



# EMPLOYER TOOLKIT



The Prince's  
Responsible  
Business Network

# INTRODUCTION

Youth Employment UK have been supporting BITC's inclusive recruitment campaign, Opening Doors, with their youth-led "Jargon-Busting" campaign.

Youth Employment UK looked at how we can make sure job descriptions and adverts are comprehensive and utilise inclusive language.

The full scope of jargon-busting includes:

- Overly technical language
- Red flags
- Subjective language

Job descriptions and adverts were reviewed for a range of employers of differing sizes, sitting across multiple sectors.

This toolkit supports organisations of all sizes with the third key of the Opening Doors Campaign: Use comprehensive job adverts with inclusive language.

To support the creation of this resource we have used:

- **The Youth Voice 2022:** the largest youth voice survey of its kind.
- **Focus groups for 14 - 16 year olds:** in person group sessions exploring job adverts and job descriptions.
- **Focus groups for 16 - 30 year olds** : online focus groups exploring key themes.
- **Video interviews with 16 - 30 year olds:** one on one video interviews with young people in our network.

# HIRING YOUNG PEOPLE

## WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

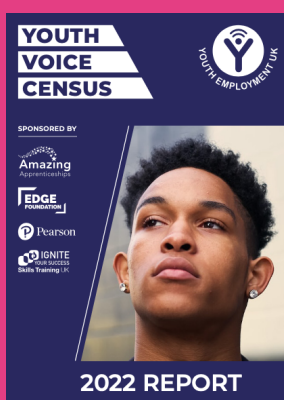
Young people are less confident than ever before that they can find, access and secure quality work.

They are concerned that they don't have the tools that they need to apply for work and feel that they don't have the skills employers are looking for. With access to work experience declining there was great uncertainty about where they could build the skills and knowledge employers might require.

## WHAT IS 'ENTRY LEVEL'?

Young people looking for entry level jobs are left feeling frustrated when roles that are pitched as entry level and pay entry level wages have extensive requirements such as:

- long lists of skills
- qualifications, which may often not be relevant or necessary for the role
- work experience



## WHY NOT APPLY?

When we asked young people who were looking for work why they chose not to apply for particular jobs:

- 19.7% said the role had an unrealistic person specification
- 16.1% said that the role had higher qualifications than currently held
- 13.2% said the advert was not well written and was hard to understand

# HIRING YOUNG PEOPLE

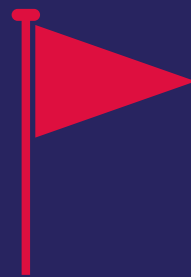
## RED FLAGS

Young people told us what made them disengage with job adverts, descriptions and specifications too. Their employer red flags include:



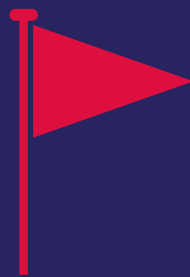
### Salary:

Job specifications that either do not list the salary or simply list 'competitive'



### "Hit the ground running":

Can be a concern that there is little to no training



### "Fast-paced":

Is everyone going to be too busy to help, is it a code word for stressful

## YOUTH VOICE SESSIONS

Our in-person and online forums and interviews with young people allowed us to explore in detail how job adverts and job descriptions were received and perceived by young people.

The three common themes that young people wanted employers to know were:



BE CLEAR



AVOID BUZZWORDS



BE REAL

# BE CLEAR

**There is too much generalisation and lack of specific detail and clarity within job titles and descriptions. Young people felt that there were long lists of technical or personal requirements that were sometimes proliferated with words such as extensive, substantial and excellent.**

Companies need to be more specific. Give examples that young people can relate to, 'Excellent communication skills' could mean different things to different people

**If you use phrases like 'good' or 'excellent' skills without defining what this means, young people are given the impression that they must have a huge amount of experience to be successful.**

The words 'excellent' or 'substantial' can put me off at times making it seem like the skill needs to be perfect. It gives off the idea that you can't make mistakes or that you have to be very experienced.

Not showing a salary or salary range makes me wonder who they are trying to short-change: me or the people currently working there...

# GETTING IT RIGHT!

**As part of your recruitment pack and support think about how young people can evidence the skills you are asking for, give an example.**

**Always show the salary or the salary range - it isn't enough to say it is competitive.**

**Young people, especially those with protected characteristics, are unlikely to challenge the minimum salary and ask for what they believe they are worth.**

# AVOID BUZZWORDS

Certain phrases muddy the waters and do not talk to specific expectations and requirements. 'Fast-paced' and 'self-starter' all present as an unwillingness to be specific and turn potential applicants away.

Adding in phrases like 'self-starter', 'hit the ground running' and 'fast-paced' can make young people feel that there will be no support or training when they enter the business. It doesn't always make it sound exciting, and like young people told us, they are yet to see a job for a slow-paced organisation being advertised.

Young people want varied and busy jobs but not something that sounds as if you have to know it all before you start.

I struggle with words like 'fast-paced' or 'agile'. It's about being honest about what it means. Young people have these qualities in abundance, but they need to be more specific about what it means practically.

I would rather see a simple, honest job role. I am not interested in 'fluffy' job titles or job descriptions that are way too long.

When I see words like 'agile mindset' and 'creative approach to problem solving' it makes me laugh - I am not sure who is out of touch; them or me!

# GETTING IT RIGHT!

Keep it simple, do not feel the need to oversell the job or the role by using buzzwords.

Young people want honest and clear information in words they can relate to.

# BE REAL

**Young people want you to know that they can't be perfect already!**

**The temptation can be to load up a job specification with all of the wishes you have for skills, experience and behaviours. However, you are at risk of giving young people a list of reasons why they can't apply.**

Employers are not always specific enough about their requirements or have the expectation that young people under 20 will have a lot of work experience, which is just not possible - we all have to start off somewhere.

**Young people with protected characteristics are also less likely to apply for roles if they feel that the person specification has too many requirements or if they find the job specification to be difficult to understand. In particular Black, Black British, Black African or Caribbean are 15% less likely to apply for roles with a person specification that is too high and those with additional needs are at least 10% less likely to apply if they find the job specification difficult to understand.**

Employers need to be more willing to train employees, rather than requiring employees to be experienced already.

**GETTING IT  
RIGHT!**

**Young people need reassurance that environments are youth friendly, that they are places where they will be trained and supported, and safe places to grow, develop and make mistakes.**

# YOUTH FRIENDLY JOB ADVERTS

So, what can you do to make sure your job adverts and descriptions are encouraging and opening doors for young people?

1

## Do the entry level check

Entry level roles should be just that - accessible for people accessing work for the very first time. Employers are quick to add in 'essential' or 'desirable' requirements that rule young people out. Be clear about the level of skill needed and avoid generalisations like 'good communication'.

When writing the job description consider the training your organisation has available too, what can you support and what will need setting up to ensure young people can thrive in the work place.

3

## Youth Voice

If you have young people in your business, use their voice and expertise to double check the job advert. Is it engaging or hard to read? Do they think they could do it?

If you haven't hired young people in your organisation before you can reach out to Youth Employment UK or BITC for support.

2

## First impressions count

Lengthy job descriptions can put young people off applying for roles straight away.

Some things that are essential to include:

- Talk about the organisation but make sure you save space to cover what the job entails. If they can't picture a day, they won't be sure they can do it.
- Include diversity and inclusion policies, make it clear that you are an inclusive organisation to work for.
- Always include the salary or the salary range.
- Be clear on the location and hours. Make it clear how many days/hours are 'on site' vs at home.





The Opening Doors campaign has five keys for inclusive recruitment, each underpinned by specific, measurable actions. Employers that want to sign up to the campaign must commit to a minimum of three specific actions that they will implement by 2025.

- 1 Create partnerships that connect untapped talent to your jobs.
- 2 Show candidates that you are committed to inclusion.
- 3 Use comprehensive job adverts with inclusive language.
- 4 Focus on the essential skills and capabilities that are needed to do the job
- 5 Prioritise accessibility and eliminate bias



The Good Youth Employment Charter has been developed in collaboration with a range of youth employment experts and young people including The Youth Employment Group.

It provides a framework to support, inspire and recognise all those employers who are committed to providing good quality opportunities to young people.

- 1 Creating opportunities
- 2 Recognising talent
- 3 Fair employment
- 4 Developing people
- 5 Youth voice