



Involving Young People in the Recruitment Process Guidance for Services



Thriving children, fulfilling their dreams.



Document Control

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Document Summary

The purpose of this guidance document is to outline the process and requirements for involving young people in the recruitment of Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council staff. The guidance is intended for use by both RCBC staff seeking to involve young people in recruitment (e.g. HR, Team Managers, Senior Management and Directorate Management Staff) and RCBC staff facilitating young people's involvement during the process.

The principle of the wishes and views of young people contributing to both individual care decisions and service improvement is enshrined in the Children Act (2004), Children and Social Work Act (2017), Health and Social Care Act (2012), Children and Families Act (2014), HMIC Inspection Guidance (2015), Safeguarding Services (HM Government, 2015), Young People's Public Health Framework (2015), Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) Framework (2021) as well as Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Involving young people in the recruitment process is considered to be good practice in children's services and demonstrates the local authority's adherence to the aforementioned legislation.

Additionally, involving young people in the recruitment process provides evidence that we are fulfilling Pledge 3 of our Voice and Influence Pledges, as outlined in the Children and Families Voice and Influence Strategy 2021-2023; "We will involve children, young people and families in making decisions about our services."

This document outlines scope, benefits of including young people in the process, selecting young people, standards the service will meet throughout the process, expenses and rewards, and safeguarding and consent.

Scope

The service considers involvement of young people in the recruitment of management roles to be a minimum requirement and, further to this, involvement of young people in the recruitment of roles working directly with children and young people to be best practice. This document therefore applies to:

- Recruitment of management roles in accordance with Pledge 3 of our Voice and Influence Pledges, as outlined in the Children and Families Voice and Influence Strategy 2021-2023.



This includes Children and Families Services Directorate Management Team roles and Senior Management Team roles where the role is responsible for a service carrying out direct work with children and young people.

- Recruitment of other roles working directly with children and young people.

Benefits

There are a number of benefits of involving young people in staff recruitment, for children and the organisation more broadly.

Benefits for young people:

- Young people are involved in making important decisions which makes them feel valued, respected and recognised.
- Their involvement demonstrates to them that their views matter and are important in influencing the services we provide and encourages their future involvement.
- Young people gain valuable experience and skills during the process and certificates and feedback letters can be placed in their Record of Achievement or CV.

Benefits for staff and the wider organisation:

- The process allows the organisation to develop a deeper understanding of children's wishes and feelings in relation to the qualities they want in staff working in services that support them.
- Improved service delivery as a result of young people helping to shape services to better meet their needs and recruit the right people.
- The process makes it clear to young people that the organisation values their views, leading to increased likelihood of future engagement with voice and influence activities.

Selection of Young People

It is important that the children asked to be involved in recruitment activity reflect the demographics of the service for which candidates are applying to work in. Where possible and appropriate, young people who currently receive, or have previously experienced, a service should be a priority when approaching young people to be involved in recruitment activity within the service. For example, recruitment for relevant roles working with Children in Care should involve children who are currently in care or who have experienced care. Relevant roles that work more broadly across a range of children should seek to include a diverse range of children from different backgrounds with different experiences and levels of service involvement.

It is generally recommended that interview panels are formed of between 2 and 6 young people to allow for good quality discussion between young people. The nature of the role being recruited for may influence decision making regarding the number of young people involved in the process. For recruitment of roles with a broader remit it may be necessary to involve more young people to be



representative of young people in the borough. Where this is the case, the service will consider if more staff support is needed to successfully facilitate the group size.

Expenses and Rewards

It is expected that as a minimum standard the service will:

- Reimburse travel costs for young people travelling to sit on interview panels, or travelling to contribute to the recruitment process in other ways, to ensure that contributing to the process does not put any young person or family/carer at a financial disadvantage.
- Provide food and refreshments for young people taking part in activities which benefit the local authority.
- Send a thank you letter/certificate to recognise the young person's contribution.

On top of this, there are a number of types of rewards services may choose to give to young people for their involvement, as shown in Table 1.

TYPE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
INCENTIVE	Something that encourages people's involvement.	Learning new skills, food, transport, having a voice, building confidence, making new friends.
RECOGNITION	Showing that people's involvement is valued and appreciated.	Thank you letters, certificates, feedback on how young people's input has influenced decisions, providing references.
ACCREDITATION	Giving people the opportunity to certify the skills they have developed.	AQA Unit Schemes, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Children's University.
REWARD	Giving something tangible that is of value to a person.	Vouchers, tickets to events, meals out, competitions and prizes.
REMUNERATION	Payment received by a person for their participation.	BACS.

Table 1: 'How can a participant be rewarded?' Young Minds (2020). Rewarding Participation.

At the time of selection of young people for the recruitment activity, the service must consider if there is the budget available to reward young people as per some of the examples outlined in Table 1. If the service has the required budget to provide a monetary reward to young people, it is good practice to give the young people options as to how they would like to be rewarded.

For older young people, payment for their involvement may have financial implications on benefits or taxation. The service will discuss this with the young person and consult with [Department for Work and Pensions Government Guidance: Volunteering and Claiming Benefits \(2019\)](#) where necessary. The reimbursement of expenses to participants does not affect either their tax status or their entitlement to benefits. If this is the only financial payment received, their contribution is considered volunteering. Some employment and volunteering schemes may consider the young



person's involvement to qualify as volunteer hours. For extra payments and collection of volunteering hours, the service should advise young people to check the impact of their involvement on their circumstances before they start (for example, checking with their DWP Work Coach).

A template thank you letter and certificate are available via [Tri-X \(under the Voice & Influence sub-heading\)](#) for services to use when recognising young people's involvement.

Involving Young People

Young people's involvement in the recruitment process can be facilitated in different ways and at different points in the process. Examples include:

- *Identifying the need for a post.*
- *Helping to write the job description, person specification and/or job advert.*
- *Short listing candidates.*
- *Having a Young People's Interview Panel.*
- *Having a joint Young People/Adult Interview Panel.*
- *Observation sessions followed by feedback from young people.*

It is recommended that, where possible, young people are involved in the form of a Young People's Interview Panel as this is generally considered to be the most effective method of involving young people in recruitment decision making.

There are three key stages that the service must consider and plan for:


1. Before the interview/recruitment activity
2. On the day of the interview/recruitment activity
3. After the interview/recruitment activity




Services must ensure that the manager in charge of the recruitment activity and the staff member responsible for supporting young people to take part have viewed '*Involving Children and Young People in Recruitment Activity Practical Tips for Staff*' document (Appendix A), which contains more detailed guidance around facilitating young people's involvement in the process.

The remainder of this section sets out the standards that the service will meet when involving young people in the recruitment process in the form of a Young Person's Interview Panel.

1. Before the Interview

The service will ensure that:

-  Requests for young people's involvement that are not initiated by the service themselves will give **at least 4 weeks'** notice (including date, time and venue) for the service to arrange staffing, recruit and prepare young people and complete all consent and risk assessments. It is also best practice that the service facilitating young people's involvement be notified of upcoming recruitment activity at the point the service is drafting the job description.

-  Young panel members have had some preparation / training prior to the interview day. As a minimum this should be to attend one preparation session.
-  Consent is gathered from parents/carers (Appendix B and C). Where possible, meetings and interviews should be scheduled for out of school hours; a permission letter (Appendix C) will be sent to schools where this is not possible.
-  Travel arrangements for the young person will be decided, either transport via parents/carers or by the session facilitator in their car/minibus. The session facilitator will complete mandatory risk assessments for the session and the method of travel (Appendix E). Where young people have access to transportation, they will be reimbursed for their travel expenses.

A preparation session with young people should:

Ensure the young people know what they are being asked to do, how to do it and why they are being asked to do it.





Establish ground rules with all young people.

Explain the job description and the skills, knowledge and experience expected of the candidate (sharing the job description/person specification at this stage is recommended).

Make clear who is making what decisions. The service must be clear with young people about how their input will contribute to the overall decision. It is useful to remind the young people that their opinion is very important, but it is only part of the decision-making process.


2. On the day of the Interview



The service will ensure that:

-  Young people are provided transport as agreed, in line with the completed risk assessment.
-  Young people have an appropriate, comfortable, accessible space to carry out their work. They have access to the appropriate facilities and are given breaks and refreshments/food.
-  The Young People's Panel has a key staff member who supports them throughout the process and on the day to complete their task and ensure their needs are met.
-  Young People are provided with the Young People's Interview Panel Question Template to make notes during the interviews.

3. After the Interview

The service will ensure that:

-  Young people are given the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience via the Young People's Voice Survey.

-  Young people are debriefed afterwards, thanked for their time and input, and later notified of the outcome of the interview process.
-  The Service Improvement & Participation Officer is notified of all activity, so the involvement of young people in decision making is recognised in our Voice and Influence reports!

Safeguarding and Consent

As in any work with children and young people, **safeguarding is paramount**. Services should consider any safeguarding implications to involving young people in the recruitment process prior to their involvement. The service facilitating young people's involvement must inform parents/carers (Appendix A), get parent/carer consent using the Medical Information and Consent form (Appendix B), send a letter to school (Appendix C) and complete risk assessment forms (Appendix D).

Should any safeguarding issues or concerns arise during the process, staff must follow the procedures outlined on the [Tees Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures website](#).

Appendices

Appendix A: Involving Children and Young People in Recruitment Activity Practical Tips for Staff

Appendix B: Example Parent or Carer Information Sheet

Appendix C: Parent/Carer Consent Form

Appendix D: Example School Permission Letter

Appendix E: Session and Travel Risk Assessments





Involving Young People in the Recruitment Process

Practical
Tips for Staff

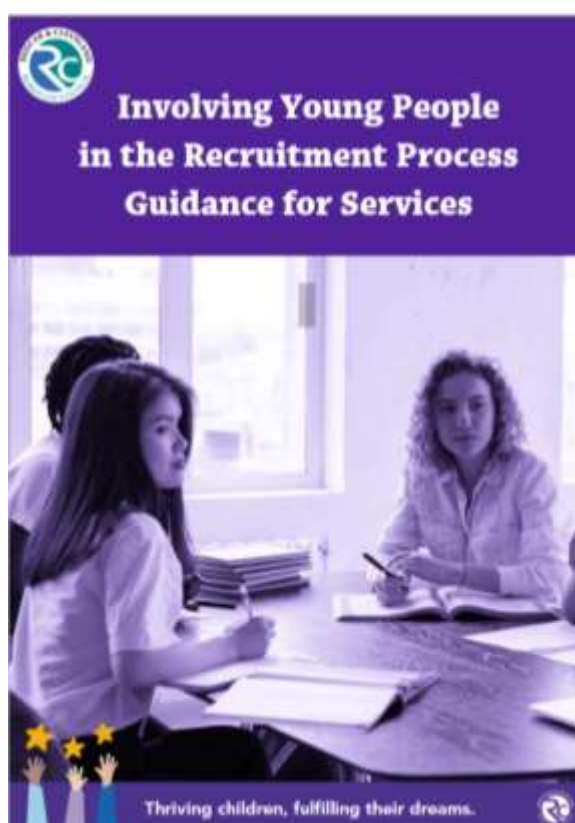
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Involving Children and Young People in Recruitment **Activity: Practical Tips for Staff**

This document outlines some top tips and ideas for facilitating young people's involvement in the staff recruitment process through Young People's Interview Panels and is intended for staff members who will support young people to be involved both before and on the day of candidate interviews.

More information on our service standards and expectations around involving young people in this process, including information about safeguarding, rewards, consent and risk assessments, is included in the 'Involving Young People in the Recruitment Process Guidance' document.



Before the interview

PREPARE

Time planned for before the interview (one preparation session minimum) should aim to make sure that **young people know how to do what they are being asked to do** and that they know the **reason they are being asked to do it**.

The job description for the role this should be made available to young people, explained and discussed in preparation for the interview. **Young people should have the opportunity to talk about the skills, knowledge and experience expected of the candidate** and how they will know if an interviewee ticks these boxes.

Young people should come up with a selection of questions they would like to ask candidates. They might be general questions such as “How will you make sure young people’s opinions and concerns are listened to?” or very specific to the group of children they represent (for example, specific to the experiences of children with SEND or children who are in care). Record the questions for young people to refer to on the day (using the Young People’s Panel Question Template and Score Sheet) and encourage young people to think about what they think a good answer would be.

SET EXPECTATIONS

Establish ground rules with all young people at the beginning about what is expected of them. This will include listening to the other young people’s opinions even if they don’t agree.

Set expectations about the entire process, the part the young people will play and the outcome. This includes trying to **make decision-making structures transparent** so young people know who is making what decision. It’s likely their opinion about candidates will not be the only thing the service need to consider before making a final decision. It’s useful to remind the young people that their opinion is very important, but it is only part of the decision-making process.

Explain confidentiality and ask them not to discuss any information outside of the recruitment process.

BREAK THE ICE

As with any group, make sure young people are introduced to each other and that there’s an opportunity for young people to get to know each other better. This is especially important if the young people don’t already know each other and will help to make young people more confident to take part in discussion and debate key issues.



Interview Day

MAKING YOUNG PEOPLE COMFORTABLE

Make sure there's enough time to **welcome young people** when arriving at the building and to show them around (if interviews are in person), including access to toilets.

Ensure timings enable young people to have **adequate breaks** and refreshments/food breaks are planned. Check food allergy details on consent forms, prior to making arrangements for food to be provided.

An **opportunity to meet with the staff panel** on the day can help to show young people that their contribution is valued. This might include meeting them before hand to introduce themselves and discuss what's going to happen and/or meeting with them after interviews so the staff panel can hear their thoughts and thank them for their contributions and time.

LANGUAGE

Avoid acronyms and jargon. Young people may not feel confident to speak up if they don't understand. If a candidate or staff member uses an acronym or jargon, please ask them to explain what it means if none of the young people ask themselves.

MAKING A DECISION

It's a good idea to discuss before the day who will ask candidates the questions. Some groups of young people may ask the worker supporting them to do this if they don't feel confident to, however it's good practice to **encourage the young people to lead questioning** if they are comfortable doing so.

Use the Young People's Panel Question Template and Score Sheet so young people can make notes if they would like to during the interviews and record their scores. Remind young people that the adult panel will probably want to see their score sheets to help them make their decision and so any notes they write will be seen by others.

Give young people time to give their feedback on candidates, where there are differences of opinion taking time to **work together and discuss them before coming to a final decision.**

DEBRIEFING

Allow opportunity for the group to discuss what went well and what could be improved on next time. Ask young people to complete the short Young People's Voice Survey with their ideas and experiences, which will help us to implement improvements in the recruitment process across all of our services.

After the Interview

CLOSING THE FEEDBACK LOOP

It's important that we **recognise young people's contribution** and show that we value their time. Services can use, and amend where needed, the Certificate and Thank You Letter templates for young people. These could be prepared in advance and given to young people on the day or sent out afterwards.

If sending letters to young people after the interview day, and a decision has been made that can be shared, **notify young people of the outcome**.

As a directorate we report on all the opportunities for young people to influence our services and make decisions. **Inform the Service Improvement and Participation Officer** that you have involved young people in the recruitment process so that this can be reported, and young people's influence celebrated.

Send any responses to the Young People's Voice Survey to the Service Improvement and Participation Officer, who will collate them and ensure any suggestions are reviewed and where appropriate acted upon.



Appendix A

Practical Tips for Staff

For the *Practical Tips for Staff* document, see [the RCBC Tri-X Voice and Influence Section](#).

Appendix B

Example Parent or Carer Information Sheet

Dear Parent / Carer / Guardian,

Recruitment Panel for [Role]

Date and Time of activity:

Description of activity

[X] has been invited to sit on Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council's recruitment panel to ensure that the position of [Role] is filled by someone that young people would be happy with. [She/he] will help interview the candidates and will contribute to the final decision.

Please could you sign and return the enclosed consent form.

Please contact us using the details below with any queries.

[Contact information]

Yours sincerely

[Name]

[Job Title]

Appendix C

Parent/Carer Consent Form

For the *Medical Information and Consent Form* to be completed by parents/carers, see [the RCBC Tri-X Voice and Influence Section](#).

Appendix D

Example School Permission Letter

Dear *[Name]*,

I am writing to ask if you would allow *[name]* to be excused from lessons/ work (delete as applicable) on *[date]*. *[Name]* has been selected to sit on a recruitment panel for Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council at *[venue]*. She/he will be interviewing candidates for the post of *[name of post]*.

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council is committed to encouraging children and young people to voice their opinions and concerns about the things that matter to them. One of the ways in which we can achieve this is through consulting with our young people and offering a range of activities and opportunities for them to speak out on issues that are important to them.

I hope that it is ok for *[X]* to miss lessons/ school (delete as applicable) on this occasion, but if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Job Title]

[Phone number]

Appendix E

Session and Travel Risk Assessments

For activity and car and minibus travel risk assessments to be completed by staff, see the [RCBC Tri-X Voice and Influence Section](#).

