



Buckinghamshire Involving Young People in Interviews Guidance

1. Introduction.

This document provides practical guidance to help organisations involve young people in staff interviews and recruitment. The Guidance covers young people aged 11 to 19 years and up to 25 in the case of disabled young people or those in receipt of after care services. It has been produced in order to support organisations to involve young people using a consistent and effective approach.

The Guidance is based on the feedback received from young people and staff that have been involved in staff interviews or supported young people in this process. It should be noted that it is intended to help organisations rather than impose a method upon them.

It is important to recognise that several organisations already involve children and young people in staff interviews very successfully. However, this good practice needs to be widened over a realistic period of time, so that as many organisations as possible can benefit from excellent contribution to staff recruitment children and young people make.

This Guidance has been approved by the Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Trust Board and commended for use by all partners delivering services to children and young people in Buckinghamshire.

2. Why involve children and young people?

The Children Act 1989 determines the duty for local authorities to consider the wishes and feelings of children when adults make decisions about them.

In December 1991 the UK Government signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 12 in the Convention outlines the right for children to give their opinion on all matters affecting them. This includes decisions made in their families, education, public services and decisions made in local and national policies.

It is evident that the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers working with children and young people is supported by these principles and clearly states that their views should be taken into account.

3. Benefits of involving young people.

What are some of the benefits of involving young people in staff interviews?

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.

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" (Galanina, 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).

4. 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.

5. Training for young people.

A free one day training course is provided for young people aged 11 to 19 years and up to 25 in the case of disabled young people or those in receipt of after care services. The course is accredited via the Open College Network.

The course covers:

- Introduction to Interviews.
- Equal opportunities, confidentiality and Employment Law.
- Job descriptions and person specifications.
- Understanding Application Forms and the Short listing process.
- Planning an Interview.
- Interview Questions.
- Mock interviews.

To find out more about the training and how to access it please contact participation@buckscc.gov.uk

6. Training for staff.

Co-delivered by young people, the aim of the training is to equip staff with the appropriate skills and knowledge to enable young people to engage effectively in recruitment processes. It is open to all staff.

The training is a free half day course. To find out more about the training and how to access it please contact participation@buckscc.gov.uk

7. Rewarding young people.

It is very important that the valuable contribution young people make is recognised. This Guidance recommends that young people are given the choice of one of the following rewards:

- Using the time they have volunteered to contribute towards a voluntary award.
- A reward of £25 for a half day and £50 for a full days interviewing. This includes any preparation time required prior to the interview.
- If they are on benefits then a voucher to the equivalent value should be offered. Young people should be given a choice of vouchers.

This amount does not cover young people's travel expenses which will need to be paid. Expenses should cover the cost of getting to and from the interview using public transport or fuel costs (using the Buckinghamshire County Council rates).

For some young people, such as those in care, with disabilities or from Traveller Communities providing a taxi is recommended.

8. Feedback and Monitoring

It is essential that young people are given feedback as to how their views have made a difference i.e. what action has or has not been taken and why.

It is also essential for service providers to ensure ongoing monitoring of progress on work that is taking place and that children and young people are involved and informed about this.

An evaluation template is available if required. Please contact participation@buckscc.gov.uk for a copy of this.

9. Representation

Young people will have different experiences of services based upon a number of issues including their gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or ability, beliefs/non beliefs and living circumstances. These differences will need to be addressed with sensitivity. For example, consideration needs to be given to access issues and specific needs of any of the children and young people taking part.

It is vital that a wide range of young people are enabled to participate and steps are taken to actively include those young people who are often overlooked, such as those from black minority ethnic groups and disabled young people.

Ensuring that all children and young people have the opportunity to participate regardless of their circumstances is a principle of equality upon which effective participation is based. It is important that the appropriate support is provided to enable this.

It is recommended that where applicable the young people involved should have experience of using the services the position will be delivering. For example, interviews for a Social Worker post should involve children in care or those in receipt of after care services.

10. Other information

This Guidance has been approved by the Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Trust Board and commended for use by all partners delivering services to children and young people in Buckinghamshire.

Consultation on the Guidance has also taken place with members of the multi agency Children and Young People's Trust Participation Group.

Young people's views have had a significant impact on the development of this Guidance, as have the views of staff that have supported young people during interviews.

Practical Steps to involving young people in Interview Processes (for 11 to 19 years and up to 25 in the case of disabled young people or those in receipt of after care services).

Preparation

- Request made to have young people involved in interview process, 4 weeks advance notice should be given using the Interview Request Form – see page 9.
- Date/time identified – needs to be young person friendly. **Interview requests that disrupt young people's attendance at school/college/training will not be considered.**
- An adult is identified to organise and support young people's involvement. The adult who supports young people at the interview process must have completed appropriate training (see page 4) and be CRB checked. Ideally this adult should be from the organisation running interviews, (but should not be on the Adult Interview Panel). If this is not possible a Youth Worker can be requested to support the process.
- Brief agreed for young people's interview method i.e. own panel, part of a panel, group work session – it must be made clear how young people's views will influence outcome.
- Ideally this should be a separate Young People's Panel (3-4 people), at least one of whom will have received Young People's Recruitment and Selection Training.
- Choice of reward for young people established.
- If none of the young people have been trained they will need to undertake a comprehensive preparation session, led by adults/young people who have previous interview experience.
- Young people receive job description and person specification, plus any other supporting information. This should be sent two weeks in advance so they have time to read and prepare questions.
- Young people meet to prepare their interview questions. These should be shared with the Adult Panel so as to avoid duplication of questions.
- Young people's influence over the interviews to be agreed – see bullet point three under 'At the Interview' section below.
- Young people receive candidate's application forms prior to the interview – it is important to emphasise that these are confidential and copies need to be brought on the day and handed in at the end of the interviews.
- Programme of the day produced and sent to young people. This should include enough time for young people to ask questions, score responses, have refreshments and adequate breaks.
- Parental/Carer Consent needs to be obtained (this can take some time). Please contact participation@buckscc.gov.uk to request a template of this form.
- An appropriate venue for the interviews should be booked.

At the Interview

- It is emphasised again how young people's views will influence outcome.
- Young people's contribution should have equal weighting to the other parts of that interview (e.g. adult panel 40%, young people's panel 40%, presentation 20%). This weighting should be made clear to all involved at the beginning of the process, including candidates
- Young people meet with the adult panel to share views and make a decision (important this joint process happens, we have had very negative feedback from young people when they are not involved in this stage).
- Need to provide refreshments – young people could be coming straight out of school etc.
- If support staff needed to drive young people to venue appropriate safeguarding procedures must be in place for this such as CRB checks and business insurance on the vehicle used.
- Young people have time to arrange the layout of the interview room as they wish.
- Copies of the Parental/Carer Consent Forms available at the interviews – these should be held by the staff member supporting the young people.

Feedback

- Feedback is given to young people as to who has accepted position.
- School/college/training/company/work informed of young people's involvement for information to be included on their Record of Achievement etc.

Other considerations

Application Forms

These should be shared with the young people in order that they have the same access to information that adults have. It is however vital to consider confidentiality issues e.g. important to reinforce the information is confidential and to collect in forms at the end of the process. Basically follow the same procedures that should be in place for adults.

Joint Young People/Adult Interview Panel

- It is important to clarify if young people understand the adult questions, and visa versa, to ensure accurate assessment of the candidate's responses.
- Thought should be given as to whether it is appropriate for an adult not on the Interview Panel to be present to support the young people.

Making the final decision

It is essential to be clear about this from the outset of the process. The 'weighting' or % influence that young people have must be clear to all involved. It could be that it spans a range of activities e.g. a formal interview and a presentation or that the input is less formal e.g. a 'meet and greet' session with a view or advice being feedback to the adult panel. Whatever the scenario the key is to be clear. However, as stated previously the recommendation is that young people have their own panel for the most effective form of involvement.

Conducting the interview

A method of scoring should be agreed in advance of the interviews e.g. marking each candidate's response out of 5.

It is important to take the time after each interview to finish notes, scoring the candidate and to allow time to prepare for the next candidate. Notes should show how the young people reached their decision regarding the candidates score.

Like in any interview it is important to take notes on all the answers the candidate gives to questions. This is good practice and therefore should the candidate want to follow up, receive feedback or make a complaint about their interview, perhaps because they feel they have been treated unfairly, the score/record sheets will provide evidence to support the decisions made.

A template for this is given in Appendix One.

Warner Interview

For some posts a Warner (or Safeguarding) Interview will be required. If this is the case, it is important to explain to young people what this is and how it will influence the outcome of the interview process.

Interview Request Form (for 11 to 19 years and up to 25 in the case of disabled young people or those in receipt of after care services).

Please refer to attached guidance when completing this form.

Preparation	
Requesting organisation	
Key contact (this should be the person who will be supporting the young people)	
Contact details	
Job title of post (please attach JD and spec)	
Date, time and venue of interview	
Will transport costs be covered?	
Number of young people required	
Are there any specific requirements e.g. involving young people in care or from a particular geographic area?	
Preferred interview method	
Closing date	
Date you will advise of number of candidates e.g. when you will have short listed.	
Will young people be involved in short listing?	
How will young people's views impact on the decision making process? What is the agreed % weighting?	
Parental Consent requested/received:	
Interview Questions produced.	
At the Interview	
Final briefing given to young people by the Support Worker i.e. to reconfirm the % weighting.	
Will food and drink be provided?	
How and when will the reward for young people be made? This should ideally be on day of interview.	
Feedback	
How and when will young people be informed of the outcomes of the interview e.g. did the successful candidate accept the post?	

Please submit completed forms to: yourvoicecounts@buckscc.gov.uk

For further information

If you have any queries on this Guidance please contact:

Tel: 01296 382253 or participation@buckscc.gov.uk

APPENDIX ONE

INTERVIEW PANEL QUESTIONS FORM

QUESTION (evidence required)	ANSWER	Score out of ?
PRESENTATION QUESTION:		

Scoring	5	Excellent well developed answer that met or exceed all evidence requirements
	4	Very good comprehensive answer
	3	Good competent answer but not well developed
	2	Adequate answer but lacked depth and understanding
	1	Poor no understanding shown, did not meet evidence requirements

QUESTION (evidence required)	ANSWER	Score out of 5
Q1		

Scoring	5	Excellent well developed answer that met or exceed all evidence requirements
	4	Very good comprehensive answer
	3	Good competent answer but not well developed
	2	Adequate answer but lacked depth and understanding
	1	Poor no understanding shown, did not meet evidence requirements