

youth futures FOUNDATION



Principal Economist Recruitment Pack

Date: July 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.

We are committed to showing salary information on all of the roles that we advertise both internally and externally, along with sharing our pay scale information internally.





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

27

research and evaluation papers published

07

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

25,301

cumulative total of young people engaged

02

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

01

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

£29m

in cumulative grant funding awarded to 173 grantees

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

PRINCIPAL ECONOMIST IMPACT & EVIDENCE DIRECTORATE

Term: Permanent - Full Time –37.5 hours per week

We offer flexible working and consider alternative patterns of work.

Salary: £47,810 to £53,883 (subject to skills and experience)

Reporting to: Head of Research & Impact

Direct reports: Senior Analyst and 2 x Senior Economists

Location: This role can be based at any of our hubs located in Birmingham, Leeds or London. 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

The Principal Economist is based in our Impact and Evidence team and supports our work to improve understanding of youth unemployment in England, so that we can make a positive impact on outcomes for young people. We are looking for someone with expertise in economic analysis, data analysis, quantitative research methods and project design to lead our growing portfolio of work in these areas.

The role manages and/or supports all aspects of Youth Futures' economic and data analysis, from design to impact. This will involve working closely with colleagues across the organisation, including our busy Policy, Communications, and External Affairs colleagues.

The Principal Economist will support Youth Futures' mission as a What Works Centre by: identifying key research questions; exploring youth employment within the wider labour market, the UK economy, and local economies; working with research and analysis partners to ensure projects are delivered to a high standard, on time and to budget; and quality assuring outputs to deliver clear recommendations that will influence practice and policy. They will also lead the oversight and development of our Data Dashboard, and they will be responsible for the next phase of work towards an economic model of youth employment.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the design and commissioning of economic research and data analysis projects on key issues for youth employment and young people, using a range of methods. This will include both in-house and externally conducted work.
- Leads the end-to-end delivery of projects, ensuring clear planning, active coordination, and timely execution to meet defined objectives/KPI's.
- Use economic data, studies, models and analysis to improve understanding of youth employment within the current economic context, and to assess and evaluate the potential impact of policy and practice interventions.
- Critically review research proposals to ensure designs are high quality and cost effective; manage externally commissioned research, securing high quality research from providers.
- Support the maintenance and development of the Youth Futures Data Dashboard.
- Lead the development of our economic model of youth employment.
- Develop strong and effective working relationships with colleagues across Youth Futures and with a range of external partners.
- Manage a small team of quantitative analysts including economists and data experts.
- Support colleagues across Youth Futures to understand economic and quantitative data and to develop clear messages for policy, employer and practitioner audiences; support the development of economic and data understanding across the organisation.
- Prepare thematic briefings based on messages emerging from various datasets related to youth employment and associated economic trends and issues; provide clear and concise economic and statistical outputs for non-expert stakeholders.
- Lead and prepare briefings on emerging trends in the data.

General:

- Provides high-level management by supporting strategic plans, driving operational performance, and ensuring alignment between organisational goals and delivery
- Effectively manage and develop individuals and teams by setting clear expectations, providing regular feedback, supporting growth, and ensuring a positive, high-performing work environment
- Supports strategic goal-setting and ensures effective day-to-day operations by optimising resources, streamlining processes, and enabling organisational stability
- Makes informed operational decisions that mitigate risks, support long-term objectives, and drive organisational success
- Keep up to date with key developments in policy, research and practice related to young people, skills and employment, and innovations in research and development approaches; working with colleagues to disseminate this learning
- Develop and contribute to research outputs - reports, briefing notes, infographics, toolkits, workshops, blogs, etc.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge, experience and abilities		
A good knowledge of economics, including economic and labour market policy.	X	
A strong track record of conducting and/or commissioning complex research projects from design to impact, including substantial work in the field of economics and/or labour markets.	X	
Experience and familiarity with a range of datasets in labour markets, education, and/or skills; strong quantitative research and data analysis skills, including the ability to provide bespoke data analysis in response to requests.	X	
The ability to present, explain and communicate data and economic concepts to different (non-specialist) audiences, clearly and concisely.	X	
Experience of building strong professional relationships with colleagues and with external stakeholders, including sector experts and decision-makers.	X	
Experience of leading a team of economists and/or data analysts, including line management responsibilities and supporting individuals' professional development.	X	
Relevant qualification in an economic, social science or related discipline, OR relevant professional experience	X	
Decision making - ability to make high-impact decisions under pressure. Uses data, stakeholder input, and risk analysis to inform choices.	X	
Skills & competencies		
An analytical and critical thinker. Applies critical thinking to diagnose issues, explore options, and deliver practical solutions that enhance performance and support continuous improvement	X	
A strong understanding of economic concepts and trends, as these relate to labour markets and the situation of young people from marginalised backgrounds.	X	
A good understanding of economic modelling and econometrics.	X	
Proven ability to analyse quantitative data and statistical evidence using a range of methods, and to deliver actionable insight and policy advice using this evidence; proven ability to present evidence and insight clearly and accessibly to senior decision makers.	X	
Experience in disseminating quantitative findings to expert and non-expert audiences, through drafting written papers or reports and giving oral presentations.	X	
Experience of managing external stakeholders effectively and on a long-term basis (e.g. externally commissioned delivery teams).	X	
Strong interpersonal and teamwork skills; able to take initiative, and to work proactively and independently.	X	
Excellent project management and personal organisational skills.	X	
Problem solving - Strong analytical skills with a structured approach to identifying root causes and implementing effective solutions.	X	
Prioritising - evaluates competing demands to prioritise tasks and initiatives that deliver the greatest value and align with organisational goals	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 – taking the initiative

- ❖ a positive and can-do attitude, willing to roll sleeves up to get into details where necessary
- ❖ solutions focused thinking
- ❖ 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: before you start your application you will be asked to confirm that you are answering the questions yourself and that answers are not plagiarised or automatically generated by AI software, before you start your application.

We expect thoughtful and personalised responses to our application questions, rather than generic AI-generated answers. Applications found to contain AI-generated content without meaningful personalisation will be flagged, and scores could be impacted.

You must ensure that you genuinely record the abilities, skills and experience that are verifiable. Remember, as the applicant, you are responsible for the entire content of your application, regardless of how it is generated.

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: 4 August 2025, 10am

Interviews: 1 September 2025

Please note: Due to receiving high volumes of interest in our opportunities, this vacancy may close earlier than the advertised deadline. To ensure your application is considered, please submit it as soon as possible.

If you require this document in an alternative format, or have any questions relating to this vacancy please contact our people team on opportunities@youthfuturesfoundation.org

