

# Employment Accessibility Report

Research designed and delivered by young people assessing employer websites and online job application processes

**ACCESS  
GENERATION.**



## About the data

Our peer panel of young people externally assessed 600 employer websites and their job application processes.

The main industry sectors represented were as follows;

- Construction
- Finance
- Food and Drink
- Health Services and Care
- IT and Technology
- Manufacturing and Engineering
- Transport and Logistics

20% of the data included national and international employers.

The remaining data is made up of small to medium enterprises (any employer with fewer than 250 employees and typically more than 50).

The data was analysed during January/February 2020.



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# About Access Generation CIC

**Our purpose is to empower employers to attract the next generation.**

We support employers to adapt their job application processes and enhance their employer value proposition to encourage young people to apply.

We believe that employers have an opportunity to create a competitive advantage by implementing a recruitment strategy that includes inexperienced young people.

When we refer to inexperienced young people, this is typically 18 to 24 years-olds. However, our assessment is relevant and meets the expectations of young adults up to the age of 30. Those under 30 may have college or university qualifications but lack the work experience and evidence of skills to demonstrate in a job application process.

They are caught in a catch-22 situation; no experience but need the experience to work.

We don't favour any particular schemes or programmes (e.g. graduate or apprenticeship) we simply encourage employers to create entry-level roles.

We want the unnecessary barriers to accessing work to disappear.

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**#Attract2Recruit**

**#AccessYourTruePotential**



# Executive Summary

This research is based on the perceptions and expectations of 200 young people. 600 employer websites have been assessed by eight members of our young peer panel.

Employers that think differently about the ways they recruit and how they attract talent will gain a competitive advantage.

With an ageing demographic, a declared skills shortage and changing skills needs, relying on experienced candidates alone is no longer an option.

We want to encourage employers at a leadership level to take the following actions:

- **Become an employer of choice**

“Young people want to know what you do and why” - Suraya, peer panel member

When it comes to being an employer of choice, you have to evidence your employer brand including your purpose, culture and values.

- **Embrace diversity and inclusion**

“We want to see diversity and inclusion represented in the workplace.” - Adil, peer panel member

When it comes to young people’s criteria for choosing an employer, employers that embrace diversity and inclusion will become an employer of choice.

- **Consider the candidate as a customer**

“It often feels like you’re submitting an application into a black hole with no acknowledgement that it has been received by the employer.” - Peter Colley, peer panel member

Employers that acknowledge applications, are clear about the next steps, timings and provide feedback, demonstrate that they are supportive and meet young people’s expectations.

Taking action is not only commendable but has the potential to bring additional benefits supporting innovation, productivity, engagement and retention of employees, thereby creating a compelling business case.

## Headlines results

The headlines are based on 600 employer websites assessed by eight members of our peer panel.

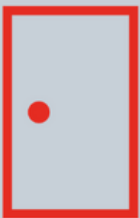
The results below show the overall results for the three main areas the research assesses; Candidate Journey, Support and Employer Branding (read more about what this means under Methodology).



3 out of 4 employers do not have entry-level roles



1 out of 3 employers had a very poor or no job section on their website



3 out of 4 organisations failed to promote themselves as an employer

There is no priority given to creating entry-level roles and many organisations are not taking their employer value proposition seriously

## Top concerns for young people

These headlines represent the top concerns that young people have when choosing an employer and applying for jobs online.

The results below show the percentage of employers who address those concerns in a positive way:



4% of employers promote opportunities to progress



6% of employers positively address diversity and inclusion



1% of employers state when feedback is available

Very few employers are exceeding young people's expectations so this represents a big opportunity for those employers who want to gain a competitive advantage

## Background

### Labour market

In the latest Quarterly Recruitment Outlook report by the British Chamber of Commerce, 54% of employers attempted to recruit and of these employers, 73% said they had experienced difficulties in recruiting.

There are 896,000 people employed in zero hour contracts (during April-June 2019). This equates to 2.7% of the working population in insecure jobs (Office of National Statistics).

The Labour Market Outlook report by the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD), reported similar numbers of employers struggling to recruit with the most hard-to-fill vacancies falling in public sector industries with healthcare topping the list (75% of healthcare employers struggling to recruit).

The Financial Times reported five UK sectors struggling with labour shortages in; Hospitality, IT, Construction, Healthcare and Leisure.

The challenges to recruitment faced by employers include; pace of change, technology, skills shortage and ageing demographics in the workforce.

## Young people are not a problem, young people are part of the solution

Employers have an opportunity to energise existing employees and capture their experience by buddying them up with inexperienced young people with the right attitudes and behaviours.

### Youth employment

According to the Office of National Statistics, 800,000 people aged 16-24 were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the final quarter of 2019. That's 11.6% of all people in this age group.

Based on the 'Hidden in Plain Sight' research in 2018 by London Youth, Sheffield Hallam University and a Prince's Trust youth initiative, it is possible there is a further 52%, up to 480,000 young people, that are not included in the government statistics nationally.

Due to other circumstances such as caring responsibilities or mental health, this group is often not captured by employability initiatives.

## This represents a big untapped talent pool

## Education

In the last few years, there has been an increase in demand for employers to engage with education.

This has been driven by the need of schools and colleges to provide evidence to Ofsted that they have met the Gatsby benchmarks which is a framework of 8 guidelines that define a good career provision.

The eight Gatsby benchmarks of good career guidance are;

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Employers are being called on to help schools and colleges to meet benchmarks five and six; encounters with employers and experiences of the workplace.

Every organisation, whether local, national or international, should think local when it comes to recruitment.

**Engaging with your local schools and colleges is a great way to start and presents a fantastic opportunity to promote your industry, sector and organisation**





## Fact finding

In the last year, we have spoken to over 800 employers through events, webinars and networking.

Here are some of the comments that we often hear from employers;

- "We struggle to recruit and compete with a big local employer who pays more"
- "Young people don't want to work in our industry"
- "We can't find people with the right skills"
- "Where can we find young people?"
- "We have used agencies, but they don't really work for us"
- "Why do we keep getting calls from schools and colleges?"
- "We would like to get involved in work experience but we don't have the time"

Here are some comments made by employers who have been externally assessed by our young peer researchers and received our report with findings and recommendations:

"We have seen 50% of applications being made directly through the website rather than jobs boards since we made changes based on this work."

"I found the feedback from young people most valuable. The report was clear and concise and enabled me to identify a number of areas that could add real value to how we better attract young people."

"Since making changes based on the feedback, we have seen an improvement in recruitment measures. Our direct recruits increased 12-fold, which has made a real contribution to our recruitment requirements."





"It's hard to get a job  
without experience"

When you submit an  
application online it often  
feels like it goes into a  
blackhole with no  
acknowledgement"

"What did I do wrong?  
I didn't get any  
feedback"

## Young people

Since our initial workshops with 100 young people, our work has been validated again by a further 100 young people with a project led by three interns.

The project with De Montfort University, saw our interns deliver focus groups, workshops and an online survey with students.

Their project confirmed the key concerns young people have when applying for jobs online and validated the assessment matrix we use to score employer websites.

Two of the interns were specifically tasked with a project on diversity and inclusion, which looked at the views of black, Asian, minority ethnic (BAME) students on the workplace.

This project provided us with a deeper understanding of the topic of diversity and inclusion and what young people look for on employer websites.

**[See the full report from the Future Leaders project on our website.](#)**

## Objectives

- Establish how many employers are accessible to young people
- Compare industry sectors
- Find out what specific areas need improvements (Candidate Journey, Support or Employer Brand)
- Provide empirical information to support our conversations with employers

**This research is designed by young people, delivered by young people and disseminated on behalf of young people.**

## Methodology

We engaged with the employability teams at De Montfort University, Loughborough University and the following youth employment initiatives, Talent Match Leicester and Twenty Twenty.

With their support, we arranged workshops with students and young people.

These questions were initially asked at workshops with young people.

- What are your preferred methods of job hunting?
- Do you use social media to job hunt and if so, which platforms?
- What is your criteria for choosing an employer in order of importance?

In groups of three, the students then looked at a sample of job sections on employer websites.

The students then added their comments on to post-it notes of what was done well, adequate, poor or missing. These were then plotted under three headings; Candidate Journey, Support and Employer Brand. These headings were created based on initial feedback about the challenges faced when applying online.

The challenges fell into three main areas; navigation, information supporting the job application and what the employer said about itself.

We then engaged with the Talent Match Leicester team who helped us to run two further workshops with young people who have been unemployed on average over 26 months.

We asked these young people the same questions as the university students plus we asked the young people through Talent Match to tell us about their experiences of applying for jobs and the obstacles or challenges they may have faced.

When we collated the feedback from young people with Talent Match it validated what the students had found in the initial sample of employers.

The language used by young people at Talent Match was different to the university students, however, the principles were the same. For example, both university students and young people engaged in Talent Match Leicester told us that they wanted 'a supportive employer who is open to all' (Talent Match); 'an employer who values equality and diversity' (university students).

We undertook further workshops, which meant in total, we engaged with nearly 100 young people.

We wanted to further validate our initial work and explore in more depth the criteria that young people apply when choosing an employer.



**80% of young people will look at the job section on an employer website to find out more about the employer regardless of where they first saw the job advertised**

### **Assessment matrix development**

The assessment matrix used by young people to score an organisation's website was validated by a further 100 young people and by our interns as part of the De Montfort University Leicester Future Leaders project in October 2019.

[The Leicester Future Leaders Youth Employment Accessibility Report is now online.](#)

The following explains how the assessment matrix was developed:

On the basis of collating the feedback from young people on what they want from an employer and the obstacles faced, Access Generation used this information to create and structure draft questions. Access Generation then engaged with Dr Rebecca Steer and a young person and peer researcher, Peter Colley, to further develop and refine this assessment tool. Collectively, this research team completed this process for developing and refining the criteria, questions and scoring over four phases.

1. The research team reviewed the draft questions and removed any duplicate questions and amended the questions and criteria/category headings. For each question, we created a scoring matrix and agreed specific examples for each level of the scoring matrix. Each member of the research team then independently carried out an initial assessment of the same 10 employers to test the scoring.

2. The research team met to discuss any variance in question, criteria or scoring interpretation, clarifying and adjusting scoring and criteria examples and reaching agreement where there were differences in scores given. Peter then repeated the assessment of the initial 10 employers and an additional 10 (20 in total) with the refined scoring matrix.

The scoring of these 20 employers was sample checked to assess consistency and agreement of scoring using the refined scoring matrix.

3. Once again, the research team met to discuss the refined scoring matrix and resolve any scoring discrepancies. With this sample of 20 organisations, we discovered that the scoring created an unrealistic result for some and gave a disproportionate scoring on other sections, particularly for employers who did not have a jobs/vacancies page, or no available positions to assess. We, therefore, introduced four 'key entry criteria' questions to establish if a employer had a youth entry point. In addition, we made some scoring criteria adjustments and further clarification of examples. Specific scoring examples and discrepancies were discussed and resolved. Peter then repeated the analysis of the 20 employers whilst a small number were sample checked.

4. The research team met a final time and agreed that the scoring matrix was now consistent between raters, appropriate and proportionate for use. A total sample of the 50 pilot organisation websites (including the initial 20) were then surveyed against the now refined scoring matrix and questions. This process aimed to ensure that the survey questions and scoring was reliable and robust.

This latest research was completed by eight young people from our peer panel who went through training and levelling exercises.







## Matrix categories

Questions were grouped under five headings, Key Entry Criteria, Candidate Journey, Support, Employer Brand and Overall Quality.

### Key entry criteria

The purpose of the Key Entry Criteria was to better assess whether organisations are immediately accessible for young people.

For example, an organisation has at least one entry point for young people or has a mobile-friendly website. In addition, if the key entry point of a jobs/careers page did not exist, or if no vacancies were currently available, employers would subsequently score zero for questions pertaining to the quality and clarity of job descriptions and the application process, as it was not possible to assess this. In this case, an organisation may still be scored on these key entry criteria which would provide an indication of their accessibility for young people.

For these criteria, where the questions relate to a simple presence or absence of a capability or feature then a score of 5 was applied to 'Yes' and 0 to 'No'. For example: Was the job section mobile friendly?

This scale contained 4 items and a maximum total score of 20. Scores for Key Entry Criteria were assessed separately to the total score obtained across the subsequent four categories.

### Candidate Journey

This category contained four items and was concerned with a young person's experience of the process of finding, identifying and applying for jobs online. The maximum total score for this category was 20.

### Support

This category contained seven items and was concerned with the availability, clarity and accessibility of content and information regarding the role, stages of the application process, guidance for applicants, and potential progression opportunities. The maximum total score for this category was 35.

### Employer Brand

This category contained six items and was concerned with content that provides information to the candidate about the organisations' mission, purpose and values, their attitude towards equality and diversity, and the experiences of employees and customers. The maximum total score for this category was 30.

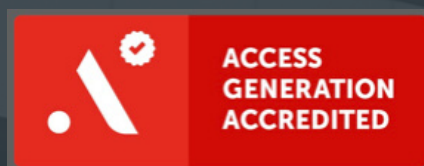
### Overall Quality

This category contained two items and was concerned with the overall quality of the website and consistency of the organisations' brand across all parts of their website, including their main site and vacancy and application pages. The maximum total score for this category was 10.

For each question under the four categories assessed, scoring ranged from 0 – not evident or missing to 5 – evident and well presented with examples. As previously described, each question had specific scoring criteria and examples against which it was assessed. For example, the question 'Is the application process and key stages clearly identified?' where 0 = No job section and/or no job adverts to 5 = Step by step, timings, next steps and opportunities for feedback.

The maximum total score for the four categories was 95.

**How attractive is your organisation  
to future employees?**



[www.accessgeneration.co.uk](http://www.accessgeneration.co.uk)

# Results and analysis

The table below shows the percentage of employers achieving an adequate score.

This means they meet a minimum standard expected by young people but not necessarily attractive and commonly using generic content. They all achieved an average score of 3 or above for each question and category.

	Candidate Journey	Support	Employer Brand
Construction	36%	22%	22%
Manufacturing and Engineering	25%	10%	11%
Food and Drink	22%	14%	17%
Transport and Logistics	24%	12%	12%
IT and Technology	21%	12%	21%
Finance and Business Services	24%	24%	7%
Health Services and Care	28%	28%	19%
All data	25%	18%	13%

Construction, health services and care achieved above average scores across all three categories and would be more likely to meet the minimum standard expected by young people than any other industry sectors

The table below shows the percentage of employers that excelled in each category.

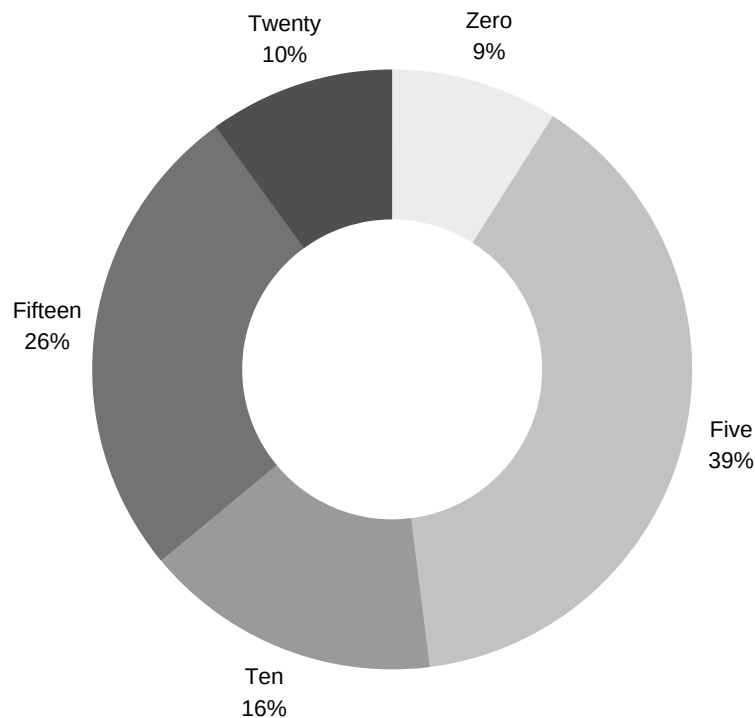
This means they exceeded a young person's expectations (giving specific examples and support of how to make a good application and evidenced that the employer lives by its values). They all achieved an average score of 4 or above for each question and category.

	Candidate Journey	Support	Employer Brand
Construction	4%	2%	2%
Manufacturing and Engineering	5%	0%	2%
Food and Drink	1%	3%	0%
Transport and Logistics	3%	1%	4%
IT and Technology	4%	0%	8%
Finance and Business Services	3%	5%	3%
Health Services and Care	8%	0%	0%
All data	3%	2%	4%

Very few employers are exceeding young people's criteria so this represents a big opportunity for those employers who want to gain a competitive advantage

## Key entry criteria

The following diagram depicts the results for Key Entry Criteria, which is a category within the assessment to better assess whether organisations are immediately accessible for young people.



## The majority of employers have met some of the accessibility

55 employers scored zero on Key Entry Criteria, indicating that they did not fulfil any of the key criteria for young people to attract them to apply for employment opportunities, such as being mobile friendly or having obvious youth employment opportunities displayed on their website. Conversely, 61 employers received the maximum score of 20 for this section, indicating that they are open, available and accessible to young people.

### Did you know...

80%

of young people will look at an employer website regardless of where they first see a job advertised

70%

of all job seekers said they would research an employer before applying (INDEED).

73%

of job seekers of all ages would apply for a job on a mobile device (REED).



**What do young people want?**

**"We want to recognise an employer  
with a supportive and accessible  
recruitment process"**

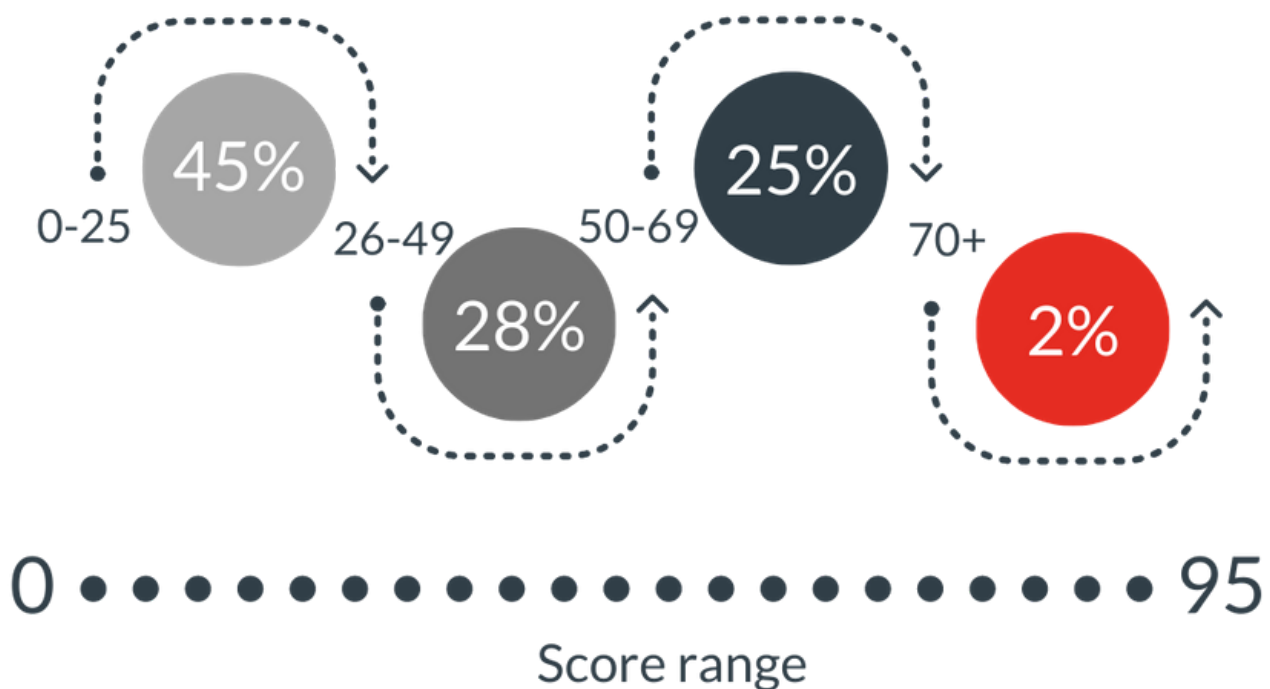


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## Total scores

Total scores for the remaining four categories ranged from 0 to 86 out of 95 with only 2% of employers achieving a score of 70 or above and exceeding young people's expectations.

The diagram below depicts the percentage of employers in each quartile.



Most organisations are failing to promote themselves as an employer of choice and will be missing out on candidates.

In our experience, employers who make a few, but important, changes can see a big improvement in their attraction.

# Candidate Journey

Overall, the 600 employers assessed performed very poorly for Candidate Journey, with an 'average' mean score of 6.6 out of 20 (Mode = 0). Only 22 employers (4%) scored 4 or 5 for every question, indicating that their Candidate Journey was very good or excellent.

These employers would meet a young person's expectations for the use of technology, functionality and ease of applying. 8% of health services and care employers exceeded young people's expectations.

The Food and Drink industry had the least employers meeting young people's expectations for Candidate Journey with only 1%. Conversely, 316 employers (53%) scored 2 or less for every question in this section. Of these, 197 employers (34%) scored zero. These employers therefore failed to meet young people's expectations for their journey as potential applicants.

Online application processes were not fit for purpose, did not work or were not present. There were examples of links that were 'dead' or go round in a loop, and ending up on a group or parent organisation website.

Food and Drink industry websites performed the worse with 55% not having a job section or not working; Manufacturing and Engineering came next with 41% and Finance and Business Services at 42%.

In the Candidate Journey category we examined the availability of options for young people without experience to gain employment. 318 employers (53%) scored zero which meant this was missing and suggests these employers either do not clearly display options for young people, or opt for experienced candidates only.

Low scores for Candidate Journey effectively closes the door on young people's opportunities to access work. This is a poor reflection on an employer and young people are likely to leave their website quickly and go elsewhere.

Situation	What this means	Impact
No job section on the website	Reliance on recruitment agencies or jobs boards Fail to attract direct hires through the website	Miss out on the most discerning and best candidates Additional recruitment costs associated



# Support

Overall, more employers performed poorly on the Support category than any other (Mean = 9.8, Mode= 0). Only 108 employers (18%) scored 3 or above for all the Support questions, with only nine employers (2%) scoring 4 or 5 on every question representing good or excellent scores.

341 employers (57%) scored 2 or less for every question, while 255 employers (43%) scored zero, indicating that overall, support for young people as potential candidates was poor or missing.

For those employers that have a job section online, the Supportive content and Employer Branding pose the biggest opportunity for improvement.

We found employers performed particularly poorly in a couple of areas. These areas referred to how clearly the application process and key stages were identified and explained, and the presence of guidance to support potential candidates to make a good application, respectively.

537 employers (90%) scored 2 or less when it came to clearly stating the application process and key stages. Conversely, 562 employers (94%) failed to provide guidance to support potential candidates to make a good application.

This is a shocking revelation and reflects poorly on the business community; this lack of information and clarity is likely to have a negative impact on an experienced, older candidate let alone a young person.

Situation	What this means	Impact
Lack of clarity around the process and availability of feedback	Candidates invest time in applying without knowing happens next The employer appears uncaring	Overtime this can have a negative impact on a candidates resilience and confidence Potential damage to employer reputation



# Employer Brand

Overall, only 1% performed strongly on Employer Brand (Mean = 9.7, Mode = 3). Food and drink, health services and care performed least well of the industry sectors, with no employers excelling on Employer Brand.

Clearly, with certain industry sectors saying that they need to attract young people to their industries there is room for improvement as shown by this research.

Very few employers are saying things about themselves that would make them attractive to a young person or meet their criteria.

Diversity and inclusion is in the top criteria for young people when choosing an employer (see our spotlight on diversity and inclusion later on in this report).

Employers that used their online presence as part of their proposition, for example Food and Drink, tended to have a quality focus on their product which did not translate to the organisation or the jobs sections of the website.

If employers want to improve their Employer Brand to meet the criteria for young people then they need to give evidence and examples of where and how their values and policies come to life.

Situation	What this means	Impact
Promoting the product and service only	Fail to promote themselves as an employer	Fail to meet young people's criteria and candidates go elsewhere



# Quality

Although this final category was only comprised of two items, it provides an indication of the overall quality of the website with regard to spelling, grammar, formatting, updates and functionality; and the consistency of the employer's job pages with the rest of the site.

Overall the employers assessed were split on overall quality scores, 245 employers (41%) scored 4 or 5 for both items while 268 employers (45%) scored 2 or less for both items.

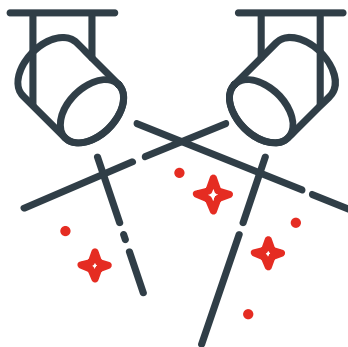
It was noted that often job pages and/or the online application pages are somewhat neglected, such that, in the worst cases, they appear to be a different website. Common problems include: branding that is not present, old, or inconsistent with the rest of the site, a greater frequency of spelling, grammatical and formatting errors and problems, overuse of jargon and complicated language, and links or pages that are broken, missing or not recently updated.

These seemingly innocuous factors such as formatting and consistency with the main site may appear to not hold much weight for a young person searching for employment opportunities. However, young people will automatically assess these pages in reference to their expectations for ease of use, functionality and clarity of both the employer and the application process.

If these initial impressions are negative and expectations are not met, young people may judge that this is an employer they do not want to work for, and will quickly move on elsewhere.

Employers may inadvertently be missing out on young talent if they do not pay attention to these details.

Situation	What this means	Impact
The job section is not necessarily owned by anyone	Inconsistent with the rest of the employers website Lack of quality and attention to detail	Potential damage to employer reputation Candidates get a poor impression of the brand and may go elsewhere



## Spotlight on diversity and inclusion

Diversity and inclusion is in the top criteria for choosing an employer for young people

There are two areas on the topic of diversity and inclusion we want to highlight; the views of black, Asian, ethnic minority (BAME) young people and secondly, the views of those with hidden conditions and disabilities.

### BAME student views

We were able to research this topic further under the Leicester Future Leaders project. This project aims to increase diversity within the workforce of local businesses and increase black, Asian minority ethnic (BAME) groups getting internships and jobs with businesses across the region and create more opportunities for high-skilled work in the local economy.

Working alongside De Montfort University, we employed two interns to validate our research and ensure it adequately reflects the views of students from the BAME community.

Our interns ran workshops, focus groups and an online survey with 100 BAME students.

They found:

- 95% felt that their name can play a part in being disadvantaged
- 94% felt that employee engagement is important

Young people who took part in the focus groups said...

"No one looks like me, therefore it makes it harder for me to see myself working for that company."

"If I change my name, I know I have a better chance of getting a job role."

"We have to attain more because we feel disadvantaged from the start."



### Yomna's story

- She believed she did not get a job because she had experience of working with an Islamic charity on her CV
- She has applied for a number of roles using the experience with the charity on her CV
- As soon as she took it off her CV the number of responses increased substantially

**Should we consider religion as a barrier?**



The following statistics have been updated with this latest research on 600 employers.

- Only 5% of employers evidenced a positive attitude towards diversity and inclusion
- Only 22% of employers addressed the topic of diversity and inclusion
- 1 in 6 employers used employee testimonials as a way of demonstrating their culture effectively

Employers commonly include policies on equality, modern slavery and gender pay gap (this is a legal requirement for organisations with over 250 employees) but go no further into the topic of diversity and inclusion.

There is a gap between the expectations, wants and needs of BAME young people and what employers say about themselves. The Equality Act 2010 was brought in and designed to replace several other prior pieces of legislation. Under this act discrimination is defined as unfair, unjust or prejudicial treatment of a person on the basis of sex, gender, race, disability, age, religion or national origin. This is something every employer needs to be aware of and address if they want to be inclusive to all.

This clearly is an issue as BAME young people do not feel the opportunities are there for them to access or progress in the workplace.

This is an issue that may make people feel uncomfortable but we believe it needs to be addressed.

### Recommendations for employers

- Introduce anonymity in the recruitment process - remove bias
- Include visual images of diversity in the workplace - if a young person sees themselves represented in the workplace they will feel they would be accepted
- Inclusion and diversity starts within the workplace - focus on existing employee engagement

Did you know...

**Inclusive recruitment is an  
attractive force for all candidates**



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# Finding the ability in disability

Employing those furthest from the workplace is doing good and is good for business.

There are 13.9 million people in the UK with disabilities and 19% are of working age (Scope). 83% of people who have a disability acquire it while they are in work (Parliament).

## Being an inclusive employer widens the talent pool.

In the Barriers to Employment report by disability jobs board, Evenbreak, 700 disabled candidates were surveyed. The main issue disabled candidates face is a lack of confidence in the employer.

Disabled candidates want employers to;

- Recognise their talent first, rather than see them as a 'problem'
- Assess their skills fairly without bias
- Understand that with the right support disabled candidates can and do want to work

"Rather than asking 'do you consider yourself to be disabled?', ask 'do you have any access needs?' or, even better, 'we really want you to shine in the recruitment process – what do we need to do to enable that to happen?'

At recruitment stage, the employer doesn't need to know if the candidate is disabled, but does need to ensure the process is inclusive.

Reminding candidates that Access to Work should provide adjustments for the recruitment process can help (e.g. British Sign Language interpreter, assistive technology). Most adjustments may be things like having the questions in advance, or being given more time to answer questions."

Jane Hatten, Evenbreak



# Recommendations: Candidate Journey



Review your website and put yourself in the candidates shoes  
Think mobile - 73% of all candidates apply by mobile phone



Don't assume that someone is taking ownership or that the website works  
Don't ask candidates to register before you sell the opportunity

Did you know, your website has seconds to engage someone and less than a minute to retain their attention to keep them from bouncing off your site?

Our peer researchers spent up to 20 minutes per website completing the assessments. This was to ensure we gave each employer ample time but in reality, if the job section and evidence required to meet candidate expectations is not clear and upfront, then you are likely to miss out on candidates.

73% of all job seekers of all ages would apply for a job on a mobile device (REED). Is your website and job section mobile friendly?

Some recruitment processes still require you to download, print and scan applications but access to such facilities is not always possible for candidates.

Remember, the latest generation are digital natives and will be comparing the job application experience to other online activities such as shopping and gaming. For example, you can browse before registering on Amazon and the checkout and delivery process is clearly stated. Do you do the same for your job application process?

## Don't forget...

80%

of young people will look at an employer website regardless of where they first see a job advertised

70%

of all job seekers said they would research an employer before applying (INDEED).

73%

of job seekers of all ages would apply for a job on a mobile device (REED).

# Recommendations: Support



Provide a clear outline of the process including timescales  
Explain when feedback will be available  
State how the role will help someone progress



Don't use industry jargon or terminology  
Don't make the job bigger than it is  
Don't ask for unnecessary qualifications

The best employers recognise that inexperienced young people need to be supported to make a good application rather than apply the hurdles and obstacles used to test and filter out experienced candidates.

If you are looking to recruit graduates then remember that they complete 75% of their work in the final year of their degree, which means they are time poor.

Young people and most candidates invest at least half a day completing a job application. The minimum you can do as an employer is to acknowledge receipt of the application.



# Recommendations: Employer Brand



- Explain your purpose and values
- Engage with existing employees
- Demonstrate diversity and inclusivity



- Don't just state policy
- Don't talk about values without defining and evidence them

Organisations are great at promoting their product or service but neglect to say what they are like as an employer.

When it comes to being an employer of choice, you have to demonstrate your employer branding including your culture, values and purpose.

We know that 80% of young people will review an employers website before applying regardless of where they first see a job advertised. This means you have to provide evidence in order to attract this new generation who were born into a digital world and can spot fake news.

It's important to be authentic in order to attract candidates and to retain them once they have joined.

If you promote something that doesn't exist in your culture then your retention rate will drop.

Your employer value proposition should make it clear that you are an inclusive employer. Look at existing employees to find evidence you can display in case studies.



# Conclusion

Many employers are struggling to recruit but are they doing everything they might to address these stated problems?

There was a correlation that employers who had a youth entry point generally had a better job section overall.

There was clearly an issue that many employers did not have an entry point, did not give the required support and did not provide sufficient information about the employer for a young person to make a decision.

There is an opportunity for employers to engage with their local community, schools, colleges and universities in order to attract future talent.

**It is worth noting that it would not be unreasonable to assume the results apply to all discerning candidates not just young people.**

Based on our conversations with employers it became clear that there was rarely any ownership of the job section on an employer website.

This lack of ownership in itself presents a barrier to young people who expect to be able to access information digitally.

This work demonstrates an opportunity to greatly improve employment accessibility online for all.



# #AccessYourTruePotential

A campaign led by young people on employment accessibility



Diversity & inclusion



Progression



Feedback



Acknowledgement



Entry-level roles

# What next?

Our peer panel are leading a campaign to encourage employers to make a difference and take action!

#AccessYourTruePotential is a campaign to highlight the key concerns young people have when applying for jobs online.

We want to see employers make a commitment to change the way they attract and recruit and we want young people and other supporters to sign a petition to encourage employers to make these changes happen.

This campaign has been created by our intern, Suraya, who validated our research, the issues young people face when applying for jobs and created the artwork for the campaign too.

## Sign the petition and commit to change

If you're an employer reading this we want you to sign the petition and pledge to make a commitment to become an accessible and supportive employer.

Pledge to do one or all of the following;

- Create entry-level roles
- Provide details of the recruitment processes including when feedback will be available
- Acknowledge receipt of all applications
- Provide examples of progression
- Make diversity and inclusion a priority

## Search #AccessYourTruePotential



## Peer panel commentary

I went into the web assessments expecting a large majority to have advanced websites containing rich, valuable information about the employer, the industry and the roles on offer.

However, upon completing my first few assessments, I quickly realised this most certainly was not the case. I was taken back to find that some small and medium employers have more detailed careers pages/job listings than some very well-known, household brands.

With this, I also discovered that a large proportion of employers do not take the time to write specific job descriptions, which leaves candidates in the dark surrounding the role they are applying for.

If I could request for employers to focus on one area, I would ask that they provide basic details such as recruitment timings/processes, job descriptions and pay ranges – this information will help candidates decide if this is the correct role for them.

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Having analysed different employers and websites I could see that there is a lack of entry level and graduate roles. If I had to give employers one piece of advice then it would be to concentrate on creating these opportunities.

A lot of websites seem outdated, out of context and had a little information about the employer.

There was an overall lack of emphasis on diversity, equal opportunities and community involvement. This is a great shame as employers should showcase to make an attractive proposition for future employees. Employers should make their values loud and clear!

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At first, I was surprised by what I found. I thought I was being too harsh, or I was doing something wrong when I was scoring the websites. Once I met with other peer panel members, I discovered they had found the same problems.

These included examples of employers without entry level roles, websites with no job section and few promoting progression.

I have even found some websites that didn't work.

I feel one of the best ways to attract young people is make sure you have entry roles and advertise them. Examples include apprenticeships, entry role, traineeship, internships, graduate role and junior roles.

Another big attraction point would be progression. If a job is clearly labelled with potential progression roles then this would make the job vacancy more attractive.



Charlotte Boyd



Adil Patel



Immanuel Masih

In addressing employer websites, I was most surprised by the lack of visibility in terms of the recruitment process.

More often than not you had to register or share details with the employer before having any substantial knowledge on what the next steps were which I found off-putting.

Another issue that often arose was a lack of insight into the employer, with few images and feedback from current staff.

For young people, they want to be able to see that they can fit into the employer and if it's the sort of environment they would enjoy and thrive in.

I think it's important for employers to focus on a clear website for job seekers, having all details in one place so that people feel confident in their decision to apply and feel they have a good sense of the employer.



Sarah Gaylard

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I was really surprised to see how little detail was given to an employer's values, purpose and the general history of how the employer began and why it began.

No matter what an employer does in terms of its product or service, its values and purpose matters, particularly to someone potentially wanting to work there.

If a job is listed on Indeed, Monster or any other job sites, people (young people in particular) will always look at your website to work out if you are an employer they want to apply to work for based on your ethics, values, and what you do.



Suraya Mayes

My message to employers is - include the history of the business, what you want to achieve and why you want to achieve it and you will see the difference it could make to the strength of applications that come through.

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I have always known that there has been an issue in how today's employers recruit (if looking over 400 companies doesn't clue you in, what will?). But looking over these companies I am astounded by the lack of focus placed on recruiting the next generation of workers.

However, this is not one of those problems that isn't amendable with a few adjustments. Thus, my recommendations to employers are;

Keep your website up to date, make sure entry level roles are available – everyone has to start somewhere. And finally, showcase your brand – technically, you are already doing this with the products you are selling, but candidates want to get a glimpse of the people behind the products, don't be afraid to put it online. People will come for the job, but stay for the culture.



Peter Colley

# Access Generation commentary

When you think logically and beyond one's immediate concerns with regards to business performance, there are a number of themes and challenges that are not going away.

These include, pace of change and ability to adapt, whether this is related to technology, climate, infrastructure or reliance of fossil fuels, everyone of these represent a big challenge over the next five to ten years.

The ability to adapt and address and successfully navigate this change is dependent on the ability of the people you employ and the culture you promote.

It has probably never been more essential to have a strategy for the recruitment and retention of staff.

In short, consideration of human resources, culture, values, diversity and leadership, all need to be recognised and discussed on the top table if an organisation wants to succeed.



Chris Tarry

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This research highlights the lack of ownership of the job section on an organisations website.

It generally falls between marketing, IT and HR with no one party taking responsibility for its accuracy, quality and the impact this has on potential candidates and also clients.

With technology and social media blurring the lines of marketing, customer services and recruitment, there can no longer be silos or departments working separately within a business.

If an organisation wants to have a competitive advantage and attract the top talent, then they need a strategic approach to their attraction and ensure the jobs section of their website matches the quality of the rest of the website.



Jemma Redden



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Prince's Trust





If you want to be included in future research, attend a training workshop or speak to us further please contact us.

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