

Involving Young People in Recruitment and Selection Processes in Bury

Introduction

Bury Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is committed to the co-production of services. Children and young people and their parents and/or carers have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives. The aim of the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership Board is to develop a culture across all partner organisations whereby:

Children, young people and families have the opportunity to be fully engaged and are valued as equal partners in the design, development and review of the services that they use.

The Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership Board has also committed to a promise that they will involve young people in decisions that affect them.

A critical element of ensuring young people are co-producing and equal partners in the design and delivery of services is a commitment to involving them in the recruitment and selection of new staff. Involving young people in the recruitment and selection process provides services with vital insights into what young people need from staff and offers a better chance of recruiting the most appropriate candidates. The process also provides young people with a valuable and empowering experience and proves to them that their views are taken seriously.

This toolkit is designed to assist any professional or service who wish to involve children or young people in the recruitment and selection of new staff. It contains information, activities and good practice examples.

Key Principles

When involving young people in recruitment and selection you must ensure that their participation is:

- **Meaningful** – young people need adequate training and should be clear about how much influence they will have before the process begins.
- **Transparent** – there should be a clear scoring system that incorporates all elements of the recruitment and selection process so that young people can see how their scores influence the final decision.
- **Honest** – young people should meet with any other panels and be part of an open and honest discussion about who should get the job and why.
- **Accessible** – young people should be supported to participate at their convenience. Interviews and training should have accessible content and be delivered at times that young people can attend.

How to create a young people's interview panel

Selecting young people to take part

- Young people should be invited to take part by an impartial adult who will support them through the process. The impartial adult is someone who supports the young people but does not influence the decision making process. The impartial adult must have training in recruitment and selection processes as well as experience supporting young people.
- Young people should have some direct experience of the agency that is recruiting or of the work that the post covers.
- Young people should have a good understanding of what their involvement will be before they decide whether or not they want to take part.
- Young people should be chosen based on their ability to understand how the post will affect young people and not academic ability.

Training for young people needs to be tailored to meet their needs and must be appropriate to the age and ability of the young people on the panel. You should devise training that is inclusive of all needs and encourage young people who may be harder to engage to take part.

Taking part in the interview process

- The best way to involve children and young people in the interview process is to have a young people's panel made up of 3-5 young people. Odd numbers work well so that if there is a split decision someone has a deciding vote.
- The young people's panel should be supported by an impartial adult.
- Any adult panels should meet separately from the young people's panel to ensure that young people can make independent contributions.
- Young people should not be part of any adult panels but should have the opportunity to meet with them after the interviews to share scores and feedback.

Who is the impartial adult and what is their role?

- The impartial adult must engage in training with the young people's panel prior to interviews so that they all have a clear understanding of the process.
- During the training the impartial adult helps the young people to develop appropriate questions for the candidates. These questions can be sent to the person coordinating the recruitment and selection process as required.
- During the interviews the impartial adult must take detailed notes of all the candidates' responses.

- During the interviews the impartial adult does not score candidates but must ensure fairness in accordance with recruitment and selection procedures.
- The impartial adult must, as the only qualified and fully trained person in the interviews with young people, support young people to make fair judgments and should understand the rationale and be able to explain any decisions made by the young people at a future date if required.

The impartial adult must fully understand and follow their organisation's recruitment and selection processes and must have experience working with young people.

Training the young people's panel

Training young people is crucial in enabling them to make a meaningful contribution to the recruitment and selection process. Training should take place before the interview day. Training should be adapted to suite the age and ability of the young people on the panel. The training session must contain the following elements:

- **What is the job?**
- **What skills/qualities does the successful applicant need?**
- **Equal opportunities/fairness**
- **Scoring/weighting**
- **Creating questions to ask (including the desired answers)**
- **Confidentiality**
- **What will happen on the day of interviews?**
- **What will happen after the interviews?**

You will find an example training session in appendix i of this document.

Role of the young people's panel

- The young people's panel is there to ensure that young people are equal partners in decisions that affect them.
- Young people will have priorities for professionals working with them and it is right that these expectations are heard.
- The young people's panel ensures that adults make informed choices when appointing staff to manage services and work with and support young people.

How should the young people's panel operate?

Before the interview:

- Young people undergo training.
- Young people should use the same scoring system as any other panels and should know before hand what percentage of the final score their panel will have. Best practice suggests that the young people's panel should have an equal contribution to the final score as any other panel.
- There needs to be a clear scoring system in place before the interviews to ensure young people's scores are compatible with scores from the other panels e.g. if an adult panel is scoring out of 50 but the young people's panel is only scoring out of 25, the only way to be able to fairly add the scores together is to change them into percentage scores.
- All panels should agree a benchmark score for a candidate to be considered appointable.

During each candidate's interview:

- The young people's panel should be supported by an impartial adult. This person should have delivered the young people's training and will take very detailed notes while candidates are answering questions but must not score.
- Young people should have their own score sheet and must score each answer individually.

After each candidate's interview:

- After each candidate has completed their interview, the young people's panel should compare their scores. The impartial adult should help in these deliberations.
- For each question the individual panel members will give their score, if everyone has given the same score then that goes on the final sheet.
- If the young people have scored answers differently, the impartial adult should remind the panel what was said in the answer and the young people must come to a shared decision about the score for each question.
- One person on the panel should keep a note of the overall score.
- Once the panel have scored each question they can add the scores together to get a total for each candidate.

The impartial adult is there to ensure recruitment and selection processes are followed correctly and that the panel scores fairly. They should encourage panel members to think about their scores, ask questions about what they were looking for and remind them what the candidate said. The impartial adult should feel happy that the young people are making fair judgements about relevant issues and must question any judgements which are unfair or irrelevant to the job.

After all the candidates have been interviewed

- After all the candidates have been interviewed and all the scores completed the young people's panel should meet with any other panels and be treated as equitable partners in the process.
- All panels should feedback their scores and the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.
- All panels should come to a shared decision about who should be appointed.

The Young People's Panel must be considered to have as much weight as other Panels in the decision-making process.

Support and Recognition

- Training and interviews should take place outside of school time where possible and where this is not possible staff should work with schools to support young people in being able to attend.
- Young people's participation should be recognised. They are giving freely of their time and must not be out of pocket.
- All travel expenses should be paid for.
- Food should be provided at the training session and during the interview day.
- Young people should receive gift vouchers (normally £20) and a certificate at the end of the day of interviews.

Further Support

Should you require any further support or if you have any questions please contact Heather Walton, Youth Participation Worker on 0161 253 7165 or e-mail h.walton@bury.gov.uk

See also:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Appendix i | Example of young people's panel training session |
| Appendix ii | Example of young people's panel scoring sheet |
| Appendix iii | Examples of good practice |
| Appendix iv | Children and Young people's strategic Partnership Board Promise |
| Appendix v | Participation, engagement and Co-Production Strategy |

Appendix i

Example of a young people's panel training session

Aims:

- Young people will get to know each other and develop self-confidence.
- Young people will gain a greater understanding of what the post involves and how it relates to the lives of young people.
- Young people will gain a good understanding of equal opportunities and their responsibilities within the recruitment and selection process.
- Young people will gain a full understanding of the recruitment and selection process.
- Young people will develop appropriate questions to ask the candidates.
- Young people understand how their involvement will impact the decision and future work.

Time:

2 hours 45 minutes

Food (15 minutes)

- Young people need to be focussed so it is a good idea to offer them something to eat before you begin.

Introduction/Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

- Ask everyone to introduce themselves and share a decision that they've had to make that day.
- Ask everyone if they could be Prime Minister for the day what one change would they make.
- The impartial adult should explain who they are and how the recruitment and selection process will work.

What is the job? And what qualities would a successful applicant have?

Person Specification sorting exercise (20 minutes)

- Before the training session separate the person specification and the job description into individual bullet points (each point on a separate piece of paper).
- Put all the elements of the person specification out on a table.
- Give the young people all the elements of the job description and ask them to put them with the element of the person specification that matches. Eg *Will be responsible for managing a team*. Would be placed with *Experience of managing people and projects*.

This helps young people to understand what the job entails and what skills a successful candidate would need. It also helps young people to understand how job descriptions and person specifications are created.

Agree/ Disagree Continuum (10 minutes)

- Place a sign saying *agree* at one end of the room and one saying *disagree* at the other. Read out a number of statements about the job and ask young people to stand somewhere between the two signs

depending on how strongly they feel about the statement. You can then ask young people why they are standing in any particular place. Some example statements are:

- Having experience of managing staff is essential for this post.
- A good manager would always punish a member of staff who was not working properly.
- We should give the job to the person we like best.
- A good manager will know about all the agencies in Bury that support young people.
- A good manager will know about all the issues facing young people.

This exercise helps young people explore their opinions and creates a safe space for you to discuss issues and preconceptions that may arise. You must be prepared to challenge young people in a supportive way if they are expressing views which might prevent them from making an objective decision when it comes to scoring candidates.

Equal opportunities – how do we ensure that we score candidates fairly and treat them with respect?

Explanation of scoring system (10 minutes)

- Explain to the young people that they will come up with questions for the candidates.
- Explain that every candidate must be asked the same questions.
- Explain that young people will score candidates on how well they answer each question.
- Explain that each young person will have their own scoring sheet (show them a copy) and that they will score each answer individually.
- If you are using a weighting system you will need to explain this to young people also.
- Explain that after each candidate's interview has finished you will compare scores and agree on a score from the panel as a whole for each answer.

What young people should and should not judge on when they are scoring (20 minutes)

- Ask the young people to imagine that they are judges (you can use a wig and hammer as props if you like) and that they must decide whether certain people can have the job.
- Explain that you have a number of cards with descriptions of people on them and they must decide if each person is suitable for the job or not.
- Explain that in a real interview you would have a lot more information but they have to make a decision based simply on the information that you give them.
- Before the interview you can prepare cards for young people to read out in turn or you can simply read the statements and ask young people to discuss whether or not they would give you the job.
- Statements might include:

Please can I have the job because I have a Ferrari and young people will like travelling in my car.

- Discuss why superficial attractions such as nice clothes or a posh car are irrelevant.

Please can I have the job because I'm really funny and my staff will like my jokes, I know I don't have a lot of experience but I don't like my current job.

- Discuss how a great personality isn't enough to offer someone a job and shouldn't increase someone's score if they don't have experience.

Please can I have the job because I have 20 years experience working with young people and 5 years managing staff. By the way... I'm gay.

- Discuss the fact that you cannot discriminate against anyone because of their sexuality, gender identity, age, race or religion.

Please can I have the job because I have loads of experience and new ideas, I'm a bit boring and quiet.

- Discuss the fact that you are scoring people on how well they answer the questions you ask and the experience they have. If they answer well and have experience they should score well even if they seem boring.

Please can I have the job because we've been neighbours for 10 years and you know me really well, even though I didn't perform too well in the interview, you know I could do the job very well.

- Discuss the fact that sometimes you may know someone coming for interview but you cannot take any prior knowledge into account. Explain that in order to ensure that every candidate is treated fairly you can only take into account the evidence provided at interview.

Please can I have the job because I'm originally from Poland and could teach my team how to speak Polish.

- Discuss the fact that skills need to be relevant to the job. Also explain that you can not discriminate against people because they are from a particular country but nor can you give someone a job simply because of this.

Please can I have the job because I'm drop dead gorgeous and used to be a model but fancy a career change.

- Discuss the importance of being objective and not being swayed because you think someone is attractive.

Please can I have the job, I am a wheelchair user who has worked with young people for 10 years, been a manager for 3 and am ready for a new challenge.

- Discuss the fact that you can not discriminate against someone because they have a disability. Explain that it is the employer's responsibility to ensure that buildings are accessible and that employees with disabilities are supported providing they have the necessary skills to do the job.

Confidentiality (5 minutes)

- Explain to the young people the importance of confidentiality. Explain that they must not discuss any aspects of the questions or interviews with anyone else.

BREAK (20 minutes)

Devising Questions (45 minutes)

- Explain to the young people that they need to come up with a selection of questions (normally between 6 and 10) to ask candidates.
- Make it clear that questions must relate to the person specification to ensure that they are relevant to the job.
- Encourage young people to come up with questions in turn so that they all contribute. You may have some example questions to show them.
- When a question is suggested, encourage the group to think carefully about how to word it. The impartial adult should finalise the wording in accordance with their Corporate Recruitment and Selection training.
- Discourage young people from asking hypothetical questions and encourage them to ask questions that relate directly to the candidate's experience. E.g. replace *What would you do if...* with *Give us an example of a time when...*
- It is important that as each question is devised, young people also discuss what they are looking for in an answer.
- If you are weighting questions then young people need to decide whether the question should be weighted 1-3 based on its importance.
- The impartial adult should write up questions and points to look for in an answer onto a question sheet (there is an example of what a question sheet may look like in appendix ii).
- When young people have devised all the questions and discussed points they are looking for in the answers you should go through the scoring system again.
- Explain that to get full marks the candidate must give a model answer that leaves nothing out.
- Explain to the young people that the questions must be sent to the person coordinating the interview process for final approval.

Arrangements for the interviews (10 minutes)

- Give young people a clear time to arrive on the interview day and make sure that they know where they are going.
- Ensure young people have any travel expenses reimbursed.
- Discuss with young people what they should wear. Explain that they should wear something that they are comfortable in but that candidates will be dressed smartly so they may wish to as well.
- Give young people a clear indication of what time they should expect to finish on the day of interviews.
- Check if there are any dietary requirements as you should provide food for the young people's panel on the day.

Appendix ii

Example of young people's panel scoring sheet

Team Manager
YOUNG PEOPLE'S PANEL
INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT FORM

NAME:

| QUESTION | Young Person asking: | SCORE | WEIGHT (Optional) | KEY POINTS TO LOOK FOR/COMMENTS/NOTES |
|--|----------------------|----------|-------------------|--|
| 1 Why do you want the Team Manager position? And what skills would you bring to it? | Mark | | 3 | Change, new challenge, desire to tackle issues, experience, communication skills, team work, assertiveness, mentoring, support, listening, written skills, objective, fair |
| 2 Young people face a variety of issues. Tell us what you think the main issues are, and your experience of dealing with them. | Emily | | 3 | Bullying, exam/school stress, money, housing, sex, relationships, family, drugs, alcohol, mental health, offending, things to do, pregnancy |
| 3 Tell us about your experience of managing people. | Raven | | 3 | Motivating, support, develop, organisation, lead |
| 4 How will you support your team to motivate young people? | Simon | | 2 | New ideas, empathise, compliment what's done well, support, joined up working |
| 5 Tell us about your experience in involving children and young people in decision making. | Chris | | 2 | Evidence of listening, feedback, working with groups, e-mail, new ideas. |
| 6 Tell us about a situation where you have had to deal with challenging behaviour. | Emily | | 3 | Calm, listen, explain, ensure safety, follow procedures. |
| 7 That's all of our questions is there anything that you would like to ask us? | Mark | NO SCORE | NO SCORE | NO SCORE |

Scoring Key: 5 = V. Good / 4 = Good / 3 = Satisfactory / 2 = In Need of Improvement / 1 = Unsatisfactory

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Appendix iii

Examples of good practice

A Post for Connexions with a specific focus on young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities:

- The young people's panel was made up of five young people, three were from Elmsbank Specialist Arts College and had learning difficulties and/or disabilities and two were frequent users of the Connexions service in the town centre.
- Specific training was created to meet the needs of all the young people on the panel including large print information.
- During the training session the young people each shared what qualities they were looking for and discussed their different experiences and the different needs that young people have.
- The young people's panel was supported by Bury's Youth Participation Worker.
- At the end of the day the manager's panel came to meet with the young people's panel. They exchanged information about how the interviews had gone.
- The managers added the young people's percentage scores to their percentage scores and the candidate with the highest overall score was offered the job.

A Senior Post in Social Care & Safeguarding:

- Young people were identified by professionals supporting Bury's Children in Care Council.
- Three young people from Bury's Children in Care Council formed the young people's panel.
- The young people were on one of five panels, including assessment of a written paper and presentation from candidates.
- Specific training was created to meet the needs of all the young people on the panel.
- A member of Bury's Safeguarding Board attended the training to help the young people to understand what safeguarding involves.
- The young people were supported by two impartial adults: Bury's Youth Participation Worker and Bury's Looked After Children's Strategy Officer.
- At the end of the day young people were invited to share their comments and scores with the other panels.
- The young people's scores were added to the scores of the other panels.
- Two candidates, including the candidate that the young people's panel scored highest, were then selected to be interviewed by elected members of Bury Council for the final decision.

A Post in the Youth Offending Service:

- The panel was made up of four young people: one current user of the Youth Offending Service; one past user of the Youth Offending Service and two frequent users of Connexions with a good understanding of the Youth Offending Service.
- Training was delivered by the Youth Participation Worker in partnership with a member of staff from the Youth Offending Service.
- Young people were supported by two impartial adults: the Youth Participation Worker and a member of staff from the Youth Offending Service.
- At the end of the day the manager's panel came to meet with the young people's panel. They exchanged information about how the interviews had gone.
- The managers added the young people's percentage scores to their percentage scores and the candidate with the highest overall score was offered the job.

Connexions Manager Approach

- When appointing face to face workers delivering advice and guidance to young people if after the interviews there were two appointable candidates one preferred by the adult panel and one by the young people with tied scores the Connexions manager would always opt for the candidate the young people preferred as they are the ones who will be directly working with the appointed person.

When multiple panels don't agree

- In the past when panels have failed to come to any mutual agreement (this is very unusual) the post has been readvertised.