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Involving Young People in Interviews

Guidance Document

CHILDREN SERVICES DIRECTORATE
LEARNING ACADEMY

TORBAY COUNCIL

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The involvement of children and young people in the recruitment process of Torbay Children's Services staff is led by the Participation team as part of the Learning Academy. The young people that are involved in our interview process have undertaken specific training to be able to do their role effectively.

If you require a young person to participate in an interview, please review this document in the first instance.

Content:

- Things to consider when involving young people in interviews
- Different ways of involving young people in interviews
- Suggested questions and activities that can be used in interviews when a young person cannot attend
- Selection of different activities to be used in interviews when a young person cannot attend:
- When involving Young People in interviews
 - Times of the interview process
 - Breaks for young people
 - Consent from young people
 - Young person transport to interviews
 - Venue
 - Equipment & materials
 - Refreshments
 - Feedback & evaluation
 - Rewards & Accreditation
- Training for young people
- Guidance on making a request for young people to be involved in interviews.

Things to consider when involving young people in interviews:

- Timings of interviews.
- Consent from both the candidates as well as the young people involved.
- Use of age-appropriate language.
- Transport to and from the interview or training venue.
- Refreshments
- Support from staff members.
- Rewards and recognition for the young people
- Not sharing information with the young people that isn't relevant. Young people will need the name of the candidate, and access to previous experience. Young people should not have access to information such as address, contact details, date of birth etc.
- Preparing the young person with understanding what their role is and who will ask which question.
- Consider neuro diversity needs of the young person.
- Creating a welcoming environment.
- Decision making – what impact does the young person's voice have on the final outcome.

Different ways of involving YP in interviews:

- **Part of the official interview process**
 - Young people join the official interview panel. Set questions are inputted into the interview for the young person to ask. Young people to be involved in final scoring. Their voice should hold just as much importance as any other staff member in the interview.
- **Part of a separate Youth Panel Interview** – where the candidate would meet with just the young people and answer their questions. They could also potentially do an activity with the candidate.
 - Young people can plan this part of the interview depending on the number of applicants, and what the role is. Young people will use the scoring system used in recruitment process to promote consistency. Our scoring system is:

Scoring Suggestions				
1	2	3	4	5
Very weak answer	Weaknesses outweigh strengths	Balance of strengths/weaknesses	Strengths outweigh weaknesses	Very Strong answer
Weak	Poor	OK / Fair attempt	Good/ Sufficient	Outstanding / Excellent
<10%	<35%	35 – 65%	>65%	>90%

- Members of both the youth panel interview, and staff from the formal interview, will have set time to come together and share feedback from this activity. The impact that the youth panel interview will have on the outcome of the interview will need to be planned.
- If the young person cannot attend on the day, interview candidate can complete an activity that has been planned/created by young people. Young people to have the opportunity to then grade and give feedback.
 - There are several activities and questions drafted by young people to be used in interviews if they are unable to attend. You can review these by [clicking here](#). If one of these activities is used to support with the interview process, please let us know in advance so that we can arrange for young people to review the responses given by the candidates and give feedback. If timing does not allow for young people to give their feedback, please share with us the response given by the candidate, the scoring given and the reasons why so that we can review and advise for future reference.

Suggested questions and activities that can be used with a candidate at an interview when a young person cannot attend:

Action for Participation Officers: Gather feedback from our young people on what questions they would ask applicants for roles. This to be used by young people in the formal interview process.

Selection of different activities to be used in interviews when a young person cannot attend:

- Creative activity e.g. Head, Heart, Hand activity – what makes a good social worker? What should they know, what kind of person should they be, what they should help children and young people with.
- Does how a social worker is dressed matter? - Draw or describe a good social worker. This task is a slight adaptation of the first task and can be given as a drawing activity, or candidates can be given a pile of magazines from which they can cut out images to use. This task picks up on some children telling us that they liked to use games and more creative ways of working when meeting with their worker and this helped them feel more comfortable about talking. This kind of task might also be more relevant if a post requires working with service users with learning difficulties or disabilities.

When involving Young People in interviews

It is vital that we consider the needs of our young people and offer them sufficient support when requesting their help. Because of this, we have listed below suggestions and recommendations to take into consideration when planning to include young people in interviews. If your team is unable to meet these standards, but you would still like to involve young people in interviews, please contact the participation team as soon as possible.

- Are interviews spaced out enough, but not too far to leave the young person waiting?
 - We recommend that young people have at least 15 minutes after each interview to reflect and write out their feedback.
 - If multiple interviews are being conducted in a day, young people will need to take a 15-minute break at least once every hour.
 - If the young person has a neurodivergent need, then we suggest 20-30 minutes is given.
- If necessary, has time off school / college been arranged for participants?
 - Where possible, we would recommend that interviews are planned for outside of school-working hours or during the school holidays. Some of our young people have more flexibility to attend during working hours. If you require this, please ensure that you state this clearly on the request form.
 - We currently do not have permission from schools for authorised absences.
- Do you have consent forms completed by the young people?
 - We have consent forms within the participation team that can be accessed if you have identified which young people you would like to be involved in interviews.
 - We are available to support with gathering consent from young people, but we need to ensure that each young person has submitted consent forms before participating in the interview.
- Who is organising transport for young people and who is paying for the costs?
 - For young people to have a fair opportunity to be included in interviews, we ask that staff consider the transportation needs of the young person. This could be organising

for the young person to have access to a bus ticket for this day or paying the cost of a taxi.

- Timings of interviews
 - We ask that all interviews that include young people are scheduled to start no earlier than 10am. This will help to ensure that young people have sufficient time to arrive in the mornings and prepare if using public transport.
- Has an appropriate space and rooms been booked for the interview?
 - Consider if the young person has any specific needs (e.g. access to a lift).
 - Is the room in a safe and quiet location?
- Have any equipment / materials requested by young people been provided?
 - If the young person is doing a creative activity, does the young person have access to all the resources that they will need?
- Consider neuro diversity needs of the young person.
 - This will be shared with the interview panel in advance.

On the day:

- Is time allowed for the young people to discuss their questions and re-familiarise themselves with candidates' information?
 - Prior to the interview taking place, we would recommend that the young person has at least 15 minutes to review the candidate's key information, such as name and previous experience. If the young person has a neurodivergent need, then we suggest 20-30 minutes is given.
- Is time for feedback provided?
 - As stated above, young people should be assigned at least 15 minutes between interviews to reflect and give feedback.
 - If the young people are running a youth panel interview, all staff members and young people involved in the interview process should come together after all interviews have been conducted. During this meeting, all members should discuss the feedback that they have, and come to a mutual agreement on the outcome.

Refreshments:

- Arrange refreshments and regular breaks.
 - Refreshments should always be provided considering allergies and dietary requirements.
 - Breaks are recommended to be at least 15 minutes long, once every hour the young people are involved in interviews.
 - If the young people are part of the interview process for a full day, we would suggest that they get a 45-minute lunch break anytime between 12:00 – 13:30.
- Arrange lunch if appropriate.
 - If young people are conducting interviews in the morning for longer than 2.5 hours, it is strongly recommended that lunch / food is provided. It is important to consider allergies and dietary requirements.

Feedback and Evaluation

- Feedback to young people on the decision made.
 - Young people should be involved in the decision-making process as much as possible. If a decision is made that the young people don't agree with, it is vital that the reasons why is clearly and sensitively explained to the young people.
 - Impact of young person in the final outcome:

- When involved in the formal interview process, the young person should have the same level of input as any other member of the interview panel.
- Separate young people interviews should hold equal weight.
- Relevant manager to write formally to each young person thanking them within 1 week of interview.
 - To formally acknowledge the importance of the role the young person has in the interview process, it is recommended that the manager for of the interviewed role writes to the young person to say thank you. This can be an email.

Managing expectations – supporting healthy debate and ensuring a fair process

If there is a difference in scoring, it's important to encourage open and honest discussion between staff and young people. Through discussions, use curious questions to help explore if you can resolve or change differences in any scoring. Curious questioning allows you to be open in your thought process to understand others.

Some examples of this can include:

- Tell me more about why you scored them a ___ instead of ___?
- What could they have said that would have changed your mind? / What key points would you liked to have heard?
- How did the person make you feel?

In situations where there are differences of opinions and discussion doesn't promote a change in score, the interview panel will then go with the majority vote. Please update the Participation team with these discussions so that they can provide emotional aftercare support to the young person.

Rewards and accreditation

- Are the young people rewarded & accredited for their involvement.
 - Certificate of Recognition – templates available in the participation team
 - Payments – we recommend that any form of payment is made with the use of vouchers rather than cash. When using vouchers, we recommend that £10 is given for half a day, or £20 for a full day.
 - For a group of young people, consider a group reward such as a pizza night or a leisure activity. The participation team will be happy to facilitate / staff activities like this.

Training for young people

The participation team will work with all young people that are involved in the interview process. This includes completing a training course with them to help to prepare them for interview. Within this course, we will cover:

1. Understand the appointment process and how applications, references and interviews fit within this process.
2. Be able to create appropriate questions from person specifications.
3. Have practised interviewing each other, including recording responses.
4. Have practised discussing, negotiating and (if necessary) compromising to agree the appointment of the most appropriate candidate.
5. Understand and be able to work within the necessary equal opportunities and confidentiality boundaries.
6. Understand the importance of putting candidates at their ease.

Guidance on making a request for young people to be involved in interviews.

The Participation team will support young people to participate in the interview process. We have worked closely with a number of young people to ensure that they are ready to be involved in interviews. This includes supporting them to complete an interview training course.

If you have any young people that you would specifically like to be involved in the interview, let us know in advance as we would need to ensure that the young person has completed our training package.

When wanting to involve young people in interviews, please contact the participation team. When the job advert is live for applicants to apply, submit a request form to involve young people and include some suggested dates for interviews. Once the job advert is closed and shortlisting of applicants has taken place, update the participation team with confirmed dates.

When notifying the participation team of a job posting that will require young people in the interview process, please include:

- What type of activity would you like the young people to conduct for the interview (e.g. part of the formal interview process, youth panel interview, or choose from one of our already created resources to do without a young person being present for the interview).
- Suggested date and times of interview
- Job description
- Person Specification
- If there is any reward/compensation available for young people, and if so, what is it
- The location of the interview.

After shortlisting candidates, please inform the participation team on:

- Number of applicants
- Confirmed date of interview

Please note, at this time we do not support with young people being involved in online interviews as this brings a number of barriers and challenges around confidentiality, emotional support etc. If the interview needs to be conducted online, we recommend that the formal interview takes place online, whilst the youth panel interview and / or activity is held face to face in one of our buildings. The participation team will be able to support with this.

Version control

Date	Revision No	Originator of change	Change description
24.01.24	1	Sophie de Sousa	Reviewed by Head of Information Governance – Jo Beer. No changes proposed.
30.01.24	1	Sophie de Sousa	Reviewed by Recruitment Lead – Claire Knott. No changes proposed.
07.03.24	1	Sophie de Sousa	Reviewed by Service Manager for Regulated Services – Lucy Reeves. No changes proposed.
08.03.24	1	Sophie de Sousa	Shared and feedback gathered from the Recruitment Subgroup and document updated.

22.04.24	2	Bexs Rushton	Request for document to be signed off at Children's Social Care SLT.
15.05.24	2	Bexs Rushton	Signed off by SLT with the request for guidance to be included around how we support with scoring where there is a difference in opinion. Also to gather feedback from young people on the voucher proposal.

References

https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/toolkit_for_engaging_with_cyp_in_recruitment.pdf