

Head of Research and Impact

Term: Permanent

Salary: £45,000 - £55,000

Location: This role can be based in either our Birmingham or Leeds hub. We are currently working virtually, but when restrictions are lifted, it is likely that you will be required to work no more than 2 days per week at your chosen hub. Please specify your preferred hub when applying.

Reporting to: Director of Impact and Evidence

Deadline: 22 August 2021

Apply on the Be Applied website: [Head of Research and Impact - Youth Futures Foundation - Applied \(beapplied.com\)](https://beapplied.com/jobs/head-of-research-and-impact-youth-futures-foundation)

All recruitment to roles at the Youth Futures Foundation is done using a specialist system that conceals the applicant's identity and focuses on assessing candidates based on key competencies, anonymising applications and distributing the assessment of applications against multiple assessors.

Transforming youth employment

The Youth Futures Foundation is an independent, not for profit organisation set up to tackle youth unemployment with a £90million endowment from the Reclaim Fund. We are looking for bold and impactful ways to help young people find and keep good jobs.

There are nearly 1 million young people not in education or employment in the UK. Under-25s make up almost two thirds of the total fall in employment during the pandemic, with those from ethnic minority backgrounds disproportionately affected. Recent falls in employment have been 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% were aged 16–24. There is a significant risk that a generation's future will be blighted by the scarring effects of long-term unemployment.

We are an ambitious organisation that wants to tackle the root causes of youth unemployment for young people from marginalised backgrounds. To do that, we are focused on three priorities:

1. **Changing the youth employment system** by working in partnership with organisations, policy makers and young people to address structural and systemic barriers
2. **Creating opportunities with employers** to recruit and retain more young people from marginalised backgrounds
3. **Building capacity with practitioners** to support and train more young people from marginalised backgrounds to be ready for work.



We are building an 'empowerment foundation' to identify practical solutions that work in a complex world yet are simple and cost effective enough to roll out across multiple locations, to reach as many young people as possible. Youth Futures will apply rigorous evaluation methods to determine what works, then channel resources and funding into sharing learnings and working in partnership to grow good practice.

We recognise that whilst developing and supporting young people will go some way towards tackling youth unemployment and under employment, these are systemic issues. We are seeking a significant change in national behaviour that dramatically improves the number of young people accessing - and progressing in - work.

We will work in partnership to close the employment gap by:

- **Building the evidence base**
- **Understanding and highlighting structural and systemic barriers**
- **Improving the quality of employment programmes for young people**
- **Empowering government to carry out evidence-based policy-making**
- **Equipping employers to improve productivity through hiring the best talent**

Youth Futures will take an evidence-led structural and systems-based approach that recognises the importance of national learnings and local context, as well as promoting strong coordination and partnership working across government, funders, delivery organisations and employers.

Internally, we encourage an open, collaborative and inclusive working environment. We have established an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion steering committee with team members from across the organisation and headed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.



Job Description

We are looking for a dynamic *Head of Research and Impact* to generate and use evidence that has a transformative effect on the youth employment ecosystem. You will work closely with the Director of Impact & Evidence and the Head of Evidence & Evaluation to lead our research team. You will design and manage programmes of research and evidence synthesis to understand the nature of and solutions to youth unemployment. These programmes will form the basis of tools and frameworks that help our stakeholders make smart decisions that have a positive impact on supporting young people into meaningful work.

Key Responsibilities

Manage and lead the YFF approach to research and impact, including:

- Provide strategic direction, set priorities, oversee the management of the Research team and its work, and support continuous improvement
- Recruit and oversee research team members
- Working with colleagues in Strategy & Innovation, develop a suite of evidence tools, gap maps and frameworks to have an impact on policy and practice
- Map the evidence base to identify key findings and gaps to determine priority issues for Youth Futures influencing activities with policy-makers, employers and practitioners
- Use research evidence from across multiple disciplines to inform YFF policy decisions and equip colleagues to influence our stakeholders effectively
- Plan and lead internal and external research programmes contributing to the evidence base on learning, skills and employment, and quality assure outputs to ensure they generate evidence-based policy positions
- Understand and contribute to YFF evaluations of interventions that move young people towards and into work, including comparison studies and randomised control trials
- Work with relevant government departments, representative bodies and influencers to develop, access and use data for analysis
- Develop strong relationships with experts from employment, youth and related sectors (e.g. ethnic disparities, disability, social mobility, education and training) and with research organisations and think tanks
- Represent YFF at events; chair and participate in advisory groups, grant committees, round tables and meetings to learn from and inform stakeholders
- Provide up to date information and insights on economic and labour market data linked to youth unemployment issues; collating, reporting, interpreting and



tracking data at a headline level and on specific cohorts, regions or demographics

- Keep up to date with developments in policy, research and practice related to young people, skills and employment, and on innovations in research and development approaches; working with colleagues to disseminate this learning
- Provide thought leadership in the field of youth employment, including generating content in various forms (print, broadcast, online)

Person specification

Knowledge and Experience

- Experience in leading major programmes of research and development work and building and leading high-performing teams to achieve impact on public policy and practice
- A relevant **degree** and/or equivalent training or experience in research management and the synthesis and application of evidence
- Experience of developing and implementing research **strategies**
- Experience in using and/or commissioning a wide range of research **methods** including rigorous quantitative and qualitative techniques, such as systematic and rapid evidence reviews, secondary data analysis, primary qualitative research, mapping exercises, and participatory research
- Experience of using evidence to **influence**, such as giving presentations, writing reports and blogs, creating online toolkits, animations, films, speaking at conferences, podcasts and through social media
- Experience of understanding and using **statistics**, cutting through complex findings to produce succinct and accessible research reports suitable for a lay person
- Experience of using evidence to work in **partnership** with a range of stakeholders

Desirable

- Experience of working in the context of youth employment, learning and/or skills



Skills and Competencies

- As a leader in YFF, fully contribute to:
 - developing our overall strategy
 - creating a positive, supportive and effective culture within the organisation
 - organisational development; developing new roles and ways of working; recruiting and developing new team members
 - establishing our reputation as a What Works Centre on Youth Employment
- Engage stakeholders; encourage connectivity and networks within and outside the Youth Futures Foundation
- Ability to support, coach and develop a team of people who are split across three different locations
- Extremely strong analytical skills, including the ability to interpret and make sound judgements about the implications of data and research findings
- Excellent relationship and collaboration skills, to effectively engage stakeholders, encouraging connectivity and networks within and outside YFF, and be equally confident working alongside both local and national organisations
- Strong communication, written language and presentation skills
- Proven ability to conduct research across international, national and local initiatives, conducting gap analysis and identifying and evaluating successful projects that could inform the work of YFF
- High quality project management, prioritisation and resource allocation
- Firm understanding and ability to track income and expenditure using spreadsheets and data
- Strong IT skills, including use of MS Office applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint etc), shared online folders, calendars and contacts

Mindset

- Genuine personal commitment to Youth Futures mission, vision and values
- Ability and energy to think differently with an open and innovative mindset
- As YFF was only set up in 2019, many of the systems and processes that are normal in an established organisation either do not exist or are newly forming. To be successful in this role, the candidate will need:
 - to thrive when operating in uncertainty
 - a proactive and flexible approach, able to identify and take forward opportunities and work effectively in partnership with others.



- a positive and can-do attitude, willing to roll their sleeves up to get into details where necessary
- a willingness to collaborate internally and externally to achieve our mission
- strong leadership communication skills

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

