

**PRESS RELEASE**

***Friend not foe – Gen AI’s Potential For Levelling The Playing Field For Job Seeking Youth***

**London, United Kingdom, Monday 30th September 2024**– Movement to Work, in collaboration with The Prince’s Trust, Accenture, Microsoft, GetMyFirstJob and Oxford Insights has today released a pioneering research report revealing the potential of generative AI in helping young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). This first-of-its-kind study delves into how generative AI (gen AI) can help remove some of the common barriers to work, and reveals how employers are supportive of responsible use in the recruitment process.

**Key Findings**

- **Generative AI Awareness and Usage:** The study reveals that while 85.6% of young people who are NEET are aware of gen AI, over half have never used it, particularly in the job application process. Many young people fear that employers may view the use of generative AI negatively.
- **Employer Perspectives:** Contrary to these fears, most employers interviewed are open to responsible gen AI use to support candidates with job applications, likening it to other digital aids like spell checkers. Employers value qualities such as curiosity, innovativeness, and adaptability, which can be demonstrated through familiarity with gen AI tools.
- **Challenges in the Job Application Process:** NEET young people face significant barriers including unrealistic job requirements, confusing language, lengthy application processes and a lack of feedback from employers. These hurdles are especially challenging for those with diverse needs. The research suggests that gen AI could be of great assistance in helping young people expedite processes and alleviate stress.
- **Breaking the cycle:** Many NEET young people find themselves stuck in a ‘no experience – no job’ cycle. The research suggests that gen AI can help young people without formal work experience identify transferable skills from education, hobbies, or life experiences, allowing them to communicate their unique talents and stand out to employers.

Movement to Work has also released an ‘employers’ guide’ with numerous actionable recommendations for employers including:

- **Improve Transparency:** Enhance candidate experience by providing clear information about the hiring process, including updates and feedback. Inform candidates that they are welcome to use gen AI as part of their applications.
- **Reconsider Requirements:** Evaluate whether specific qualifications and experiences are necessary or can be learned on the job. Consider moving towards skill-based hiring and hiring on potential.

- **Create Accessible Applications:** Develop shorter, clearer applications and offer reasonable adjustments such as paid travel for interviews. Some employers have discarded traditional CVs and requirements to create inclusive hiring processes that focus on skills and competencies.

As a charity, Movement to Work is offering fully-funded professional support to any employer wanting to create youth employability programmes and make their recruitment processes more accessible to young people furthest from the workplace.

Movement to Work will today embark on a 6-month youth engagement plan, to disseminate findings and upskill young people on the benefits of using gen AI to improve job prospects. They are actively seeking support from organisations who want to support this effort alongside embedding gen AI best practices into their youth employment programmes.

“The findings underscore the importance of generative AI literacy for young job seekers. By providing the necessary training and support, we can empower young people who are struggling to navigate and succeed in the job market.” **Sareena Bains, CEO, Movement to Work said.** “With the number of NEET young people rising nationwide, and [2.99 million](#) (41% of all young people) now classed as economically inactive—the highest level since 1992—we’re on a mission at Movement to Work to find ways to level the playing field. We are offering fully-funded professional support to any employer willing to join us in addressing this challenge head-on.”

Senior leaders from Accenture, Microsoft, The Prince’s Trust, GetMyFirstJob, and Oxford Insights also commented:

“We are at the dawn of a transformative era. Generative AI is reshaping our society, particularly affecting our youth. This research identifies a crucial issue: while awareness of Generative AI is increasing, there is a significant lack of preparedness and alignment with employer expectations. As employers, we have a duty to prepare our young talent to ride the wave of AI rather than being hit by it, especially as they enter the workforce. Generative AI holds the promise to dismantle barriers and broaden opportunities. It has the potential to bridge the digital divide if applied correctly. However, if misapplied, it could widen that gap. We are proud to support Movement to Work in their efforts to help young people thrive as Generative AI becomes increasingly essential in the workplace. At Accenture, we are committed to promoting digital inclusion in the UK through our new initiative, Regenerative AI. This programme is designed to empower individuals from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities to develop AI skills, ensuring they are not left behind in this rapidly evolving landscape.” **said Shaheen Sayed, Market Unit Lead UK, Ireland and Africa, Accenture.**

**Charles Eales, AI National Skills Director, Microsoft UK, added** “Generative AI can help young people be more creative, productive, and unlock rewarding careers in a broad range of industries. There is a risk that barriers to access for those furthest from the workplace could further entrench the digital divide, but this study takes an important first step in equipping employers and educators with the resources needed to ensure young people who are NEET seize the advantage that Gen AI has to offer.”

**David Allison, Co-founder and CEO GetMyFirstJob, commented** "Despite the fact that gen AI is in widespread use, it is not being adopted by all young people in the same way. Whilst gen AI has the potential to close the gap for those not yet in work, this will only be achieved if hiring organisations as well as education & training providers ensure a level playing field by offering support to those that are not yet confident in this technology, whilst also being aware of the way it is being used by many individuals already. Gen AI is going to transform every element of work – including routes into work – in the coming years. It's not something that can be ignored, so creating a deliberate approach to reduce any risk of increasing the Digital Divide is vital."

**Jonathan Townsend, Chief Executive of The Prince's Trust said** "this research highlights how GenAI has the potential to support young people into work, however there are barriers to understanding and utilising it both for young people and employers. Too many young people are left behind and struggle to take their first steps into employment, therefore it's important we explore the ways in which Gen AI could play a part in helping them join the workplace in a responsible and fair way."

**Richard Stirling, Chief Executive of Oxford Insights added that** "Generative AI is changing the world of work. With over 850,000 people in the UK not in employment, education, or training we need to harness generative AI to break down the barriers to opportunity. This research sets out that young people should have tools, skills and opportunities to harness generative AI in their job search."

Movement to Work and its collaborators call on employers, policymakers, and training providers to take immediate action based on these findings.

-ENDS-

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- '*Levelling the playing field: Exploring the potential of generative AI to support NEET young people into work*' will be released to the public Monday 30th September 2024.
- Please use this [link](#) to access full report and key assets under embargo / password protected (**Password: mtw\*genai**).
- Beyond Monday 30th September, this same [link](#) will become available to the general public / password removed, and can therefore be used in all media communications.

## **About Movement to Work:**

Movement to Work (MtW) helps employers deliver high-quality employability opportunities for young people aged 16–30 facing barriers to work. As a registered UK charity, MtW offers fully-funded professional support to businesses interested in tackling youth unemployment.

For over a decade, Movement to Work has helped deliver over 190,000 youth opportunities, including work experience, apprenticeships, sector-based work academy programmes, internships, traineeships, and entry-level roles. These efforts have resulted in positive outcomes for more than 89% of participants, who have gone on to secure further employment, education, or training.

Movement to Work's Steering Group includes executive leaders from major UK businesses such as Accenture, BAE Systems, Barclays, Centrica, Diageo, Marriott, M&S, Tesco, Salesforce, and Spirax-Sarco, as well as leaders from the TUC, The CBI, The Prince's Trust, and the DWP. MtW's mission is to help young people gain access to valuable work experiences as a pathway to sustainable employment, and in turn, expose organisations to diverse, untapped talent.

For more information: <https://www.movementtowork.com/>

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