

## HEAD OF POLICY (Interim) ENGAGEMENT DIRECTORATE

**Term:** Contract to end of the year / early January (immediate start) – Full time 37.5 hours or consultant day-rate considered (£250-£350/day)

We offer flexible working and consider alternative patterns of work

**Salary:** £52,000 - £57,000 per annum

**Reporting to:** Director of Engagement

**Direct reports:** Senior Policy Manager

**Location:** This role can be based at any of our hubs located in London, Birmingham or Leeds. 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 hub locations requiring up to six overnight stays per year of 1-2 nights each.

### Transforming youth employment

The Youth Futures Foundation is an independent, not for profit organisation set up to tackle youth unemployment with a £110 million 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.

### OPPORTUNITY

We are looking for a Head of Policy to work closely with the Director of Engagement, the Head of Strategy & Partnerships, and other colleagues to support the development of and contribute to our evidence-based policy work. This is a pivotal role to help deliver the Youth Futures mission in a long term, sustainable way to improve the lives of this and future generations.

This is a role for a creative and visionary executive – with the ability and energy to think differently, to develop and implement cutting edge but practical solutions to a highly complex problem. You may not look or sound like a lot of policy people and we are not interested in who you know; we are looking for someone who understands what it's like to struggle as a young person - either first hand or through the experiences of family or community. You will be highly driven and bring a fierce commitment to



supporting young people towards and into work, a passion and flair for building relationships with a wide range of people (including across senior leaders in Whitehall and big business), the ability to learn new things quickly to keep up with rapid policy changes, and a talent for building alliances between diverse groups of people.

The ideal candidate will be able to apply their excellent knowledge of policy areas such as children and young people, employment or social justice. They will demonstrate a proven ability to synthesise and communicate complex policy issues. They will possess strong organisational, relationship-building, project management, report writing and influencing skills, as well as a proven background of problem-solving and involvement in large-scale projects.

We are looking for someone who will be adept at identifying, augmenting, and championing effective approaches to getting young people into work, from national policy ideas to city wide partnerships or scalable local projects. Ideas may come through our portfolio of grantees (led by the Director of Grants and Investment), research into what works (led by the Director of Impact & Evidence), or through applying insights and learnings from practical discovery and co-creation with key external stakeholders. Using these insights to develop new concepts and build a groundswell of support for change will be key to transforming the youth employment ecosystem.

The Strategy & Innovation Team will form the core ideas and innovation engine within the Youth Futures Foundation. It is designed to a) determine and own our organisational viewpoint on youth employment and b) create the future-looking big ideas that will most transform youth employment over the next 10 years.

## KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

- ❖ Horizon-scanning of the youth employment policy field – what opportunities are there to influence government on the youth employment agenda? Where are the key gaps where evidence is needed?
- ❖ Analysing national departmental positions / priorities (particularly Cabinet Office, Treasury, DCMS, DWP, DfE) – on policy, delivery/commissioning priorities.
- ❖ Understanding /mapping local LWP/LA landscape .
- ❖ Mapping the funding landscape (e.g. Shared Prosperity Fund)
- ❖ Devolution (e.g. Adult Education Budget, Levelling up)
- ❖ Landscape mapping of cross departmental work (for example, the evaluation task force)

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Part One – Knowledge and Experience

- ❖ Significant experience in a senior policy role in a relevant organisation, such as youth opportunities, employment support or a relevant government department
- ❖ A demonstrable understanding of current key debates and priorities in the youth employment space
- ❖ With the ability to remain politically neutral, you will possess a deep understanding of the UK political environment and the operation of government gained in policy or influencing role within a comparable sector
- ❖ Demonstrable track record of solutions-oriented convening and partnership working
- ❖ Adept at identifying, augmenting, and championing effective approaches to getting young people into work, from national policy ideas to city wide partnerships or scalable local projects.
- ❖ Significant experience of policy development and national level influencing in a complex multi-stakeholder environment
- ❖ Ability to analyse legislation and policy and frame and position organisational lines
- ❖ Demonstrable experience of developing and delivering proactive and reactive influencing.



strategies, ensuring buy-in from key stakeholders

- ❖ Credible experience of working with very high-level decision makers to achieve positive outcomes
- ❖ Understanding of the contexts, structures and levers for national and local influencing in achieving change in youth employment
- ❖ Experience of building relationships and facilitating meetings with a range of stakeholders to identify issues, trends and collect information for developing evidence-based policy
- ❖ Experience of drafting a variety of written materials for internal and external audiences (e.g. briefings, reports and/or responses to government consultations)
- ❖ Experience of working closely with government departments to achieve policy change
- ❖ Understanding of the local LWP/LA landscape

## Part Two - Skills

- ❖ Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills that cut through complexity and provide insight
- ❖ Effective research and information gathering skills
- ❖ Exceptional communication skills, both written and oral -
- ❖ Able to establish priorities and manage a complex workload to meet tight deadlines
- ❖ Good project management skills; ability to coordinate complex and multiple projects
- ❖ Creative skills for contributing new and innovative ideas
- ❖ Comfortable working in a fast-paced, evidence-based, and applied environment
- ❖ Good ICT skills including Microsoft Office, spreadsheet use and database management.
- ❖ Excellent time management and organisational skills.
- ❖ To role model positive leadership attributes that demonstrate alignment with YFF values and behaviours and embed equal opportunities and diversity values and objectives.

## Mindset

- ❖ This is an exciting opportunity in an evolving organisation. As such, 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
  - to take a proactive and flexible approach, able to identify and take forward opportunities and work effectively in partnership with others.
  - to have a positive and can-do attitude, willing to roll their sleeves up to get into details where necessary
  - to collaborate internally and externally to achieve our mission
  - to have strong leadership communication skills
  - to be a 'completer-finisher'
  - to have a relentless focus on impact
  - to be curious
  - to have a commitment to excellence

## 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

*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, welcoming 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.*



