

Brilliant basics of involving children & young people in the recruitment process



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Why should young people (YP) be involved in staff recruitment process?

- It supports the involvement of children and young people which is actively encouraged by the Croydon Children & Families Partnership.
- It shows that we are committed to the engagement of young people which is promoted in law, policy and guidance (i.e. Children Act 1989, Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- Involving young people in the recruitment process will help make services more responsive to the needs and aspirations of young people.
- If young people are involved in the selection process they are more likely to value the person appointed.
- It is an opportunity for young people to gain skills and experience

What do you need to consider?

- The extent the job will have on the lives of young people or the services they will use: the higher that influence the greater the involvement of YP in the process
- Try and involve YP from the user group which the post will affect. For example a looked after child would have experience of the care process which means that their questions would be particularly relevant together with their listening and evaluation of the candidates responses
- When advertising include that YP are being involved in the process so that the candidate has an understanding of the value Croydon places on the voice of YP
- The timing of the interviews e.g. time away from school/college and the length of time involved in the recruitment process. As it is a learning and education activity the school/college should not object but consider arranging so that they do not miss school/college
- Get parental consent where appropriate
- Training of the YP and having a trained adult facilitator to support the YP in the recruitment process will ensure that all parties benefit.
- Ensure the YP have sufficient notice to be involved in the recruitment process including training (a minimum of 4 weeks' notice is recommended)
- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of the young person. For example YP should not be left without adult supervision and appropriate arrangements made to get home or back to school/college. Ensure refreshments are provided including lunch/dinner if involved for longer than four hours. Consider payment of travelling expenses.
- Create an environment enabling the young person to feel relaxed. YP should have the opportunity to set up the room in a way that makes them feel comfortable.
- Ensure YP are representative of diverse groups. This should include YP with learning and/or physical disabilities, ethnic minority groups and YP with any additional needs e.g. young carers and other hard to reach groups. If HR representative is supporting YP at interview they will need to be briefed about this.

- YP should be involved in the writing of job descriptions and job specifications
- YP should be involved in the design and lead an activity as part of the recruitment process
- Provide YP with the opportunity to be involved in shortlisting (where appropriate). However, only YP who have agreed to be involved in the interviews should be involved in shortlisting process. If YP decide not to be involved in shortlisting they should be provided with a brief statement to explain why each candidate has been invited to interview
- How the YP can be involved in the interview process for example a YP panel which is chaired by a YP. An adult facilitator should be present not as part of the recruitment process but to ensure the needs of the YP is met and that equal opportunity policies are met. Alternatively it may be sufficient to only involve YP in writing the person specification against which the candidate is assessed. A person specification can also be prepared at a time to suit the young person unlike an interview date and time which may be difficult to organise outside of school/college hours
- If you decide that YP should not sit on panel, candidates can still meet YP as part of the process and their views are given to the panel
- Invite the YP to submit same number of questions as other panel members
- Obtain feedback from the YP after the process has been completed as part of monitoring of the policy. By completing an evaluation form any areas for improvement will be highlighted.
- Recognition: it is important that young people receive proper recognition for the contribution they make. Consider certificate/letter which they can add to their portfolio. Ensure it gives a record of what the young person did as part of the process and highlight skills learnt.

What should I avoid?

- Consider the language you use and avoid the use of jargon
- Ensure that the involvement of children and YP is meaningful and not tokenistic
- Manage the young person's expectations: ensure the YP is aware of the extent of their views will have on the appointment. Remember if YP is invited to express a preference and this is not regarded it may lead to the appointed person not having the respect required to work with YP