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INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS GUIDANCE

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This document has been developed by the Children and Young People's Service at Wakefield Council, with the overarching goal of providing comprehensive guidance on integrating children and young people into the interview process. Additionally, it is designed to actively promote the involvement of children and people in various aspects of the recruitment and selection processes.

We understand how important the thoughts and ideas of children and young people are. Our goal is to include their unique perspectives so they can play a big part in shaping and improving our services to better meet their needs. We want to empower them and make sure their input is a key part of what we do.

As a partnership, we make it a priority to involve young people in hiring because we believe it's crucial. We also follow the best way of doing things by including young people in hiring for jobs that work directly with kids and young individuals. This isn't just about having a diverse and inclusive team, it's about our strong dedication to making a positive difference in the lives of young people in our community.



Children and young people can bring a different set of skills to interviews compared to professionals. They might notice qualities in candidates that professionals might miss, making the interview process better. Choosing the best candidate with the help of young people can make things better for children and young people.

Letting young people share their thoughts can make them feel more powerful. It shows that professionals respect them and value their opinions. This also builds a stronger relationship between professionals and young people, making young people more confident in professionals and services because they feel heard.

Benefits for Young People:

Getting involved in the recruitment and selection of staff can be advantageous for young people in many ways. Here are some simple explanations of how they can benefit:

1 . Developing Skills, Knowledge, and Experience:

Being part of interviews helps young people learn important skills for their future, like how to be interviewed for a job or other opportunities.

They can get certificates or recognition for being involved, which looks great on their CV's or applications. They can also ask someone from the organisation to give them a reference if they need one.

Getting involved makes them feel like they belong to the organisation and helps them understand more about the world around them.

2 . Participation and Empowerment:

Young people being part of the process means that the organisation is focused on meeting their needs. This helps them understand their own needs and express their opinions.

It also helps them improve their communication skills with adults and peers, as well as learn new skills like teamwork and problem-solving.

Being part of the process is not only helpful but also enjoyable and fun.

3 . Strengthening Relationships and Building Confidence:

Young people can see that what they do matters and that they've helped pick the right person for a job. This builds trust and good relationships with staff.

Professionals respecting and valuing their opinions boosts young people's confidence and self-esteem.

They get recognition and feel a sense of achievement for doing a good job.

Having a say in the process makes them feel more empowered.

Getting involved in these processes isn't just about helping the organisation; it's also about helping young people grow, learn, and feel good about themselves.



Benefits for Existing Staff:

Skill Development:

Staff members involved in the process develop new skills, including communication, listening, and creativity, through formal interactions with children and young people.

Insight into Young People's Views:

Engaging with and listening to young people provides staff with greater insight into their perspectives, fostering a better understanding of children's wishes, feelings, and opinions.

Building Positive Relationships:

The process helps build positive relationships between young people and staff, contributing to a collaborative and supportive work environment.

Informing Policy and Practice:

Through discussions with young people, staff gain valuable insights into their views and concerns. This information contributes to more effective policy and practise development, ensuring the organisation remains responsive to the needs of children and young people.



Benefits for Candidates:

Candidates stand to gain numerous benefits from the involvement of young people in the recruitment process.

Here are some key advantages:

Meaningful Interaction: Candidates get the chance to engage with the children and young people they might work with. This provides an opportunity to showcase practical abilities and interpersonal skills directly to the young demographic, offering a more authentic reflection of their character compared to interactions solely with adults.

Job Understanding: Candidates develop a better understanding that their interactions with children and young people are integral to the applied role. This insight offers a realistic preview for those who may not have previous experience working with young individuals.

Respect and Interest: Candidates tend to have more respect and interest in the organisation. Direct exposure to the commitment of valuing young people serves as tangible evidence of the organisation's dedication.

Positive Endorsement: Once selected and appointed, candidates experience a positive sense of endorsement from young people, contributing to a more affirming start in their new roles.



Benefits for the Organisation:

Demonstrating Commitment to Children's Rights:

Involving young people in recruitment aligns with international and domestic legislation, such as Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This demonstrates the organisation's commitment to respecting children's rights, providing tangible evidence for compliance, and enhancing credibility during inspections by statutory bodies.

Enhancing Recruitment Process:

Including children and young people in the interview panel brings a diverse perspective and skill set, complementing that of professionals. Their unique viewpoint can uncover qualities in candidates that professionals may overlook, thereby making the recruitment process more thorough and effective.

Sending a Positive Message:

Actively involving young people communicates a powerful message to various stakeholders, including existing staff, potential recruits, funders, and partner organisations. It underscores that the organisation values and prioritises the input of young people in decision-making processes, fostering a positive and impactful image.

Improving Service Delivery:

Observing candidates interact with children and young people firsthand enables the organisation to identify the best fit for roles. Staff who demonstrate positive interactions with young individuals contribute to a more accessible and relevant service, ultimately improving outcomes for children and young people.

Creating a Virtuous Cycle:

The organisation is more likely to appoint staff who respect children and young people, fostering a cycle of mutual respect. This positive dynamic between staff and young individuals enhances the overall organisational culture.



Before the Interview:

Advance Notice:

- The service will make sure that if they didn't ask young people to join, they give at least 2 weeks' notice before any involvement. This gives time to arrange staff, recruit and prepare young people, and complete all needed paperwork like consent and risk assessments. It's also good practise for the service to know about upcoming recruitment when they're creating the job description.

Panel Member Preparation:

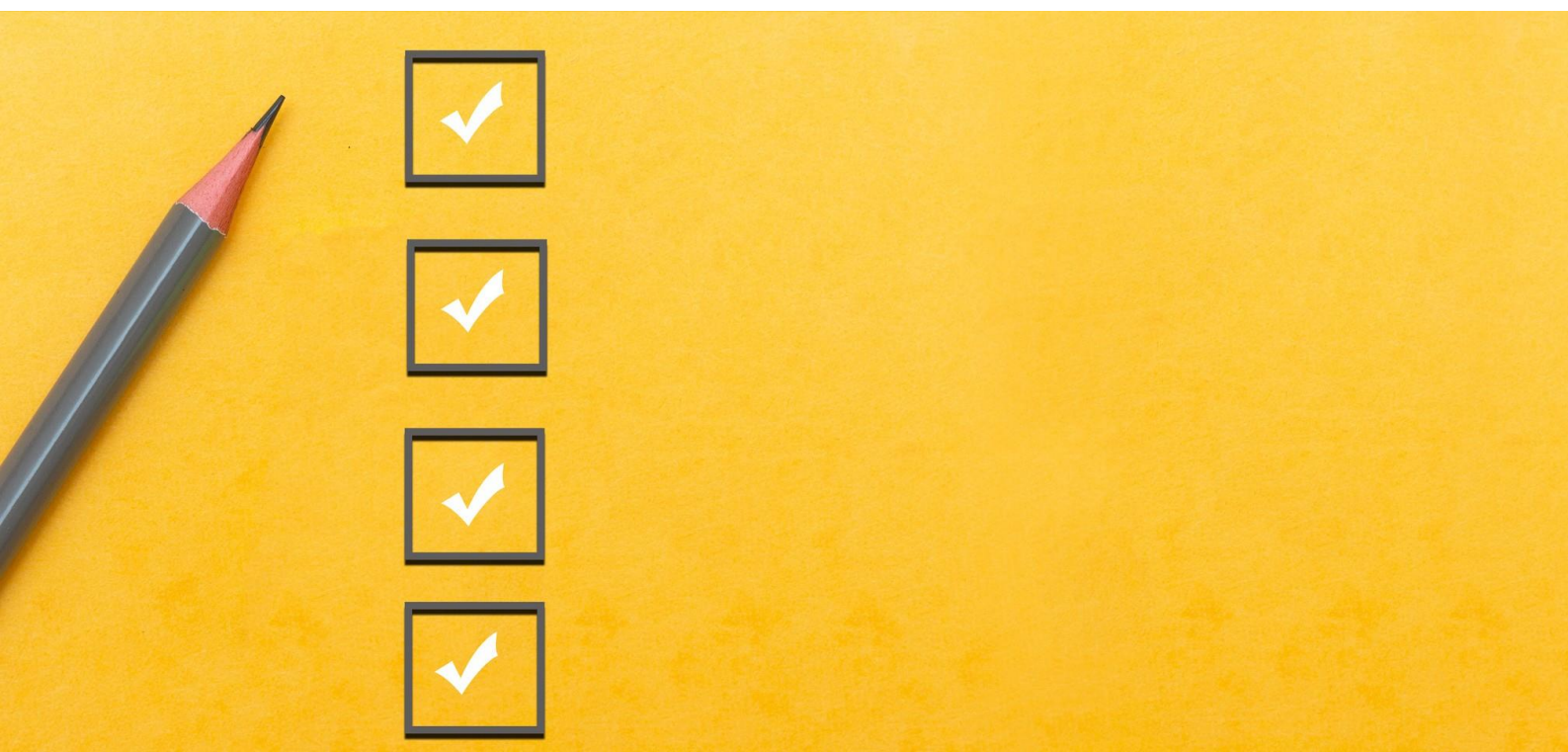
- Before the interview day, young panel members will receive some training. They must attend at least one preparation session. Training can be provided by the Voice and Participation Team at Wakefield Council. The team have undergone proper training and has been checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Parental Consent:

- Parents or carers will be asked for permission. Whenever possible, meetings and interviews should be scheduled after school hours. If this isn't possible, a letter seeking permission will be sent to schools.

Travel Arrangements:

- How the young person gets to the interview will be decided - either by their parents or carers or by the session facilitator in their car or minibus. The facilitator will do safety assessments for the session and the way of travel. If young people use their transportation, they'll be paid back for their travel expenses.



Preparation:

Before the interviews, the young people on the interview panel should meet to create a list of questions for each candidate. This can happen either on a separate occasion before the interviews or an hour or two before the interview day. The job description and person specification should be shared with the young people to make sure their questions are relevant. To avoid duplication, the questions prepared by the young people should be shared with the adult interview panel.

Facilitators of the young person's panel should guide and prompt the young people when preparing their questions. For example, if they're interviewing for a Rights and Participation Officer, they might think about current officers and what they like or don't like about them. A guide for young people participating in the interview panel, including information on employment laws, the role of the interview panel, and the benefits of participating, is available and should be given to them beforehand.

Running of the Interview:

Young people can be asked if they want to take control of the interview process, including welcoming candidates and closing the interview. While young people should always ask the interview questions, if they prefer, a worker can handle the opening and closing.

Interview Room Setup:

On the interview day, the room should be set up appropriately, including arranging the table and chairs and providing water for candidates. Consideration should be given to where the young people sit in the room, ensuring they are close to the candidates and positioned to face them easily.

Young People's Feedback:

Young people should be briefed on how their feedback will be used. They can provide verbal feedback directly to the adult interview panel or to the workers facilitating the young person's panel, who will then relay it to the adult panel. Providing written feedback is also an option.

Equal Opportunities:

Young people should be informed about equal opportunities and instructed not to discriminate based on gender, age, sexual orientation, faith, ethnicity, disability, or appearance. Terms like equal opportunities should be explained, and the guide to interviewing for young people briefly covers the Equalities Act 2010. If a young person on the panel knows a candidate, a decision should be made on whether they can continue interviewing, considering any potential bias.

Quick Note on Employment Law:

It is crucial to recognise that children and young people's panels must adhere to the same employment law requirements as any other recruitment process. The document provides guidance on engaging with young people throughout the recruitment process, emphasising the need for fairness and equality. Managers should use available support to understand appropriate questions, decision-making factors, and feedback protocols.



During the Interview:

Welcoming the Candidate:

- If young people want to lead the interview, they should greet the candidate, offer water, and start introductions. If they prefer not to, the facilitator can do this. Facilitators can also open and close the interview, but young people should always ask the questions.

Asking Questions:

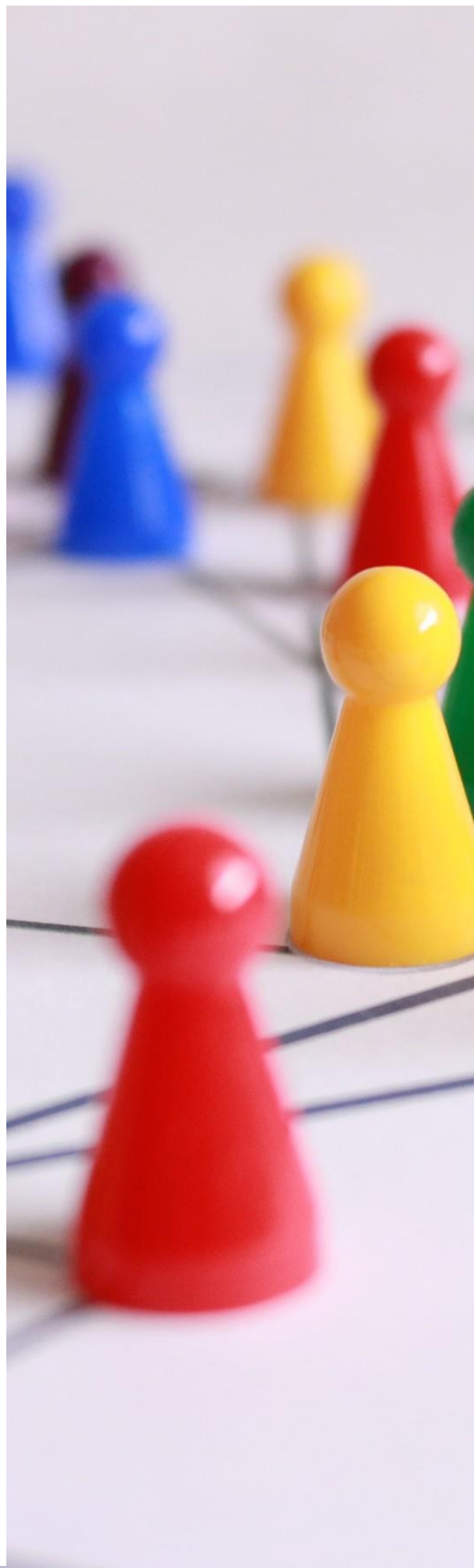
- After friendly introductions, young people should ask each candidate the same questions. They should have paper to take notes, and these notes should be clear, appropriate, detailed, and relevant. This is important because candidates may ask to see the notes.

Facilitator's Role:

- Facilitators facilitating the young person's panel should also take notes, paying attention to how candidates interact with young people. Their role is not to influence the young people's views but to ensure a smooth interview process, treat young people with respect, and listen to their opinions. Their role is to support and facilitate, not to guide the young people's opinions.

Discussion and Ratings:

- After each interview, the panel discusses the candidate, allowing young people to share their thoughts. Facilitators can ask questions to understand views better without leading them. This helps young people think in more detail about the candidate and their responses.



AFTER THE INTERVIEWS:

After the interviews, the young people will have time to share their thoughts. This step is crucial because it ensures that the young people feel their opinions are valuable and are considered when making the final decision.

Once the interviews have taken place the young people panel will share views and scores. The candidates feedback will be given at the end of the assessment panel as the feedback will provide evidence to support the decisions made should the candidate want to follow up, receive feedback. It is vital that the young people know the outcome of the interviews even if this decision is made on another day.

To facilitate this process, if the young person's panel is unable to provide verbal feedback directly, written feedback can be gathered and shared with the adult interview panel. It's important to keep the young people informed about the final decision, especially if they were not present when the decision was made. This way, everyone involved stays in the loop and feels a sense of inclusion in the decision-making process.





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