Introducing Youth Futures Foundation

We are an independent, not-for-profit organisation established in December 2019 to improve employment outcomes for young people from marginalised backgrounds. The foundation launched with an initial endowment of £90 million from the Reclaim Fund.

The youth unemployment crisis

When Youth Futures Foundation launched, youth unemployment was already too high, particularly for young people facing disadvantage or discrimination. Following the pandemic, the challenges have grown even greater, with a significant risk that a generation's future will be blighted by the scarring effects of long-term unemployment.

In October–December 2020, 14.4% of 16–24-year-olds were unemployed, compared with 11.3% the year before. Recent ONS statistics show under-25s make up almost two thirds of the total fall in employment during the pandemic, with those from ethnic minority backgrounds disproportionately affected. The fall in employment is four times higher for young Black people and nearly three times higher for young Asian people. Young people typically work in occupations that have been impacted most by the pandemic, such as hospitality and retail. Of people put on furlough, 47% are aged 16–24.

Young people from marginalised backgrounds are undoubtedly the worst affected. Bleak predictions for the employment prospects of our most vulnerable young people make our work more urgent and vital than ever.





A challenging but productive year

When Youth Futures Foundation was set up in December 2019, we had a clear mission: to help young people facing discrimination and disadvantage to access and keep good quality jobs.

By the start of 2020, we already expected a challenging year. We were scaling up the organisation, taking on new staff and planning to open new offices. We anticipated that our work would be to support 750,000 young people into employment.

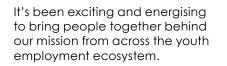
Then Covid-19 hit.

In addition to causing a public health crisis, the pandemic wreaked havoc on the economy, exacerbated intergenerational inequalities and fractured social cohesion.

Young people were hit particularly hard: they missed out on education, faced increased mental health challenges and were more likely to lose their jobs or be put on furlough. As always, the most vulnerable young people suffered disproportionately.

We responded by providing emergency Covid-19 resilience funding to support small organisations throughout the pandemic.

Despite the challenges, we have achieved a huge amount this year. Our grants programmes have supported an extremely diverse range of organisations across England, providing a total of £15.3m in funding and evaluation commissioned. We co-founded the Youth Employment Group and have successfully influenced Government policy on Kickstart and Youth Hubs.



Meanwhile, Youth Futures Foundation is growing fast. At the beginning of the year, we had seven staff on shortterm contracts; now we have 27 staff on permanent contracts. Our teams in London, Birmingham and Leeds are working virtually, but it feels as though we've created a family.

From day one, strong youth participation has been a cornerstone of our work – on our Board, on our Grants Committee and in our Future Voices Group. Young people inspire us, act as role models and ensure that we reflect their lived experience. We will work in partnership with them as we tackle the challenges ahead, drawing on our combined strength.

Looking forward, we're determined to keep on identifying what works, investing in innovation and great practice, and igniting a movement to drive long-term systemic change. We will be relentless in our pursuit of a better future for all young people.

Anna Smee, CEO and Joe Montgomery, Chair

03 Impact Report



2020 in formula in the second second



Young people reached

Grant funding awarded and evaluation commissioned

Research, evaluation and policy papers published

200+ Members of the Youth Employment Group, co-chaired by Youth Futures

Grantees supported

21 Development and Impact Grants,12 Infrastructure Grants, 107 Inspiring Futures Grants**

** Youth Futures Foundation and BBC Children in Need responded to the youth employment crisis by distributing £7 million in resilience funding to youth and community organisations in November 2020





Our vision

A society where all young people have equitable access to good quality jobs.

This includes:

- Equal employment outcomes for young people who face discrimination or disadvantage
- A reduced number of young people outside the labour market or in insecure work
- Improved progression pathways for young people

Our mission

To narrow the employment gap by identifying what works and why, investing in evidence generation and innovation, and igniting a movement for change.

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 grow collective impact
- We are determined: We are relentless in our pursuit of a better future for all young people

Our long-term impact

By collaborating with others, we aim to make a positive long-term impact on the lives of marginalised young people across the country. We will do this by reducing the employment gap and improving the quality of jobs that young people enter and progress to in terms of pay and job quality. Our current focus is to:

Reduce the employment gap (or risk of NEET*) between young people:

- From ethnic minority groups and White British
- Who are disabled and non-disabled
- From disadvantaged backgrounds and better off young people
- In different regions of England
- 2 Reduce the pay gap between certain ethnic minority groups and the average.
- 3 Reduce the percentage of young workers in temporary jobs or on zero-hours contracts when they want permanent jobs or fixed hours.
- Increase the percentage of young people moving out of low-paid work.

*Not in Employment, Education or Training







Identifying what works

Everything we do is guided by robust evidence of what works to support young people from marginalised backgrounds into good jobs. We learn from the projects we fund and scale up that learning to drive genuine, long-lasting systemic change.

As a member of the national What Works Network, we work to the principle that good decision-making should be informed by the best quality evidence.

We create evidence by funding programmes and putting high-quality evaluations in place to understand whether or not those interventions are effective. We curate from studies around the world into interventions that help young people into work.

Since our launch, we have already funded the largest range of youth employment interventions for evaluation ever seen in this country.

In 2020, we produced eight new pieces of analysis on what works. This includes: analysis of key government policies such as the Kickstart programme and Youth Hubs; a rapid evidence review; and a review and recommendations to address the impact of Covid-19 on young people's prospects.



Identifying what works: Rapid Evidence Review

We commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies to identify what works when it comes to helping marginalised young people to obtain jobs. The resulting paper, 'Supporting disadvantaged young people into meaningful employment', was published in April 2020.

Although there's a need for more robust evidence, the report highlighted some clear areas of good practice that help optimise young people's chances of success. They include:

- Identifying at risk young people as early as possible
- Engaging young people in employment opportunities through music, sport and the arts
- Providing personalised support packages based on an understanding of individual needs
- Offering the support of a trusted adviser who helps young people to overcome barriers and achieve their goals

- Helping young people to find work experience and to develop their employability, essential and vocational skills
- Helping young people address barriers to employment related to health and housing
- Providing wage subsidies and intermediate labour markets (i.e. temporary paid jobs where young people receive support)
- Offering in-work support

https://youthfuturesfoundation. org/wp-content/uploads/ 2020/04/v14-IES-evidencereview-FINAL.pdf We're keen to do what we can to support DWP, employability professionals, local authorities and other organisations to ensure that the programme is a success. In October 2020, we produced a paper, 'Youth Hubs – what works?', that identifies evidence and examples of good practice.

We highlighted the following four main principles for effective colocation of employment services for young people:

- 1 Set up robust governance systems and draw on experience of partnership working.
- 2 Attract and engage young people with youth-friendly locations, outreach services and high-quality coaching support.



Identifying what works: Youth Hubs Rough Guide

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) recently announced plans to open Youth Hubs that will support 18–24-year-olds looking for work.



- 3 Co-design services with young people so they can shape their own training and employment needs.
- 4 Share data, align services, and test and evaluate approaches to learn what works.

Alongside this report, we produced an interactive Rough Guide to starting a Youth Hub.

https://youthfuturesfoundation. org/youth-hub-rough-guide/

https://youthfuturesfoundation. org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ Youth_Hubs_what_works_.pdf

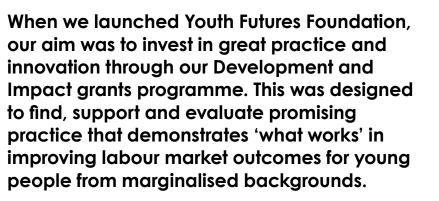
10







Investing in potential



Then coronavirus swept in, radically changing the youth employment landscape.

Suddenly the focus was on the survival of the businesses that hire young people and the practitioners who support them. The Board rapidly identified that the area of greatest need was the frontline community organisations and the infrastructure bodies that support them.

We responded quickly and boldly. In addition to our Development and Impact 'what works' grants programme, we added a new strand of work to provide resilience funding for the youth employment ecosystem. Our aim was to shore up those organisations that might help us to learn what works and deliver it at scale in due course.

We successfully drew down an additional £10m of funding ahead of schedule and deployed grants in a very short space of time through our partnerships with Rocket Science and Children in Need.



Investing in potential: Responding to the pandemic: Inspiring Futures Fund



The Covid-19 outbreak has dramatically heightened existing challenges for children and young people looking to access further education, training and work.



As a rapid response to the challenges caused by the pandemic, we delivered a series of grants through the Inspiring Futures Fund in partnership with BBC Children in Need.

Through the fund, we provided £7m to 107 frontline charities and social enterprises to deliver positive activities that support children and young people on their journey towards employment.

Funding was targeted at projects that work with young people who experience discrimination or disadvantages that create short or long-term barriers to employment, especially those whose journeys towards employment had been further hit by Covid-19. Grants of £10,000 - £80,000 were available for projects lasting between 12-18 months.

Organisations that received funding included the Damilola Taylor Trust in London, the Cwmbran Centre For Young People in Wales, the Belfast Exposed Community Photography Group, the Manchester Deaf Centre, and Football Unites, Racism Divides in Sheffield. Friends, Families and Travellers

Young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities face some of the greatest barriers to employment of any ethnic group in the UK.

Educational attainment is extremely low: 60% have no qualifications. By year 11, 50% have dropped out, often due to racial abuse and cultural concerns. To compound these problems, young people frequently have low self-confidence, limited aspirations and little knowledge of life outside their family and site.

Friends, Families and Travellers is a national charity that supports people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds. It received a grant from the Inspiring Futures Fund for a programme of employability support activities for young people.



youth futures The grant will support 252 people aged 10–24 who live in Sussex.

"Many of our young people's households are overcrowded with no access to printers, laptops, internet or digital services," says Samson Rattigan, Project Coordinator for Friends, Families and Travellers.

"When schools and colleges turned to online learning due to Covid-19, many of our young people were isolated even further."

"By focusing on digital skills training in this programme, we hope to close the educational and employability gap for our young people. They'll have more confidence in using digital equipment and will be able to access more work and training opportunities."

The project also aims to improve essential employability skills such as leadership, communication and patience.

"We want young people from our community to have the same opportunities that others have," says Samson. "We want them to raise their aspirations, access training and education, and follow their dreams."



Investing in potential: Responding to the pandemic: Infrastructure Resilience Grants

While our Inspiring Futures Fund provided support to frontline charities and social enterprises, our Infrastructure Resilience Grants helped support key infrastructure organisations that were also suffering as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.



During the Covid-19 pandemic, the youth employment sector required high-quality, sustainable infrastructure in order to deliver frontline services. However, in times of crisis, infrastructure bodies rarely attract emergency funding or charitable donations, because public support and private philanthropy tend to get directed to the frontline.

We stepped in to provide support for these vital infrastructure organisations, with a specific focus on:

 National infrastructure organisations that draw together, champion and respond to the needs of all young people seeking work Infrastructure organisations focused specifically on empowering young people from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds, including those of Gypsy, Roma & Traveller heritage.

Through our Infrastructure Resilience Fund, we provided £1.7m funding for 12 national and regional infrastructure organisations. The grants enabled us to deliver capacity building for frontline charities and social enterprises and helped us develop a movement of support for evidence-led practice.

Grant recipients included: Ubele, a social enterprise that supports people from the African diaspora; the Association of Employment & Learning Providers; and UK Youth.

The Employment Related Services Association

An organisation with 1,776 members involved in employment support services, the Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) brings the sector together to help young people seeking employment.

ERSA has a strong reputation for supporting youth employment and promoting models of good practice.

"We help improve the employment chances of marginalised young people by holding ERSA forums, collaboration events and conferences," says Elizabeth Taylor, ERSA's Chief Executive. "An important part of our role is to bring the sector together to discuss how to offer the best support to young people seeking employment."



ERSA had already been hit by a steady retraction in the welfare to work industry when Covid-19 delivered a further blow. The charity faced a funding shortfall just when its members most needed its services.

Youth Futures Foundation helped bridge the gap with an Infrastructure Resilience grant. "This funding is important because it has enabled us to increase our activities to support the sector," says Elizabeth.

This helped ERSA respond to the impact of Covid-19 and support the Kickstart Community Forum. It brings together 440 employers, gateways, change makers, commissioners and other organisations interested in delivering the right opportunities for young people.

The grant will enable ERSA to: employ a policy officer focused on youth unemployment; run more forums and conferences about youth employment; improve online resources for employment support organisations; and host a new online collaboration space for the employment sector.





Investing in potential: Development and Impact Grants

Our Development and Impact Grants programme is a key way through which we will identify what does and doesn't work to help marginalised young people to secure jobs.



We are looking for approaches and interventions that can be tested, evaluated and, where proven to be effective, expanded to more young people.

These grants are aimed at organisations working with young people aged 14–24 who are either not in employment, education or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET.

Two types of grant are available:

• **Development Grants** – helping organisations to strengthen the design, delivery, scale and reach of programmes that are not yet ready for larger-scale delivery or evaluation. Impact Grants – supporting programmes that have the potential to generate useful lessons both for the organisation and the wider audience through robust evaluation.

In 2020, our Development & Impact Fund awarded £6.5m funding to 21 frontline charities and social enterprises across England. Grantees included: 1625 Independent People, which supports young people aged 16-25 at risk of becoming homeless; and Volunteer It Yourself, which challenges young people aged 14-24 to learn trade and employability skills.

Making the Leap

Making the Leap is a London-based charity that runs careers education programmes for children in schools and prepares young adults for life-changing career opportunities.

Our Development Grant focuses on disadvantaged Year 11 pupils who are in secondary schools or in alternative provision within local authority pupil referral units. All are at risk of becoming NEET or of internal/ external exclusion.

The grant will enable the charity to deliver weekly sessions with small groups, helping pupils to develop their personal skills and readiness for employment. Over the course of two years, the programme will support 100 young people in Greater London.

"Many of the young people we work with are less likely to achieve well at school simply because they were born poor," says Eugene Blavo, Operations Director of Making the Leap.

The charity has found that young people from poor backgrounds are four times more likely to be excluded from mainstream education, and only 1% of those excluded have success at GCSE.

"The grant from Youth Futures Foundation allows us to support a seriously marginalised group of young people at an important transitional life stage," he adds. "We will help them develop the essential skills that businesses require, such as resilience, grit, curiosity and creativity. We'll also develop their professional networks and put them in contact with people who can offer them mentoring, advice and work experience."

"Crucially, we'll give them hope and raise their aspirations so they are inspired to reach for new career opportunities, whether that's training or work."







Volunteer It Yourself

Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) combines DIY and volunteering by challenging young people aged 14–24 to help repair and refurbish youth and community facilities, whilst learning vocational trade skills on the job. They also deliver 'early intervention' construction sector employability skills and careers training for 10–14 year-olds in schools.

Our Impact Grant will support and provide evaluation of a programme that will help 500 young people into education, training or employment opportunities.

Programmes usually last from three to six months providing careers and taster sessions and hands-on site work experience potentially leading to Entry Level City & Guilds trade skills accreditations and to further education and employment opportunities.

The majority of young people who take part are, or at risk of, disengagement and/or exclusion from mainstream education and training and/or unemployed. Spencer, 22, was referred into VIY by The Amber Foundation, a charity that supports homeless and unemployed young people in turning their lives around. Over one week, Spencer helped undertake improvements at CentrE17, a community theatre in Walthamstow, learning and applying new carpentry and painting and decorating skills in the process. "It was a great experience and gave me skills that I can take with me when I leave The Amber Foundation and apply for a job. Volunteering with VIY has also made me feel more motivated to succeed and has given me strong opinions towards my future and taught me that hard work pays off."

Spencer Volunteer It Yourself Volunteer









Igniting change

Throughout 2020, we've worked to ignite behaviour and practice by collaborating with partners, building coalitions and influencing policy. By mobilising a crosssector response to youth unemployment, we aim to generate systemic change.

We've formed partnerships with a wide range of key players and have built constructive relationships across government to shape employment schemes that support young people who face barriers to employment.

As a founder member and co-chair of the Youth Employment Group, we're working with other organisations to improve employment opportunities for young people.

Meanwhile, our Future Voices Group is amplifying young people's views, ensuring their voices remain at the heart of all our work.



Igniting change: Youth Employment Group



In April 2020, we co-founded the Youth Employment Group, together with Youth Employment UK, The Prince's Trust, Impetus and the Institute for Employment Studies in response to the escalating youth employment crisis.

This growing coalition of currently over 200 organisations brings together practitioners, employers, local authorities and key think tanks to address youth unemployment in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis.

The Youth Employment Group has mobilised this collective expertise to make evidence-based recommendations to policy makers on how best to address the short- and long-term impacts of the coronavirus outbreak on young people's employment chances.

A rapid response to Covid-19

In May 2020, we jointly produced our first Youth Employment Group report, 'Securing a place for young people in the nation's economic recovery'. This paper set out practical proposals for supporting young people into work in the era of Covid-19, building on strong evidence of what works and what delivers the best long-term value.

Many of these recommendations have shaped government initiatives such as the Kickstart scheme, investment in traineeships and incentives for employers to take on young apprentices. Building on the positive relationships established with the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Education and others, the follow-up report in September 2020 recommended that the Government should set clear objectives for schemes designed to support young people during the economic crisis and beyond. It then made 19 recommendations around employment, skills, careers, entrepreneurship and welfare support for young people and called for an Opportunity Guarantee.

The Youth Employment Group has successfully secured high-profile media coverage to amplify its calls for greater employment support for young people. Alex Morawski, Youth Futures' youngest non-executive board director, spoke to Channel 4 News in September, about his own struggle to find a job as part of the Youth Employment Group's call to the government to create 1,000 new jobs or training opportunities a day for young people as part of the #1000opportunities campaign. "Through my involvement with the Youth Employment Group, I have been able to share my voice on important issues with ministers, organisations and with young people directly. I am looking forward to being part of the Youth Voice Team and making sure that more young people are able to share their views, voices and ideas."

Kim Lupton, Youth Employment UK Apprentice YEG Youth Voice Team member

"The scale of the youth employment crisis in the face of the pandemic demanded an urgent, united response. Impetus, Youth Futures Foundation and our other co-chairs have been able to mobilise key organisations across different sectors to bring together collective expertise, recognised by ministers, officials and sector leaders. The Youth Employment Group continues to play a critical role in shaping government policy and the support needed to help young people into quality jobs at this exceptionally challenging time and its aftermath."

Samantha Windett, Director of Policy, Impetus, Chair of the Youth Employment Group





Igniting change: Future Voices Group

Following the principle of "nothing about us without us", youth voice is woven throughout every element of our work. Young people from marginalised backgrounds with lived experience of unemployment help shape our strategy and lead all our work.

Towards the end of 2020, we set up our Future Voices Group, an advisory group of young people who will feed into our vision and strategy, funding and research decisions, communications strategy and partnerships.

They will also play an active role in our Youth Employment Group and help to drive, shape and curate our Future Voices Digital initiative.

The first cohort is made up of 13 young people aged 16–24 from diverse backgrounds who have all experienced barriers to employment. In addition to receiving training from Youth Futures Foundation, they are embarking on leadership training provided by the British Youth Council. As champions and ambassadors of the Youth Futures Foundation, members of the Future Voices Group will help to raise the profile of our mission and work by engaging in discussions with policy makers, practitioners, employers and the media.

Group members have already gained extensive media coverage for our campaign in national media outlets including Channel 4 News, the Today programme and The Face magazine.





Spotlight on Annie Bocock, Future Voices Group member

Annie, 22, is in the first cohort of the Future Voices Group. She's written articles for The Guardian and BBC Bitesize, among others, reflecting on her struggles with mental health.

After dropping out of university, she became a Press Ambassador for Student Minds and Time to Change, and worked as a Content Creator for TEDx BrayfordPool. She's passionate about the environment, pop culture and poetry, and recently founded Art for Messy Beings, an Instagram platform that encourages creativity.

What's your experience of unemployment, Annie?

Growing up working class and queer made it more difficult than it should have been to get a job. When I dropped out of university, I was unemployed for four months. I thought that with my experience and qualifications, I'd find work quite easily, but I didn't. It was really worrying dealing with debt and the pressure to get a job.

How about your friends?

When my friends finished university last year, they graduated into an extremely turbulent environment in the middle of the pandemic. Before Covid-19, it was already hard to get a graduate job. Now, in this climate, I see so many of my friends really stressed out, not even able to secure part-time work.

What made you want to join the Future Voices Group?

I want to make a tangible difference to young people's employment opportunities. Before I heard about Youth Futures Foundation, I didn't know how to campaign to bring about meaningful change in this area. Now I do – and I'm really looking forward to it.

I also like the way that Youth Futures Foundation champions young people and puts them at the centre of decisionmaking. It means they can share real-life perspectives on what young people think and what they want.

Why is it important for young people's voices to be heard on the issue of youth unemployment?

The job market is really difficult for everyone at the moment, but young people are disproportionately affected by job cuts and the crisis. We've experienced the tough reality of the job market and we know better than anyone what helps and what hinders our career prospects and our future. So people need to listen to our opinions.

What do you hope that Future Voices Group will achieve?

I feel really confident about where our team is going and have faith that we will make a difference. If we can fund projects and discover what works and what doesn't work in tackling youth unemployment, that will feel like a job well done.

I'd like to see a change in employers' attitudes, so they consider people's potential, rather than demanding that the people they hire are already perfect. I'd like to change government policy. Most of all, though, I'd like to see young people take part in Youth Futures Foundation projects and go on to find meaningful employment.

"If we can fund projects and discover what works and what doesn't work in tackling youth unemployment, that will feel like a job well done."





Our three year strategy

We aim to ensure that future generations have access to fulfilling work, no matter what their background, as a result of our ability to identify and share learnings, provide a bridge between employers and practitioners, and influence decision-makers.

We will focus on three priorities over the next three years.

Changing the youth employment system

We are working with others to remove the structural and systemic barriers faced by young people from marginalised backgrounds. We will:

Identify evidence and opportunities to improve the youth employment ecosystem. We will map youth employment systems, engage with stakeholders and drive change through the Youth Employment Group.

Invest in interventions that address barriers within the system. We will launch a Systems Change Innovation Fund that will invest in new ideas to tackle systemic barriers to employment for marginalised young people.

30

Impact Report





youth futures

Creating opportunities with employers

We are supporting more employers to recruit and retain young people from marginalised backgrounds. We will:

Identify effective employer recruitment and retention practice. We will carry out

research to understand how employers are recruiting and retaining young people, and what kind of evidence they need.



Invest in evaluating, scaling and replicating promising employer practice. Our new Employer Practice Programme will test and

Practice Programme will test and evaluate ideas that have the potential to be scaled up and replicated more widely.

Ignite collaboration between employers to test and learn. We will set up new employer networks including an Employer Advisory Board and a wider network to share evidence and resources.

Building capacity with practitioners

We are equipping practitioners to train and support young people from marginalised backgrounds to be ready for work. We will:

Identify effective practitioner-led interventions. We will highlight examples of excellent practice, identify gaps in evidence or provision, and create tools and resources to support practitioners in their work.

Players in evaluating and scaling promising practitioner practice. We will reopen our Developmen

We will reopen our Development and Impact Fund to identify and test what works in supporting young people into employment. Ignite shifts in culture and practice through practitioner networks.

We will set up a new Practitioner Advisory Board and will continue to inspire change through our leadership role in the Youth Employment Group.



Working together

If you would like to work with Youth Futures Foundation to transform employment outcomes for young people from marginalised backgrounds, please get in touch with us:

E: partnerships@youthfuturesfoundation.org www.youthfuturesfoundation.org



youth futures



Get in touch: www.youthfuturesfoundation.org @YF_Foundation

company/youthfuturesfoundation