

# Employment Accessibility Report 2022

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 572 employer websites and their job application processes.

The main industry sectors represented were as follows;

- Construction
- Finance and Business Services
- 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 from July 2021-October 2022.



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# About Access Generation CIC

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

We provide young people with a platform to have their voices heard and opportunities to demonstrate their abilities.

We support employers in adapting their job application processes and enhancing 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 old. 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 often 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 to remove unnecessary barriers to accessing work.

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**#Attract2Recruit**

**#AccessYourTruePotential**



# Executive Summary

This research is based on the perceptions and expectations of 300 young people. 572 employer websites have been assessed by 16 members of our young peer panel.

Employers that think differently about how they recruit and attract talent will gain a competitive advantage. Here are the top messages from the report findings highlighted by young people for employers...

- **Make job adverts transparent**

Make it clear what the job is, what's in it for the candidate and how to apply. Use simple, straight-forward language to describe the job, state a salary range, if remote working is available and be clear on what you want the candidates to do before you ask them to register.

Remember the candidates are assessing you as an employer as much as you will be assessing them.

- **Tell us who you are**

You might be reading this report because you don't know, what you don't know. The same is true of candidates. Young people leave education knowing about a dozen industry sectors and job roles.

Promoting your industry and attracting candidates go hand in hand. Are you doing everything you can to tell the world about what your organisation does?

- **Embrace and evidence equality, diversity and inclusion**

Are you an inclusive organisation? If so, then tell us, show us and let candidates know you are supportive to all.

- **Give candidates feedback**

Stating when feedback is available in the application process can help manage candidate expectations and avoid damaging their resilience and confidence.

## Headlines results

The headlines are based on 572 employer websites assessed by 16 young people.

Below are 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).



**1 out of 3 employers provide entry-level roles**



**2 out of 5 employers had a very poor or no job section on their website**



**1 out of 10 organisations promote themselves as an employer**

**Most employers fail to develop an online employer value proposition**

## Top concerns for young people

The following 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:



**2% of employers promote opportunities to progress**



**7% of employers positively address diversity and inclusion**



**1% of employers state when feedback is available**

**Progression and culture are the most important criteria for young people**

## Background

### Labour market

In the latest Quarterly Recruitment Outlook report by the [British Chamber of Commerce](#), 52% of employers attempted to recruit and of these, 70% said they had experienced difficulties in recruiting.

There are 1.03 million people employed in zero-hour contracts (from July to September 2022). This equates to 3.2% of the working population in insecure employment ([Office of National Statistics](#)).

The Labour Market Outlook report by the [Chartered Institute of Professional Development \(CIPD\)](#) also reported on employers struggling to recruit with 46% stating they have hard-to-fill vacancies. The most common are in transport and storage (60%), voluntary (56%) and healthcare (55%).

### Youth employment

According to the [Office of National Statistics](#), 711,000 people aged 16-24 were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the first quarter of 2022. That's 10.4% of all people in this age group.

When the apprenticeship levy was introduced in 2017, there was a decrease in lower-level apprenticeships (levels 2 and 3) but there is now some recovery. There was 349,190 apprenticeship starts in 2020/21 with 69% representing levels 2 and 3.

The most prominent subjects include healthcare, law and business administration.

Most worryingly is the number of young people going directly into an apprenticeship after college (those under 19s account for 22% of apprenticeship starts).

### Education

The biggest risk to education in the current economic climate is the impact of the energy crisis. Half of the schools are looking at cutting teachers and teaching hours, and two-thirds say they will have to reduce the number of teaching assistants ([Sky News](#)).

Access to and quality of education is at risk for a generation that has already been impacted by the pandemic. [The Prince's Trust](#) is supporting 'The Class of Covid' as 2.8 million young people in the UK don't think their job prospects will ever recover from the pandemic

**Employers are struggling to get candidates and young people are struggling to get into work**

## What employers say



"Young people don't want to work in our industry"

## What you can do



Promote your industry

"We can't find people with the right skills"

Collaborate with colleges and universities

"Where can we find young people?"

Engage with work experience

"We would like to get involved in work experience but we don't have the time"

Invest in the future generation. Support a Gen @ Work project with us





## Feedback from employers who attended workshops created, designed and delivered by young people

“Congratulations to all of your young speakers. It was very apparent they had put a lot of effort into the content, structure and delivery of their presentations as well as coping admirably with any nerves to stand up like that. They all came across really well.”

“I learnt more than I expected in this training workshop. I will be looking at how we can evidence inclusion and use examples.”

“Brilliant session. So good to get real feedback from young people.”

“Great session with lots of food for thought. I’ll be working with local businesses and schools and considering how we can have openness in the interview process.”



## What young people are telling us

“I believe that employers should work alongside young people to empower them as they are the next generation and the future.”

“I would like employers to know, that despite the stereotypes about young people when given the chance they are able to show their value in a number of different ways.”

“Employability does not only exist in seasoned working professionals but can also be found in the hearts and minds of the younger generation if given the proper opportunities and training.”

“My message to employers is to believe in the ability of young people and to give them a chance to succeed. The continuous high expectations placed on individuals to have extensive experience at a young age are unfair. Only once there is a level playing field that is inclusive and diverse will young people be able to flourish.”

“Employers seem to forget what it was like to be an undergraduate. Most have probably experienced the problems such as no feedback after an interview, no details in a job description, and no response for months in a row, to name a few. Most of these are easily fixed if the employer spared a few more minutes of their time.”

## 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, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI))
- Provide imperial 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 (Prince's Trust) 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 Prince's Trust 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 Prince's Trust 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 Prince's Trust it validated what the students had found in the initial sample of employers.

The language used by young people at Prince's Trust was different to the university students, however, the principles were the same. For example, both university students and young people engaged in with the Prince's Trust 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.

Over 300 young people have helped shape and update the research to date.

## 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 has been validated in the last 18 months with a new addition of a category and audit on equality, diversity and inclusion.

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 of 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 on 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 an 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 16 young people from our peer panel who went through training and levelling exercises.

## New Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Category and Audit

Young people had already expressed diversity and inclusion as one of their top criteria for choosing an employer.

We extended this research with a project on Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority students with De Montfort University. The Leicester Future Leaders project with the university was looking at why BAME students attain more than their white counterparts and why there is less BAME leader representation in the workplace.

We later went on to explore another diverse group with Leicestershire Cares and young care leavers.

We have also delivered neurodiversity training for managers at the logistics company, Neovia, who were finding it challenging to manage employees who hadn't disclosed and were struggling during lockdowns.

All of this led to us recognising that our assessment was missing detail about employers' efforts to address and demonstrate what they do for equality, diversity and inclusion. We employed three interns to develop the new category and audit and test it using the same methodology as above.

This latest report included research carried out by 16 young people from our peer panel who went through training and levelling exercises.

### What we found out...

We employed two interns to facilitate focus groups with over 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."

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

**[Read the full report to see more stories and recommendations for employers.](#)**







## Matrix categories

Questions were grouped under six headings, Key Entry Criteria, Candidate Journey, Support, Employer Brand and Overall Quality and the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Category.

### 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 this 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 and opportunities to progress. The maximum total score for this category was 35.

### Employer Brand

This category contained seven items and was concerned with content that provides information to the candidate about the organisation's 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 35.

### 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 100.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This category contained six items and was concerned with evidence of EDI on employer websites and social media. The maximum total score for this category is 30.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Audit

The EDI audit is designed as a temperature check to see if employers embrace inclusion by offering adjustments at application and interview, providing employee network support, reference to the Equality Act 2010 and using their social media content to evidence their inclusivity. The maximum total score was 20.

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



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# 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%

Transport and Logistics made real headway with Candidate Journey. Healthcare likewise, has a slight improvement. Business and Finance - improved across all 3 areas. Construction falling behind, and Manufacturing failing to impress.

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

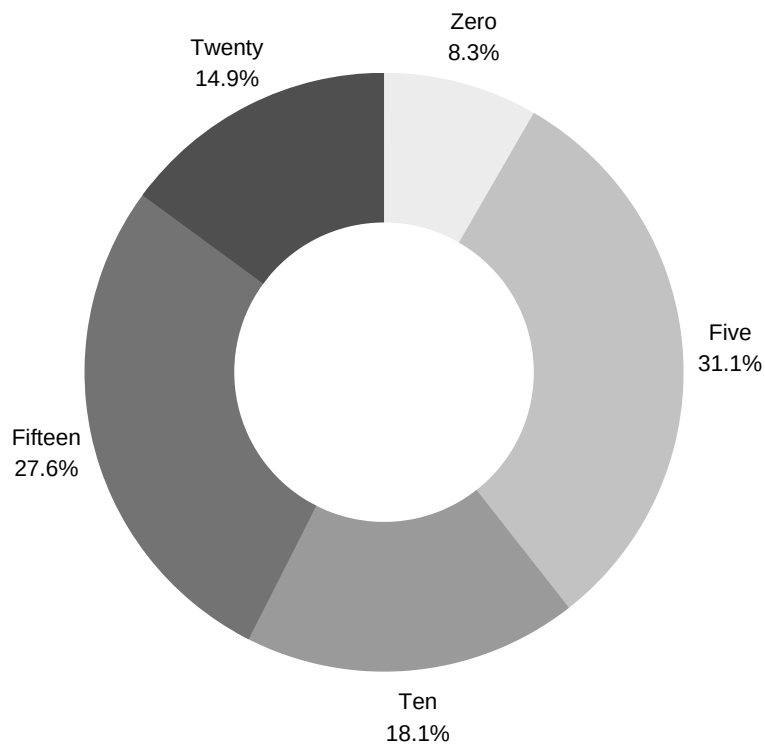
This means they exceeded a young person's expectations (giving specific examples and support of how to make a good application and evidenced that the employer lives by its values). They all achieved an average score of 4 or above for each question and category.

	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%

There's room for employers to occupy the good practice space. Two or three small adjustments can make a big impact and put you ahead of your competitors.

## 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 criteria

48 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, 86 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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## Job vacancies and hybrid working

Since the last time we published our report (March 2020), the pandemic has changed many aspects of our lives including the way we work.

Whilst assessing employer websites, our young peer assessors also reported on the number of employers who had job vacancies and the number of employers offering remote or hybrid work.

Although we are confident in our interns working remotely, we do acknowledge that in many situations, young people may lose the benefit of informal mentoring and coaching in the workplace.



51% of employers did not offer remote working



54% did not have any job vacancies

Employers are working through change and need to be adaptable. Retention is becoming as important as recruitment.



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a new addition to our research for 2022. This category assesses whether the employer demonstrates different types of inclusion within their workforce. This includes race and culture, religion and beliefs, age and gender diversity, LGBTQ+ community support and disability confidence.

**Race and culture:** 1 out of 12 employers positively demonstrate race and culture amongst their workforce on both their websites or social media profiles, displaying a policy and evidence with employee stories.

**Religious beliefs:** Only 6% of employers were found to demonstrate their support and non-discrimination for employees and applicants that have religious beliefs. This small number puts employers at the disadvantage of missing out on diverse applicants.

**Age:** A massive 93% of employers do not demonstrate a diverse range of age groups. Combining inexperienced young people with experienced employees can future-proof an organisation and support staff retention too.

**Gender:** Despite recent movements on gender equality, only 16% of employers addressed or demonstrated how they were inclusive to different genders.

**LGBTQ+:** 8% of employers addressed the LGBTQ+ community within their recruitment content.

**Disability:** Only 1% of employers stated the Equality Act 2010 and only 5% stated obvious opportunities for disability groups. This includes any mention of one or more of the following:

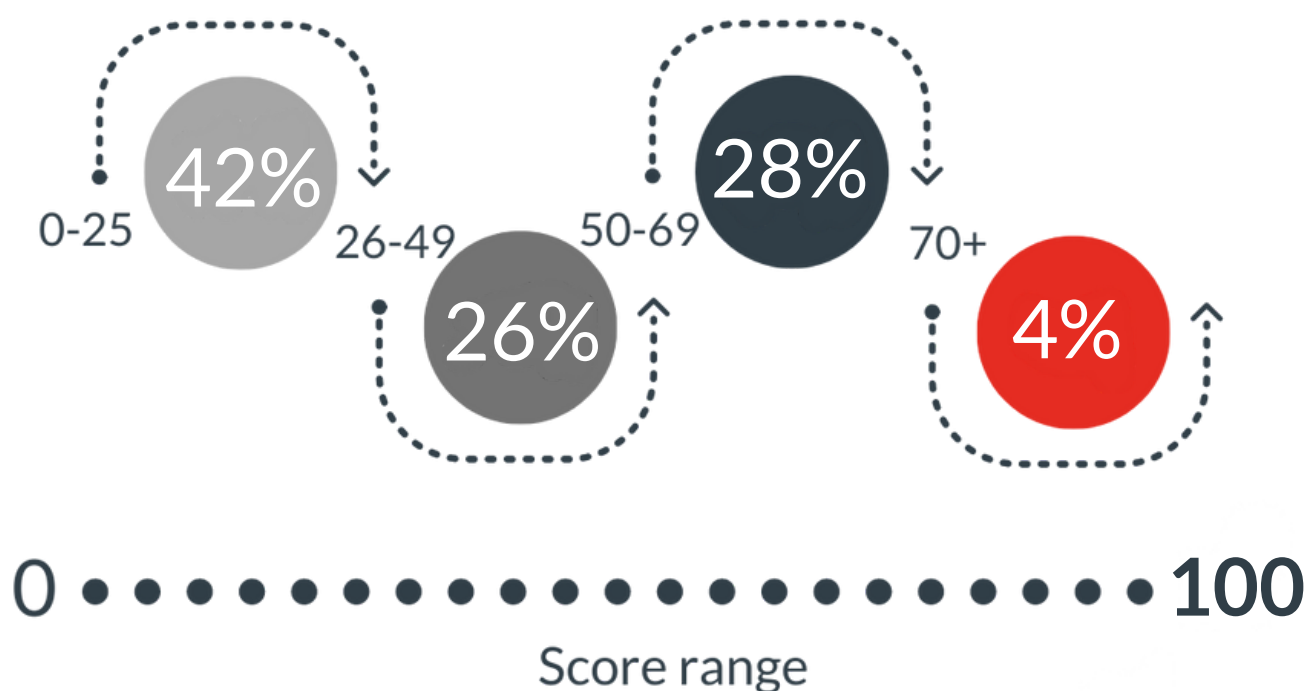
- Physical disabilities Intellectual or learning disabilities
- Psychiatric disabilities
- Visual impairments
- Hearing impairments
- Neurological disabilities

Situation	What this means	Impact
No mention/examples of diversity	Employers fail to support diversity and not being inclusive of all applicants	Employers appear uncaring to all diversities, applicants will look elsewhere

## Total scores

Total score for the remaining four categories ranges from 0 to 100 with only 4% 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.



Marginal improvement since the last report by 2% for the upper quartile range.

This represents a big opportunity for those that want to promote themselves as an employer of choice.

# Candidate Journey

Overall, the 572 employers assessed performed very poorly for Candidate Journey, with an 'average' mean score of 6.7 out of 20 (Mode = 0). Only 18 employers (3%) 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 Food and Drink employers exceeded young people's expectations. The Manufacturing and Engineering industry had the least employers meeting young people's expectations for Candidate Journey with only 12% meeting the minimum expectations.

Overall, 8% of all employers scored 2 or less for every question in this section. Of these, 28 employers (5%) 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 around in a loop and ended up on a group or parent organisation website.

In the Candidate Journey Category, we examined the availability of options for young people without experience to gain employment. 264 employers (46%) scored zero which meant this was missing and suggested 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 in the Support Category than any other (Mean = 11, Mode= 0). Only 4 employers (1%) scored 4 or 5 on every question representing good or excellent scores. 279 employers (49%) scored 2 or less for every question, 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.

54 employers (9%) scored 2 or less when it came to clearly stating the application process and key stages. Conversely, 548 employers (96%) failed to provide guidance to support potential candidates in making a good application. As these statistics are negatively high, it's no surprise to see most industry sectors struggling to reach more than 1-2% on average. 3% of Finance and Business Services employers exceeded young people's expectations and Food and Drink were second with 2%.

Overall, 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 what happens next	Overtime this can have a negative impact on candidates resilience and confidence Potential damage to employer reputation

# Employer Brand

Overall, only 4% performed strongly on Employer Brand (Mean = 10, Mode = 0).

17% of Finance and Business Services employers are exceeding young people's expectations, whilst Food and Drink, Manufacturing and Engineering performed least well of the industry sectors, with very few 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.

Employers that used their online presence as part of their proposition 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



**EMPLOYER  
BRANDING!**



# Quality

Although this 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 quality scores, 268 employers (45%) scored 4 or 5 for both items while 223 employers (39%) 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
- 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 owned by anyone e.g. HR, marketing, IT	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

**Did you know...**

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



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# 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 are not clear and upfront, 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 compare 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 employer's 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 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 the evidence you can display in case studies.



# Let us work for you!

- ✔ Get project work completed
- ✔ Satisfy corporate social responsibility
- ✔ Support young people

Provide the project brief and we'll do the rest. Get in touch today.

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

# Conclusion

We set out to find out how many employers are accessible to young people, what areas need improving and how industry sectors compare.

We hear employers are struggling to recruit and there's still 10.4% of 16-24 year-olds not in education, employment or training.

Since our last report (in March 2020), the assessment results have improved between 1-5%. There's still the opportunity for employers to gain a competitive advantage if they make small changes to how they attract and recruit.

Young people don't know, what they don't know and this report tells us the same is true for employers. We urge employers to take on the advice from young people in this report to make recruitment accessible, supportive and inclusive.

The new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion category highlights the huge gap in evidence of inclusion, which can simply be demonstrated with stories from existing employees.

The number of accessible entry-level roles remains stubbornly low. We recommend that you recruit based on attitudes and behaviours and overlay skills and experience in the workplace.

The biggest area where employers can make improvements would be in their employee value proposition. It's no longer about employers assessing candidates, the candidates are now assessing employers. We recommend that employers tell candidates about their organisation's purpose and values and evidence of how they live by them.

Small changes to what you do in your attraction and recruitment efforts can lead to big results.

# #AccessYourTruePotential

A campaign led by young people on employment accessibility



Diversity & inclusion



Progression



Feedback



Acknowledgement



Entry-level roles

# What next?

Using the results of this latest research, Access Generation has two actions;

- Support organisations to become employers of choice
- Provide young people with a platform to have their voices heard and give them opportunities to demonstrate their abilities

Access Generation needs your support to achieve this.

## How to get involved



[Access Generation Accreditation](#)



[Gen @ Work](#)



[#AccessYourTruePotential](#)  
campaign

## Employers

Be recognised as an employer of choice. Get accredited and receive an action plan to meet candidate expectations.

Provide projects for young people. Satisfy Corporate Social Responsibility.

[Make a pledge](#) in our campaign. Demonstrate your commitment to the next generation.

## Young people

Look out for accredited employers who have been approved by your peers.

Join our peer panel to have your voice heard and gain experience and evidence for CVs.

[Sign the petition](#) to encourage employers to make a change.

[#AccessYourTruePotential](#)

## Young people's views

This research is based on the perceptions and expectations of 300 young people. 572 employer websites have been assessed by 16 young people.

After carrying out their assessments, each young person is given the opportunity to submit their views and messages to employers.

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Looking at different employers' websites and analysing their websites was surprising because most websites did not have a job section, or they did not have any entry-level jobs for young people. This showed that some companies are not willing to take on inexperienced young people or even try to attract young people.

For me what was more surprising was the lack of diversity and inclusion in many of the companies. Diversity and inclusion is something that most young people look for when applying for companies, and the fact that some companies do not mention it at all shows young people the type of company they are.

My message to employers is that there isn't any excuse not to include diversity and inclusion policies in the workplace, young people need to know that you value diversity and inclusion and companies must show that and work towards it.

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I didn't know what to expect when I started analysing sites, I assumed that most sites would have a lot of the information I was assessing them against, but I was shocked to see how much information they were missing.

Trying to navigate to the companies career page wasn't as easy as many would assume, I had to use Google search techniques to find their career page, and once I got to the page I would have to make an account before I could see the next step which isn't always convenient to do.

Another issue I found, was that many sites didn't state their visions and values, this is information which should be a pillar for a company's ethos and it should show an applicant what they're applying for. I think an applicant should be able to hear from customers and employees about what the company does and how it is to work for them, and how much they love the company they're applying to.



Blessing Ozo



David Eboye



I would hope companies would focus more on showing diversity and inclusion at their firm, as this will allow people to feel at ease when they're applying to know that the company cares for all its workers and it doesn't discriminate.

Flexible working is another area I think more companies need to adopt. I think this will make applications more attractive to people who may struggle to commute to and from work.

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I found the experience very interesting because I took my time to see how the company websites are, which is different to how I would act in real life as I would skim through the sections that are of interest to me. At first, I noticed this task was very time-consuming because I was deeply searching if the website matched the particular criteria.

I suggest employers should clearly state their application process/key stages. I find that many times I am applying for roles and I don't know when I will hear from them, and then months later I still don't hear from them. It's disheartening because you spend a lot of time on your CV, cover letter and application questions and it feels unfair to receive no feedback.



Egun  
Agonsoye

I also suggest employers should clearly state their opportunities targeted for young people- even changing the names of the roles to Graduate/ Intern signposts the young person to roles that are suited to them. It makes the process a lot easier.

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Assessing the websites proved an eye-opening experience, I was surprised at how many companies were often missing what should be essential information when trying to attract future employees.

During the journey of my assessment research, I found that the majority of the businesses failed to provide clarity of the application process and stages, with most of them requiring an account to be made to even see what the first stage of the application involves. From a personal perspective, I found this frequent ambiguity to be off-putting compared to the few who did provide a detailed outline of what to expect throughout the process.



Ellie Duncan

The key aspect that surprised me the most was the lack of detail of diversity and inclusion in companies. This was especially disappointing when we perceive ourselves to be at a time where people are better included- the assessments proved this to not be the case. Gender differences were frequently the only group accounted for in policies, with other groups such as age, race, disability, and LGBT+ communities, often being unaccounted for in company statistics, policies, and support networks.

I believe that a key focus for employers should be to focus on diversifying their workforce and emphasize this by providing key examples of this such as providing workforce statistics, and testimonials and aiming for accreditations in relation to the key groups mentioned above. I believe this will attract a bigger candidate pool that can provide unique insights that a company with a non-diverse workforce will not have.

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After my experience of assessing the websites, I found that many companies did not emphasise diversity/inclusion and community/charity involvement. Employers who embraced diversity and inclusion only displayed a Modern Slavery policy and Gender Pay Gap reports, ignoring groups such as disability, race, sexuality and age.

Including more on diversity/inclusion and community support will attract applicants by informing them of the values that the company stands for. Many companies that I assessed would state 'competitive pay' for the salary. I believe that another key area of improvement for employers would be to disclose basic details such as the pay and application key stages.

Moreover, I was surprised to see that some companies did not have careers/vacancies sections at all on their websites. I was also surprised to see many companies with outdated websites and inactive social media accounts. Therefore, I believe that employers could improve their online presence, particularly their social media marketing.

It is crucial for businesses to have an efficient website with a friendly interface. As social media marketing is becoming a dominant form of marketing, employers would be able to attract more future clients through a growing online presence. For example, utilising Facebook and Instagram stories would enhance brand awareness. If employers put themselves out there e.g., through Instagram Stories & Highlights, they will build a rapport with the target demographic by showcasing the faces behind the brands and company ethos.

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The first barrier I found was that many companies only had one access point to their careers page and this was difficult to find - often hidden in the footer of the page. 30% of the companies that I researched I was unable to find their careers site!

Once at the careers site 70% of companies required an account to submit an application - which is highly irritating for applicants who are also applying for multiple other jobs. Furthermore, half of the companies didn't provide any opportunities for young people at all ( I would like to say this surprised me, however from previous experiences it didn't).

Job descriptions were mediocre, with many lacking information on the application process, pay/benefits, and possible progressions. This information is key for attracting young people and must be included in a job description.



Harjan Sahota



Jasmine  
Trapnell

I found that companies also failed to sell themselves - in fact those who are seen as 'bigger names' made no attempt in attracting people. This was disappointing to find as it gave off the impression that they were 'too good' and knew people would apply either way. Moreover, 90% of applications lead you to a different website - which is inconvenient for the applicant, potentially pushing them away from applying.

Diversity and inclusion are highly important and many young people seek for a job where the company also values this. However, no companies researched referenced the Equality Act (2010) - with very minimal detail on policies/examples of how they're diverse and inclusive.

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The overall experience of assessing the employer websites was interesting. At the beginning, the task seemed like it would take time to complete, but after assessing a number of websites it was easy to find out which websites would have the information needed to meet the criteria to be scored higher.

It was surprising to see that only a few websites had managed to score over fifty, but the majority of websites had received low scores overall. It was surprising to see that most of the job vacancies did not offer flexible/home working, considering that more people are working from home due the pandemic. Based on the scoring, it is clear that most of these employers need to focus more on becoming an attractive employer so they become an employer of choice. Especially employers of smaller companies since many of them did not have a job section or where they did, but there wasn't sufficient information.

After assessing and scoring the websites three key areas stood out. The first being information offered about support for young people during the application process. Other areas include diversity and inclusion, as many of the websites had low scores for this since the majority of them only made generic statements and only a few actually had policies that were easily accessible.

Lastly, employers were not accredited as disability confident or even had a section on the job application to disclose additional information such as having disability or any other adjustments that applicant could require from the employer.

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From my research I found out a lot about the way employers recruit. Some of my findings were as expected and some were surprising.

Only 3 of the employers I assessed stated options for accessibility adjustments within the job application process. This was a shock to me as this is extremely important for companies if they are to be inclusive in their recruitment process.



Navraj Nagra



Paul Burgess

Another aspect of my findings that was surprising to me was how hard some of the jobs/career's pages were to find on some of the employer websites. With some of the websites only showing a link to a careers page in the footer and with some requiring me to look through multiple threads to get to the jobs page.

I would like to see employers improve and increase the display of diversity and inclusion as this was definitely something that was lacking in many of the jobs pages.

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Firstly, I was pleased to find that all employer websites I assessed had made their Careers page visible and fairly easily found. Also, employers have made their application process mobile friendly, which is essential in today's mobile era.

Next, another conclusion I have reached is that most employers do not say if a role can lead to any further development or promotion inside the company. I personally would never apply for a job if I am not absolutely certain that there is room for improvement within that company. Furthermore, employers require candidates to create accounts in order to apply for a job. This makes the process considerably longer than it should be. In the end, the company hires one candidate from all who applied and there are tens or hundreds of accounts created for no reason.

Lastly, I was taken aback by the lack of opportunities for disabled people. A significant part of today's society has some kind of disability and it is inadmissible to neglect such a big group of people. Another negative observation is that all employers I assessed had not made the effort to let candidates know how to make a good application. This way, companies can miss amazing candidates, just because they advertised themselves in the wrong way or did not stress enough on the few qualities that the company expected.

In conclusion, most employers require so much from candidates, but fail to give much in return.

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Although it initially seemed like a large task, assessing over dozens of employer websites became easy to accomplish as you soon got into the rhyme of scoring. As it became easy to spot which employers would have exactly what we were looking for and which employers would have hardly anything at all on their websites, which made the task very enjoyable to do.

Overall, it was an illuminating process because of the extent to which I saw how many employers' websites scored surprisingly low. This was not just small employers, but large ones too. Very few employers scored over sixty, with many more employers than that, scoring a total sum of zero. It is clear to me that the vast majority of employers need to be doing much more in order to increase their own employability.



Radina Dimova



Reed James

Throughout my research three key areas stuck out amongst employers, and I rated them highly. The first was that hardly any employers included information during the application process on what would make a good application, nor what the stages of the application process were.

Secondly, few employers looked like they offered a diverse and inclusive workplace, with almost none stating that they adhered to the 2010 Equalities Act and showed that they had a clear policy on each of its protected characteristics.

Finally, almost no employers looked disability confident by stating that they could offer reasonable disabled adjustments both during the application process and during the actual job itself.

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AA good systematic process scoring over 28 companies according to a research matrix. The process proved to be a bit tedious as this involved the constant review of said individual company websites and giving them scores, which overall took about 14-18.5 full hours to complete for careful and accurate scoring, assessment, and feedback.

The research of these companies yielded a lot of interesting results, and repetitive patterns and common themes amongst the various companies in accordance with the research matrix. The results for the 25 and additional options for these Leicester based companies proved various things.

Only a few companies were able to achieve a total score of 55 and above. This was because most of these employer sites were lacking in a real sense of employer branding, equality and diversity models and a lack of employment opportunities, specifically geared towards a younger workforce. It was only on the rare occasion that some companies that achieved a score of 55 and above ticked all the boxes of how an employer's accompanying website could help attract the services of young people for mutual benefit of both parties.

It was also realized that the scores provided were not always indicative of the employer's website and some individual criteria on the research matrix were also not representative of a company's employer branding and attractiveness to a general/younger workforce, be it in a positive or negative light. This means high scoring companies are not always accurate outside of the matrix (Vice-versa).

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Through assessing a multitude of companies, I found a commonality that employers are often successful in presenting their core purpose and values, luring candidates in but then are significantly limited in the application process. Candidates may have an idea of the companies' composition but are left completely in the dark when they submit their application without any awareness of the recruitment stages, pay, benefits and opportunity for feedback.



Ronard Matey



Sophie Gould

From my own position, I know the time and effort that goes into creating multiple unique cover letters and applications and the distraught feeling when you do not receive any communication back.

I was surprised by the lack of employee feedback on the company's websites. There were sometimes stock photos compiled with employees' employment history but they were significantly limited by a lack of testimonials. Members of the team discussing their role and what it is like to work for the company would significantly benefit potential candidates, perhaps influencing them to apply.

Furthermore, there is a wide variety in the breadth and depth of companies' diversity and inclusion policies and subsequent actions. Some organisations will have diversity policies and reports, however, they often lack further development in regards to examples and accreditation. Companies would significantly benefit from focusing on promoting inclusion in the workplace to make new and existing employees feel comfortable to thrive.

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With the criteria that Access Generation provided, I was enlightened to the different aspects that created accessibility from a candidate's point of view.

The number of steps taken to get from the company's main website to the actual application page proved to be one of the first barriers to applying for a company. When it becomes indirect and complicated (i.e. having to create an account), it steers candidates away from wanting to apply. I had not considered how the number of clicks or the visibility of the 'careers' tab made a significant impact on the employability of a company.



Sophie Lau

I was also surprised by the sheer number of companies that did not consider diversity and inclusion. Diversity and inclusion is a staple of modern society and is essential in attracting a larger candidate pool. Most companies had a simple statement about how they are inclusive to give the illusion that action has been taken towards diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process. However, these were rarely backed up by accreditation, Acts or examples. This leads to a lack of credibility in their brand.

A large part of Access Generation's accreditation scoring is taken up by diversity and inclusion and this has stemmed from research concerning what young people deem important. If employers want to attract the best candidate pool possible, they need to make their diversity and inclusion a) immediately accessible and visible on their website and b) believable by providing concrete evidence to back this up.

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The use of the research matrix to score a number of companies allowed me to look at their websites in a new light. I looked at a number of different businesses, some of which are international companies and known in many households.

The results from the 25 companies only varied in a few aspects meaning that for the seven different categories that they were scored against there were not high deviations from the different companies. This was due to the fact that many of the companies lacked a sense of identity. Meaning they needed to improve their employer branding; which could be done by including some feedback from current employees, as this was something that was not present on a majority of the companies websites.

As employee feedback is a very valuable thing and allows potential employees to gain a real insight as to what it is like to work in the company.

Another important thing that shocked me with only a number of companies was the lack of a careers page or only advertising roles for experienced people which will only discourage potential young employees from wanting to know more about the company. In addition, I believe that companies need to improve in regards to diversity and inclusion. As it would be vital if they mentioned the Equality Act and made it easier to find their diversity page; something I struggled with for a number of websites.

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**Whitney  
Adeosun**

## Access Generation commentary

I believe that young people are well-placed to overcome the challenges the future holds. There is a need to develop sustainable new industries and solve problems using AI and technology. In addition, we need to promote our existing strengths in entertainment, media, design, high-value tech and business services.

Employers who seek to engage with educational and charitable organisations supporting young people have the opportunity to develop relationships that directly support their businesses. They can reduce their recruitment costs and gain a strategic advantage, whilst improving the engagement and retention of existing employees.

Taking onboard a few insights, being adaptable in your approach to finding talent will mean you are no longer fishing in the same pool as your competitors. Start by developing a true recruitment strategy that supports creating a pipeline of new talent whilst supporting existing employee retention.



Chris Tarry,  
Founder

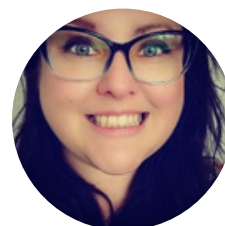
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I am extremely proud of the work of the young people who assessed and analysed the data for our latest report. Although there are some positive indicators in terms of improved scores, the majority of the results are still single digits, which means employers have a long way to go to meet candidate expectations. But it's not complicated. Care, attention, evidence and stories will put you in that top 4% who exceed expectations.

The research is based on young people's expectations, those under 30, but the assessment looks at every candidate's experience. So by following the guidance in this report you will improve your recruitment strategy.

My final thought is to say that attraction and recruitment do not stand alone. Improving attraction, increases recruitment, improves engagement and increases retention.

Empowered employees and shared stories will attract talent.



Jemma  
Redden,  
Director

# Acknowledgements

Thank you to our peer panel researchers for conducting the employer website assessments; Blessing, Chidimma, David, Ebun, Ellie, Harjan, Jasmine, Karulinna, Navraj, Paul, Radina, Reed, Ronard, Sophie G, Sophie L, Whitney.

Thank you for the continued support of De Montfort University, Loughborough University and the University of Leicester, Leicester City in the Community and East Midlands Chamber of Commerce.





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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For more information visit  
**[www.accessgeneration.co.uk](http://www.accessgeneration.co.uk)**

Published: January 2023