

COUNCIL CASE STUDY – BRIGHTON YOUTH-LED RECRUITMENT

Youth-Led Recruitment: How Brighton Council Empowered Young Leaders to Choose Their Youth Engagement Officer

Recruitment can be a demanding process. But how would you feel about young people taking the lead in hiring the person responsible for working with them? That's exactly what Brighton Council did when recruiting their Youth Engagement Officer.

After the formation of the Brighton Youth Action Group the need for a dedicated youth worker was identified to work alongside the young people and help commence development of a Brighton Youth Strategy. Recognizing the importance of appointing someone who could resonate with the Brighton Youth Action Group (BYAG) and align with the existing team's approach, the council took a bold step: they put young people at the heart of the recruitment process.

A Youth-Led Approach

The BYAG actively participated in every stage of recruitment. They:

- Created a position description tailored to the role's youth-focused objectives.
- Drafted youth-relevant selection criteria.
- Developed interview questions.
- Participated on the interview panel and made the final hiring decision.

This process wasn't just about ticking boxes—it was transformative for everyone involved. BYAG members gained firsthand experience of the employment process, boosting their confidence, communication, and leadership skills. More importantly, they ensured their voices were represented in choosing someone they would work with directly.

Building Relationships from Day One

After an intense process, the panel selected John Flack as the successful candidate. Thanks to their involvement, the young people already felt a connection and partnership with John before his first day.

Kylie Murphy, Brighton Council's Community Development Officer, reflected:

"The amazing part was how much thought they put into each applicant. They understood the gravity of this life-changing decision, not just for the successful candidate, but also for their group. Their seriousness and care throughout the process was inspiring."

Skills That Last a Lifetime

The youth-led recruitment process didn't just benefit the council—it empowered the young leaders. They developed critical skills in decision-making, teamwork, and communication. Kylie shared:

“It's enabled them to feel trusted and valued in such a big process. It wasn't just about hiring someone; it was about giving them a platform to lead and feel confident in their abilities.”

The Impact on John

For John Flack, being hired by the young people he would be working with was a unique and humbling experience.

“It was daunting at first,” he admitted, “because you feel an obligation to meet their expectations and work closely with them since they're the ones who chose you. But the transition was smooth, and the relationships were already established from Day One. It's been a great experience.”

Lessons Learned

The council ensured the process was thorough, even conducting mock interviews to help prepare the young panel members. On reflection, Kylie suggested that including an external participant in these mock interviews could have added an extra layer of realism and preparation.

A Model for Authentic Youth Engagement

Brighton Council's approach to recruitment exemplifies authentic youth consultation—ensuring young people are included at every step in matters that affect them. By empowering BYAG to lead the hiring process, the council demonstrated trust in their young leaders and reinforced the value of their input.

The result? A smoother onboarding process, a stronger connection between the Youth Engagement Officer and the young people, and a sense of shared ownership and success.