

Research Manager (Maternity cover)

Recruitment Pack

Date: July 2026



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.

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.

Vision, Mission and 'North Star' goals

Vision and Mission

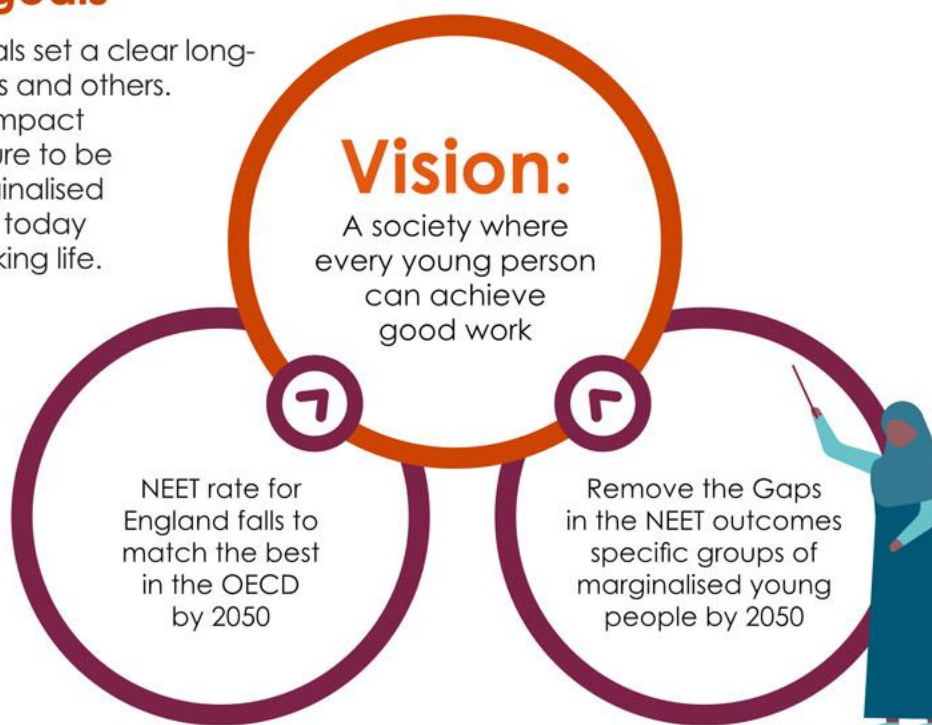
A vision that speaks to our core beliefs and aspirations for all young people.

An action-orientated mission as a What Works centre focusing on young people facing marginalisation and seeking transformational change in the system.



'North star' goals

Two 'north star' goals set a clear 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

Ambition

Collaboration

Inclusion

Learning

Trust



Ambition: We work with rigour and hold ourselves to high standards to match the scale of our mission.

We live this when...

- We strive for excellence, as a team and as individuals.
- We actively seek out opportunities that drive our mission forward.
- We recognise progress and celebrate success.
- We take personal accountability for delivering to high standards, with the ambitious systemic aims of [our strategy](#) as our collective backdrop.

We don't live this when...

- We wait for others to act, instead of taking initiative in the face of challenges or opportunities.
- We lack clarity, with no definition of success, failure, or progress.
- We repeat the same processes without seeking improvement or innovation.
- We sit back when things are hard, instead of seeking support and addressing challenges.

Collaboration: We work purposefully together – building meaningful relationships and combining strengths, to achieve outcomes none of us could deliver alone.

We live this when...

- We build multi-disciplinary, cross-departmental teams for programmes and projects, valuing different perspectives and specialisms.
- We work from a shared goal, we clearly establish roles and responsibilities, and we share ownership of outcomes.
- We proactively share information in accessible ways to invite broader input.
- We use agreed tools and processes including [The Pulse](#) and Asana to look across the organisation and feed in information as projects progress.

We don't live this when...

- We work in silos and don't consider the bigger picture or feed into cross-organisational understanding using agreed tools.
- We allow insufficient time or space for others to meaningfully engage in our work.
- We assume participation from others without clearly establishing understanding, expectations, and goals.
- We start new projects without consideration of cross-organisational priorities and activity.

Inclusion: We challenge inequity and celebrate difference to build a culture of respect and belonging, where everyone is heard and able to thrive.

We live this when...

- We embed our EDI Framework every day, so inclusion is core to how we work, not just what we say.
- We centre and amplify diverse voices in our work and decision-making.
- We acknowledge systemic inequity and take responsibility to address it.
- We model inclusive behaviours at every level.
- We create space where everyone feels safe, respected, and heard.

We don't live this when...

- We don't translate our EDI commitments into consistent, meaningful action.
- We show favouritism, behave inconsistently across teams or individuals, or prioritise the voices some groups or individuals over others.
- We avoid difficult conversations about bias, discrimination, or exclusion.
- We shut down or discourage questions, challenges, or constructive feedback.

Learning: We seek feedback, welcome challenge, and use evidence to deepen our understanding, improve practice, and increase our impact.

We live this when...

- We ask questions, we're curious about things we don't understand, and we're receptive to suggestions (especially if something isn't working).
- We create space for continuous improvement – reflecting and sharing what we've learnt.
- We support and empower one another to develop and grow, independently and together.
- We use our [Personal Development tools and processes](#) to seek meaningful feedback, reflect on areas for improvement, and celebrate progress.

We don't live this when...

- We are resolutely committed to the way things have always been done.
- We disregard feedback or evidence that something's not working or not right.
- We move forward without creating space for reflection, questions, or new ideas.
- We overlook that there are always ways for us to grow and develop.

Trust: We act with integrity and are transparent in our aims and decisions to create an open culture where we can progress together.

We live this when...

- We are transparent about how and why decisions are made, using [our internal communications channels](#) like The Hub and The Bulletin to communicate across the organisation.
- We follow through on our commitments where possible, and communicate proactively when things change.
- We create a safe culture where people can ask questions and challenge constructively.
- We work from a place of respect for others' perspectives and positive intentions.

We don't live this when...

- We make decisions or change plans without considering the impact on others, or without explaining the rationale.
- We communicate in ways that are not clear, consistent, considerate, or we circumvent our agreed communications channels.
- We create an environment where people feel unable to raise concerns or ask for clarity.

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

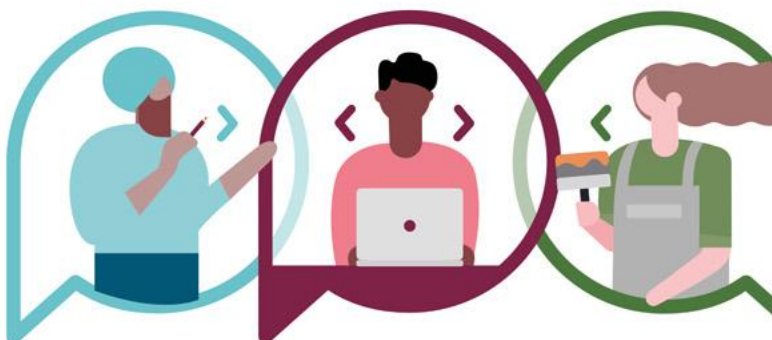
proactive strategies relating to EDI, support policy reviews and revisions, be the employees voice to Senior Leadership Team members and share feedback for continual improvement on our organisational wide values and commitment to EDI.

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.



RESEARCH MANAGER IMPACT & EVIDENCE DIRECTORATE

Term: Fixed term (maternity cover), 6 to 9 months, 37.5 hours per week

We offer flexible working and consider alternative patterns of work.

Salary: £38,223 per annum

Reporting to: Head of Research & Impact

Direct reports: None

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.

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Job Description

The Research Manager will work in a small team that is responsible for commissioning, managing and conducting high quality, robust social research, and for synthesising and disseminating evidence of what works to support the most disadvantaged young people into good jobs. The Research Team works closely with colleagues across the Youth Futures Foundation to support our mission as a What Works Centre.

The Research Manager will manage the next phases of work on two of our key evidence resources, the Youth Employment Toolkit and the Youth Employment Evidence and Gap Map. They will also contribute to our wider research strategy, including conducting evidence synthesis, working with colleagues across Youth Futures to develop externally commissioned and internally conducted research, and supporting Youth Futures' mission to create, translate and embed evidence to improve youth employment outcomes.

Key Responsibilities

- Design, manage and carry out research projects, including analysis and synthesis of evidence on youth employment and related themes.
- Lead research commissioning processes and manage commissioned research projects, including contracts and budgets, securing high quality research from providers.
- Keep up to date with key developments in policy, research and practice related to young people's skills and employment, and innovations in research approaches and methods; using this knowledge to support Youth Futures research.
- Support the updating and development of the Youth Futures Foundation's Youth Employment Toolkit and Evidence and Gap Map.
- Respond to internal research priorities and requests, working with other members of the Research Team and other teams within Youth Futures..
- Develop and contribute to research outputs—reports, briefing notes, infographics, toolkits, workshops, blogs, etc.
- Work with colleagues across Youth Futures to support the creation, translation and embedding of research evidence on youth employment, supporting our mission and disseminating research findings to stakeholders.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge, experience and abilities		
Experience and understanding of commissioning research projects, and managing externally-commissioned research.	X	
Experience of designing and conducting rigorous quantitative and qualitative social research.	X	
Strong knowledge of research methodologies, including literature reviews (systematic reviews/rapid evidence assessments) and mixed methods research.	X	
Experience in effectively communicating research findings (both written and orally) to different audiences.	X	
Experience identifying and building effective relationships with key stakeholders, including other researchers <i>and</i> decision-makers.	X	
Expertise in youth employment research or a related field.	X	
A good understanding of research translation to support policy and/or practice.	X	

	Essential	Desirable
Sound experience and understanding of MS Office 365 applications (including Teams)	X	
Experience of getting recommendations from research taken up in policy and practice		X
Skills & competencies		
An analytical and critical thinker	X	
Proven ability to analyse research and/or evaluation evidence, identify the operational and strategic implications, and deliver actionable insight	X	
Good communication and interpersonal skills including proven ability to present evidence and insight clearly and accessibly to influence decision makers	X	
A collaborative team member who understands when to take the initiative, be proactive and work independently	X	
Strong project and relationship management skills	X	
EITHER a relevant qualification in a social science or related discipline, OR equivalent relevant experience of working with research and evidence.	X	

Mindset

This is an exciting opportunity in a developing and growing organisation. 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, 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 Terms & Conditions

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:

Friday 14 August, 10am

Interviews:

Thursday 3 September 2026

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

