

Involving Young People in Staff Interviews

Young people in Buckinghamshire are regularly involved in staff interviews where they have a real say in who is appointed.

They have been involved in interviews for all types of different posts such as Social Workers, Youth Workers, Connexions Personal Advisers, Teachers, Play Workers and at lots of different levels including senior management appointments such as the Divisional Director posts in Children and Young People's Services.

What are the benefits of involving young people?

Benefits to young people:

- Their ideas are valued and influence the services provided for them.
- Opportunity to gain valuable experience and skills.
- Encourages them to get involved in other areas which affect their lives.
- Looks great on their Record of Achievement or CV.

Benefits to the organisation:

- Far more likely to recruit the best candidate for the role – this leads to improved delivery of services.
- Provides real evidence for Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, for Hear by Right and inspections e.g. Ofsted, Comprehensive Area Assessment.
- Sends out a clear message to all that the views of young people are valued and have a real impact.

Benefits to the interview candidates:

- Get the opportunity to interact with young people who they will be working with or providing services for.

What do young people and staff say?

Where the involvement of young people in interviews has been evaluated, their experience and the feedback from the organisation concerned has always been extremely positive. The below quotes illustrate some examples of this.

Quotes from young people

"Great opportunity; I look forward to participating more and encouraging others too" (Chris, 20, Corporate Parenting Officer interviews).

"I really enjoyed doing this panel" (Charley-Louise, 15, Corporate Parenting Officer interviews).

"I enjoyed the experience I received from the whole day and tips I had gained from the interviews. They involved me very well and allowed me to voice my opinion" (Galania, 15, Connexions Personal Advisor interviews).

"It was good having our own panel, easier to discuss our opinions. I feel that I was really listened too and it was interesting to see the presentations" (Carla, 17, Senior Youth Work Practitioner).

"It was very fun and enjoyable, everyone was very kind and enthusiastic" (Evan, 13, Participation Youth Worker interviews).

Quotes from adults

"Excellent process. With equal decision making we reached the right conclusions." (Divisional Manager, Safeguarding, BCC, Corporate Parenting Officer interviews).

"Young people add value to the interview process in both staff recruitment and commissioning services for children and young people" (Commissioning and Development Manager, Connexions interview processes).

"Young people's contribution to staff interviews cannot be underestimated – they bring a powerful insight and refreshing honesty to the process" (Children and Young People's Trust Development Manager, Trust Participation Worker interviews).

Areas of involvement

There are many different ways to involve young people in staff recruitment. Some examples of these are listed below:

- Identifying the need for a post.
- Helping to write the job description and person specification.
- Contributing to the job advert.
- Short listing.
- Having a Young People's Interview Panel.
- Having a joint Young People/Adult Interview Panel.
- Observation sessions followed by feedback from young people.
- Focus groups.

Ideally it is recommended that young people are involved through having a Young People's Interview Panel as feedback from young people, adults and interview candidates has clearly shown this to be the most effective method of involvement.

For more details of training available for young people and staff email participation@buckscc.gov.uk

A copy of the 'Buckinghamshire Involving Young People in Interviews Guidance' can be found at:

http://www.buckinghamshirepartnership.gov.uk/assets/content/Partnerships/CYPT/participation/yp_inter_guide.pdf