

future VOICES

2022 Future Voices Group application guide



Closing date Sunday 31 July 2022
[Click here to apply.](#)

youth
futures
FOUNDATION

Welcome



Anna Darnell
Head of Strategy & Partnerships

Hello! It's great to know you're interested in the opportunity to become a member of our Future Voices Group. This pack should give you all the information you need to help you decide whether to apply.

The Youth Futures Foundation launched in

2019 with a hugely significant mission as the only organisation in England focused on improving the employment outcomes of young people who face disadvantage or discrimination when trying to get into good quality work. For decades before we were established, countless governments, funders, researchers, and practitioners had tried to support young people out of unemployment. We were set up with the sole aim of tackling the root causes of why many young people end up unemployed, and how to change the system to ensure that the same problems and patterns aren't repeated, leaving the same young people outside of learning or earning opportunities.

Although we do not work directly with young people to get them into work (we fund programmes that do), here at Youth Futures, we believe in the principle of "nothing about us, without us" and are committed to keeping young people at the heart of what we do. In 2020, we recruited our very first cohort of the Future Voices Group as one of the keys ways to ensure that our work to improve the system for young people is shaped by young people with lived experience from the outset.

Our current Future Voices Group have been involved in some incredible work during their time with us. They have been involved in our business and strategic planning processes, have reviewed proposals for our major funding programmes,

shaped notable pieces of research, and regularly engaged directly with our Board of Directors, policymakers and employers from across England. Alongside being involved in these amazing activities, the members of the Future Voices Group have served as key strategic advisors to our organisation, holding us to account and ensuring that we are truly working to achieve the aims we set out to.

As the current cohort comes to the end of their time with us, we are looking for another brilliant and diverse group of young people to join us in our work at Youth Futures and help us to achieve our vision of a society where all young people have equitable access to good quality jobs. We are recruiting for an even larger Group this time (20 young people!) so that we can include an even wider breadth of lived experience.

If you are between the ages of 16-24 and have faced barriers or challenges in your journey to finding work, and want to have an opportunity to influence change within the system to avoid other young people facing the same issues you did, then please read the rest of this application pack. We hope you'll consider applying and we're so excited to hear more about you!

"I am eternally grateful to be a part of a programme which finally lets me be myself."

Future Voices Ambassador



Alex Morawski
Chair of the Future
Voices Group

I came onboard at Youth Futures Foundation (as a non-Executive Director of the Board) following a long stint of unemployment, in which I moved away from home to look for a job. Youth Futures was set up to tackle the systemic problems leading to youth unemployment, which

impact upon millions of young people, especially those facing disadvantage and discrimination. The Future Voices Group was set up to help Youth Futures achieve this mission by working with, giving a platform to, and empowering young people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

As Chair, it has been such a privilege to see how the members of the Future Voices Group have grown in confidence from when they started. I have seen first-hand the value and importance of having a range of backgrounds and experiences represented: whether that be neurodivergent, ethnic, gender, or socio-economic background, everyone has valuable contributions to make that others would not have even considered.

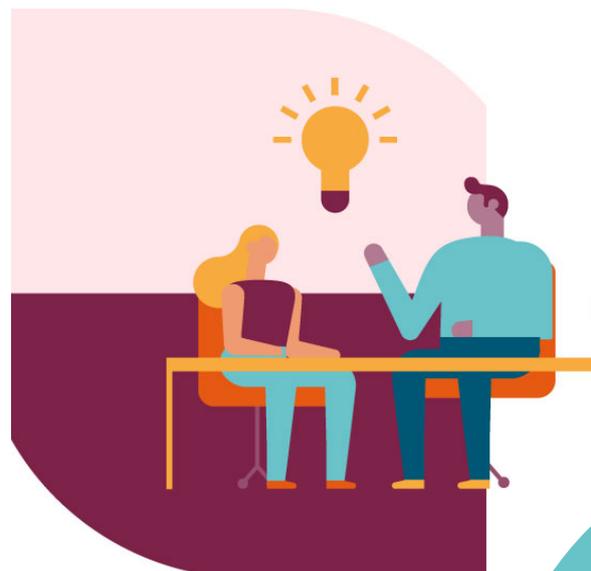
We have hit the ground running as a group. We have helped to shape Youth Futures strategies and decision-making, including contributing insights to its Business Plan, and providing feedback on grant proposals. We've written or contributed to more than 20 pieces of content for Future Voices Digital, and taken on the challenge of designing and delivering Youth Futures' first youth-led projects, drawing on our skills and expertise. All kinds of stakeholders are aware of our work, as we've met with major employers, grant recipients, policymakers and other young people throughout our time working on issues relating to youth

employment. Although the pandemic meant we were unable to get out into the world as much as we would have liked, our impact has been felt within Youth Futures and beyond.

I hope the next cohort of FVG ambassadors can take forward their own agenda, supporting the vital work Youth Futures does, and make connections with a range of stakeholders, from employers, other organisations in the youth sector, and the young people receiving our grants. If this sounds like something you'd like to be a part of, I'd encourage you to read on and apply!

"I feel valued and listened to as a Future Voices Group member. We are encouraged to challenge ourselves and take part in opportunities that I never would have thought I could do. Being supported to partake in these opportunities has given me confidence that I am actively welcome in these spaces and deserve to have my voice heard."

Future Voices Ambassador



Guidance pack

This guidance pack will give you a better understanding of the role and what we're looking for and provides more information on the application process.

In it, you will find:

- More information about Youth Futures Foundation and our Future Voices Group
- The role of our Future Voices Ambassadors, and what the Future Voices Group does
- Who we're looking for to join the Future Voices Group, and the criteria to apply
- The benefits and support we offer our Future Voices Ambassadors
- How to apply to join the Future Voices Group



Who are Youth Futures Foundation?

The Youth Futures Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit organisation set up to help tackle youth unemployment. We launched in 2019 as the only organisation in England focused on improving the employment outcomes of young people who face disadvantage or discrimination when trying to get into good quality work, and to tackle the root causes of why many young people end up unemployed.

Using an initial £110m of funding from the [Reclaim Fund Ltd](#), we are working hard to:

- understand and inform others of what works to help young people into good jobs,
- invest in good practice and fund the programmes helping those young people facing barriers
- initiate new ways of working and achieve lasting change

Using the principle of “nothing about us without us”, youth voice is woven throughout every element of our work. Young people from marginalised backgrounds with a diversity of lived experiences of facing barriers to employment play a vital role in shaping our strategy and leading our mission. Involving diverse young people in our work was incredibly important even before the impact of COVID-19 – and now, following the pandemic, we are seeing the same groups of young people from marginalised backgrounds shut out of learning or

earning opportunities, and a worrying increase in the number of young people who are unemployed for a long period of time (6 months+). This country is facing challenges that make our mission to unearth what works to support the most marginalised young people into sustained, good work, even more critical. Never before has it been more vital that young people are at the heart of efforts to change the system – the generation most affected by this crisis and its economic aftermath must have a voice in the discussions that shape this country's response and recovery.



“When there are things that affect young people, young people should have the platform to talk and opportunity to speak and share their views on that. Young people all over the UK feel powerless. We, the Future Voices Group, feed into this vision and strategy and advocate for the voices of young people.”

Future Voices Ambassador

What is the Future Voices Group?

Our Future Voices Ambassadors make up our Future Voices Group (FVG): a forward-thinking group with the responsibility to serve as expert advisors on the work we do – helping us to make the big decisions on who we fund, what works, what needs to change within the system and what solutions might be needed. The FVG also represents Youth Futures Foundation across different platforms – engaging in important conversations with a range of stakeholders such as policymakers, researchers, funders and practitioners.

Future Voices Ambassadors also use digital media to [share their stories](#) and influence decision-makers as part of their role. The [Future Voices](#) section of our website brings together the perspectives and experiences of young people across the country on employment issues, and is a way for you and other young people to share your stories to shape and influence the youth employment landscape.

As part of their roles, Future Voices Ambassadors get stuck into more in-depth work as part of dedicated 'sub-groups'. These sub-groups give members the opportunity to become experts in specific parts of Youth Futures' work, and work with staff 'champions' on detailed parts of what we do. Members will have the opportunity to help to shape each group's work programme.

To help us to make this group the best that it can be, We have partnered with the [British Youth Council](#), who are real experts in supporting young people to have their voices heard and listened to. The British Youth Council help us to manage, support and train the FVG on an ongoing basis.

We are coming to the end of our first cohort of the FVG (who will all still be staying in our network and extended family!), who started their roles in 2021.



We now want to recruit a new set of Future Voices Ambassadors, who will work with us from October 2022 for the next two years.

The role of a Future Voices Ambassador, and what the Future Voices Group does

Future Voices Ambassador - role profile

Job Title	Future Voices Ambassador
Reporting to:	<p>On a day-to-day basis, Future Voices Ambassadors report to the programme lead from British Youth Council.</p> <p>Future Voices Ambassadors are ultimately accountable to the programme lead from Youth Futures Foundation.</p>
Location:	<p>Virtual</p> <p>You will be expected to travel for whole group meetings around 3 times per year, and additional ad-hoc travel to meetings from time to time.</p> <p>We will cover any travel costs required in your role.</p>
Role duration:	<p>2 years, starting in October 2022 (date TBC)</p> <p>This time is expected to comprise of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 21 months in the Ambassador role • A maximum of 3 months spent mentoring the next cohort of the FVG
Monthly commitment	<p>11 hours a month (roughly 2-3 hours per week), with the option to be paid for additional hours worked dependent on work requirements.</p> <p>We expect that your time will average out at 11 hours, but in some months it may be a little more or a little less – we'll work with you to make sure you can manage this effectively.</p> <p>You will be expected to attend main group meetings on Wednesday evenings from 5.30 – 7pm, and occasionally on weekends.</p> <p>We will work with all Ambassadors to support you to meet your commitment alongside other personal commitments (e.g. exam periods).</p>
Salary	Paid at London Living Wage (currently £11.05), which is updated annually.
No. of roles available:	<p>20</p> <p>We intend to recruit a Chair for the FVG from within the 20 new Ambassadors recruited, who will take on additional responsibilities. All members will have the opportunity to apply for this role once in post.</p>

The role of the Future Voices Group

The Future Voices Group will be required to:

- Advise on and feed into what it is we're trying to do (our vision and strategy), the ways in which we do them (the things we fund, the research we gather and the influence we have), how we communicate with our different audiences (our communications and marketing approach) and who we work with to achieve the change we want to see (our partnerships)
- Particularly, provide insights from personal experiences that help to shape Youth Futures' policy positions, enabling us to represent the lived experiences of young people facing disadvantage directly to national and local government
- Work as part of a focused 'sub-group', working closely with expert staff 'champions' to build the knowledge and skills required to work with staff on detailed parts of Youth Futures' activities.
- Help to drive, shape and curate our Future Voices Digital initiative, and become active contributors to it



- Input into our other advisory groups and panels, and any other policy and influencing groups we convene. Ambassadors will have the ability to be involved in an additional advisory group or panel, including our [Employer Advisory Board](#) (a small group of employers collaborating on improving the youth employment landscape), the [Youth Employment Group](#) (a group of organisations who work together to achieve changes in policy on youth employment), our Grants & Evaluation Committee (the panel deciding what we fund) or others as they emerge.
- Be champions of and ambassadors to the Youth Futures Foundation, helping to raise the profile of our mission and work publicly to engage in discussions with a range of different people including policy makers, media, employers, and practitioners
- Seek out opportunities to represent Youth Futures Foundation at youth and other regional events



Who we're looking for to join the Future Voices Group and criteria to apply

We are looking for a diverse group who are representative of the range of backgrounds and experiences that we know are more likely to face greater barriers to accessing work. We value and celebrate the unique experiences and contributions of our members.

To apply, you must fit the following criteria:

- Aged between 16 and 24 years on Oct 01, 2022
- Live in England
- Have experience of, or identify as, **at least one** of the following:
 - Being of ethnic minoritised heritage - particularly Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Black; Mixed; or Gypsy, Roma and Traveller
 - Asylum seeker or refugee status
 - Having a special educational need, physical disability, or long-term health condition
 - Mental health conditions making it hard to look for, start and maintain work
 - Not being in employment, education, or training for three months or more
 - Being in the care system
 - Having a caring responsibility including being a young parent
 - Being financially disadvantaged (e.g eligible for free school meals when at school or other experience of significant financial challenges growing up)
 - Being in the criminal justice system
 - Being excluded from school
 - Attending alternative provision (including a Pupil Referral Unit) or being home-schooled
 - Taking non-traditional routes through

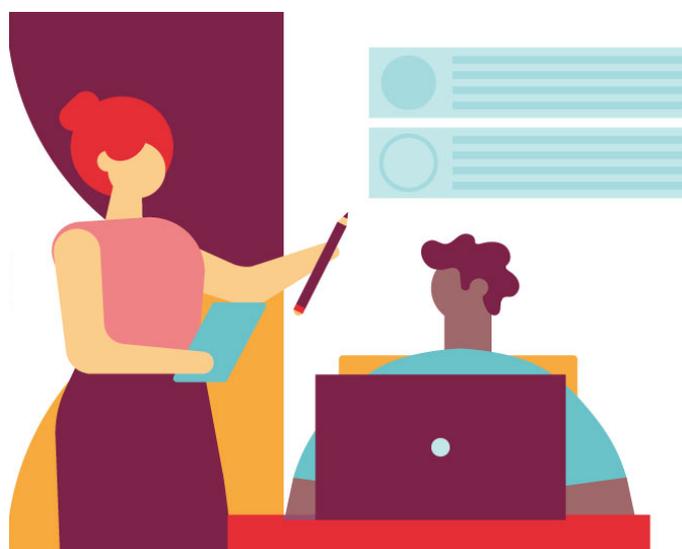
education (e.g. apprenticeships, traineeships etc)

- Homelessness
- Substance abuse

We are also looking to ensure that the group is representative geographically across England, and will be aiming to appoint at least one young person from each of the following regions:

- North East
- North West
- Yorkshire and Humber
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- East of England
- Greater London
- South East
- South West

We are an inclusive organisation and particularly welcome applications from young people with diverse backgrounds and experiences, including those who have a disability, are from Black, Asian or other minoritised ethnic backgrounds, or have overcome challenging personal experiences.



Other important information

Background Checks

All group members aged 18 and over will be subject to background checks including a 'Disclosure and Barring Service' (DBS) check.

What is a DBS check?

A DBS check is a process to see whether someone has a criminal record that may prevent them from taking up their role. We do this in line with our Safeguarding policy, which sets out how we will ensure that all staff and young people we work with are protected from harm.

Can I apply if I have a criminal record?

Yes! You are eligible to apply if you have a criminal record, but if anything comes up on the DBS check we will talk to you more to understand the nature of your criminal record to assess whether it would discount you from being an FVG member. Anyone that has 'spent convictions' is eligible to apply (according to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, these are convictions that have reached a set period of time and are no longer listed on a person's record).

If you are unsure about any of this or have any questions, please contact:
youthengagement@byc.org.uk



Benefits and support for Future Voices Ambassadors

What benefits can you expect as a Future Voices Ambassador?

The offer for Future Voices Ambassadors is:

- Initial and ongoing support, including regular 1 to 1 check-ins and opportunities suiting your interests
- Input into key parts of our work and help to shape decisions around what and how we fund, what we learn and who we influence to achieve change
- Development of key skills related to leadership, communication, and critical thinking, including in group workshops, with the opportunity to gain certificates for your learning
- Develop communication and marketing skills for example speaking or blogging/ vlogging on behalf of the organisation
- Building a network of other enthusiastic and committed young people, including friends up and down the country
- Meaningful opportunities to genuinely support and shape the development of an ambitious mission aiming to deliver lasting change
- Opportunities to visit projects on the ground and attend policy and advocacy meetings across the country with important decision-makers
- Meet with, learn from, and influence large and small employers around the country
- Be paid for your time and any additional appropriate expenses

What support will you get?

We know that this might be the first time you have ever considered applying to join an advisory group of this type, but that's ok! We're not looking for people who are already the 'full package' – our priority is to work with young people with relevant experiences and enough fire in their bellies to achieve change. We will put in place several steps to support you with the process throughout your

membership, including (but not limited to):

- A full induction programme
- A skills development package focused on giving you the skills you need to thrive in the FVG, including e.g. digital content creation, public speaking and networking, policy and influencing etc
- Ongoing training and support to ensure you feel equipped in carrying out the role, making sure you understand how the youth employment sector works, how we fit in as an organisation, and your role within all of that
- Mentoring and shadowing opportunities
Providing links and networks with other young ambassadors across the sector

Youth Futures and the British Youth Council will aim to provide you with all of the resources, support and tools you need to complete the role.

If you are currently employed, we will work with you and your employer to ensure you can have enough time to commit to this role.

We will also cover any other reasonable expenses in addition to travel such as childcare costs.

Working with Staff Champions

In addition to support from the programme team at Youth Futures and the British Youth Council, we have also created a number of 'staff champion' roles, filled by different members of the Youth Futures team across our various departments. These staff champions are your named links into the organisation. Staff champions provide guidance and support on your areas of focus (especially within your 'sub-group'), and help to connect the FVG into everything Youth Futures does. The exact nature of the support that they offer will vary based on what you're working on.

How to apply

There is a short online application form that we'll need you to complete and submit to us by the closing date on Sunday 31 July 2022. The application will include both written and recorded answers, to help us find out more about your written and verbal communication skills.

We will then shortlist applications for group interviews, which will take place over a video call (such as Zoom or MS Teams) in August 2022. The group interviews will be around 90 minutes long (about the same length of time as a typical Future Voices Group meeting!). Each interview will include 5 candidates and will give you the opportunity to talk about your experience and motivations, answer a few relevant questions and take part in a group task. You'll also hear more about the programme and have the opportunity to ask any questions you might have.

If you don't have access to Zoom or MS Teams, or have any other accessibility requirements, don't worry – we will support you so that you are able to complete the interview. Just let us know beforehand and we will work with you to make sure you will be able to access resources in your local area.

Following the group interviews, we will let you know the outcome of your application in mid-August. Due to the high number of applicants that we expect to receive, we will not be giving feedback to unsuccessful candidates unless they have progressed to the interview stage of the process, and then only by request.

Filling in the application form

Section A – details and consent

In Section A of the application form we will ask you for your information and personal details. For your application to be considered, this section will need to be completed in full.

Section B – your application

Section B of the application form is where you can tell us about yourself and why you would like to be a member of the FVG. You'll find some tips on how to answer the questions on the next page.

First, we'll ask you to submit a written answer about your motivations for joining the group. Then, we'll ask you to send us a recording (video or audio) of your answers to three further questions, focusing on your ideas and experiences, including in relation to youth employment.

You will be required to submit your application via Typeform. Throughout the form, you'll be guided as to when to submit answers in writing, and when to submit recordings. Recordings should be no longer than 7 minutes in length – but we've included this on the form!

If you cannot attach your media file to Typeform, please send it directly to us via email to youthengagement@byc.org.uk – and if the file is too large to send directly by email, we recommend using a file-sharing platform (e.g. WeTransfer).



Tips for answering the questions

Here are some tips on answering each question in Section B. When considering your answer to the questions, you might want to think about:

What you bring to the role of a Youth Future's Foundation Ambassador: what experiences you have that might add a unique perspective to our work, and what you might have seen around you regarding barriers to employment

Your ideas and ambitions for youth employment: how could it be easier for young people facing disadvantage to get good work? If you had a magic wand, what would you like to see changed? What changes you would like to see in your community?

Timetable – what happens next?

Activity	Dates
Application deadline	31 July 2022
Outcome of application communicated to candidates	Week beginning 1 August 2022
Interviews	9 August – 11 August 2022
Outcome of interview communicated to candidates	Week beginning 15 August 2022
New FVG attend residential induction	8 October – 9 October 2022

We expect the first meeting for the new cohort of the FVG to be an in-person induction residential (with an overnight stay) on the October 8th and October 9th 2022. This session will focus on team-building, getting to know the other members of the group and looking ahead to what you'll be working on as a Future Voices Ambassador over the next two years. We will work with you to support any access needs that you have, to ensure that you can attend and participate in this event in a way that is comfortable, accessible and enjoyable for you.

At the induction session we will discuss the calendar for the coming year and set dates that are suitable for the group.

For more information, please contact us at:
youthengagement@byc.org.uk

How this role could help you to develop: if you want to gain experience and you think that this opportunity could help you to do that – then tell us about it! What skills you would like to learn? How could this role help develop you professionally and personally?

What your motivations are for your time in the FVG: why are you passionate about making sure that your voice and the voice of young people in your local area is being heard? What change would you like to see nationally with youth unemployment? How can you imagine yourself influencing that?

Tips for answering the questions

When answering the questions in Section B of the application form keep in mind that we want to know about you and what you think.

This section is where you let us know about why tackling the issues around youth unemployment is important to you and to give us some insight into what experience you have. If answering the questions touches on triggering or sensitive topics for you, contact YoungMinds for support by texting YM to 85258 for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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