



# Advantaged Thinking People Handbook



## Module 1: Advantaged Thinking recruitment







# Advantaged Thinking People Handbook

Young people consistently tell us that staff members can make or break their stay in a Foyer. They point out Advantaged Thinking traits like positivity, respect and going the extra mile as things they appreciate and look for when deciding who to trust.

However, finding those Advantaged Thinking people isn't always easy.

This guide grew from a conversation with our Investor members in which we discussed the challenges of finding the right people, keeping them on board, and building an Advantaged Thinking culture. It has been written in collaboration with Salvation Army Housing Association, Swan Housing, YMCA Derbyshire, YMCA DownsLink Group and Your Housing Group, and puts forward best practice ideas and solutions borrowed from other sectors – including start-ups, which often face similar challenges to Foyers in that they must 'do more with less'.

Some services may have more autonomy over these procedures and processes, and some may have less. In this handbook, you will find a menu of Advantaged Thinking options and ideas to try, depending on what appeals to you and what can be done in the scope of your service and organisation.



# Advantaged Thinking People Handbook ●●●●●●●●

## Module 1: Advantaged Thinking Recruitment

This module starts at the beginning – embedding Advantaged Thinking into your roles from the moment they're created, and throughout the recruitment process.

It covers ways to make your recruitment process inclusive and promote diversity in your team, as well as writing a job description, advert and application form to boost your chances of attracting Advantaged Thinking candidates. There's also information about how to make your selection process as inclusive and Advantaged Thinking as possible, including involving young people. There are some templates included to help you to start trialling things in your service.

Finally, there's a crib sheet at the end to guide you through the process at a glance.

Inclusive recruitment	1
Advantaged Thinking core skills	7
Foyer Coach job description	8
Job advert (long)	11
Job advert (short)	13
Foyer Coach application form	14
Application scorecard template	15
Advantaged Thinking selection	16
Interview scorecard template	19
Module 1 checklist	21



# Inclusive Recruitment



Developing Advantaged Thinking recruitment practices starts with building inclusive recruitment practices to promote diversity within your team.

An equitable, diverse team brings many benefits to your organisation, including:

- Broader range of perspectives and ideas.
- Greater volume of applications, ie a bigger talent pool.
- Better understanding of your residents.
- Faster problem-solving.
- Positive reputation among applicants – even those who don't get the job

It's also simply the right thing to do.

Many organisations have a set method of recruitment that's replicated across roles, but there are several elements of the traditional, tried-and-tested techniques that unintentionally hurt your chances of fostering a culture of diversity and equity. In this guide, we'll address unconscious bias and how to mitigate it, explore some key principles for building a more inclusive recruitment process, give you practical tips for making each stage in the process inclusive, and share some tools you can start using today.

## Unconscious bias



Unconscious or implicit bias is the result of underlying beliefs, attitudes and stereotypes that people hold about others. It can be linked to race, gender, sexuality, disability, education background, and many other characteristics a person might have.

These biases, which a person often does not believe they hold, are a result of your brain trying to navigate the world by spotting patterns and making quick decisions, and can be ingrained further by cultural, social and media experiences. In the workplace, they can lead to minority groups being disproportionately less likely to get an interview, get the job, and get promoted into positions of power.

Two telltale signs that unconscious bias is at play are:

1. 'Gut feeling' – otherwise known as 'intuition', which is an instinctive feeling without logical rationale. It's based on those cultural, social and media experiences known to increase unconscious bias, and can often tip the scales away from diverse hiring.
2. 'Culture fit' – the reasons a person may feel like a good culture fit are often rooted in similarity and shared experiences. Recruiting on this basis is unlikely to increase diversity and bring different skills, perspectives and experiences into the team.

## Key principles for inclusive hiring



The following principles are at the core of an inclusive hiring practice and can help to check yourself against when beginning recruitment for a new role. They are adapted from CharityWorks' inclusive recruitment principles for early careers, which are based on learnings from years of recruitment and candidate training programmes:

### **1. Value potential and skills more than experience.**

Senior positions will likely require some experience, but keeping the must-have experience to only what's absolutely necessary can help to diversify the talent pool.

### **2. Recognise that we are all capable of unconscious bias and can take practical steps to mitigate against it.**

Bringing awareness to this fact will help you to identify places where unconscious bias might be a risk.

### **3. Be selective about the information you collect about candidates.**

Limiting information to only what you need to make a decision limits bias and saves time!

### **4. Base recruitment on objectivity and evidence rather than subjectivity and feeling.**

Design processes in such a way that they produce objective evidence for decision making and eliminate gut-feel or culture-fit hires.

*\*Adapted from the Kickstart Employers Toolkit from CharityWorks.*

## Practical steps to develop more inclusive practices

### Job description



The job description is where inclusive recruitment starts. It's the beginning of the candidates' relationship with your organisation, so it's key that they can see themselves reflected in the role and in the team. Inclusive job descriptions reduce the hurdles and widen your talent pool, making it more likely you'll attract the best candidates.

#### **1. Review your requirements**

Keeping your list of must-haves to a specific few reduces barriers for people with diverse experiences and backgrounds. When writing your job description, consider whether you need:

- Minimum education requirements. Unless the role is highly specialised, requiring a degree services to filter people by socioeconomic background rather than suitability.

- Years of experience. A requirement for minimum years of experience can discriminate against younger candidates. Be wary of ruling out rising stars.
- Experience in the sector. This reduces your talent pool to people already working in the field and excludes people with all the right skills working in other sectors. Consider other ways candidates can gain the experience you're looking for, such as volunteering, running clubs or in their personal life.

A quick test is to ask yourself, "what do we need candidates to come with and what can we train them to do?" If you can train it, scrub it from your must-haves list.

## 2. Avoid coded language

Although explicit discrimination is not permitted, a preference can be expressed through word choice, making a role seem like it's not really intended for certain types of people.

For example, asking for an 'energetic' candidate, a 'go-getter' or a 'digital native' can read as 'young people only'. You can use this [gender decoder](#) to find out whether your job description is coded for women or men.

## 3. Use plain English

Simplifying your word choices and sentence structures makes the role accessible to more people and reduces unnecessary barriers for people with learning disabilities. Eliminating sector or industry jargon also makes a job description more inclusive.

The [Hemingway app](#) is a handy tool for checking how easy your writing is to read.

## 4. Use images that represent diversity

If there are images in your recruitment pack or on your website, make sure that they represent diversity. Can candidates see themselves represented in the images included? Who might be missing from the picture? These visual elements give potential applicants clues about what your organisation is – and is not – looking for.

If you need to diversify your imagery, check out [Unsplash](#) for high-quality, royalty-free photos.

## Advertising the role



### 1. Advertise widely

Think about which audiences you're likely to reach by advertising in different places and make sure you have a good mix. Advertising on social media is a great way to be noticed by a large number of candidates, and the same principle applies – your LinkedIn audience won't crossover 100% with your Instagram audience, for example. Use your contacts and any professional groups you may be part of to spread the word.

If you've identified a diversity gap in applications and aren't sure how to reach more candidates from specific backgrounds or genders, ask a critical friend for advice on places to advertise.

## 2. Advertise the salary/range

Giving all candidates an indication of the salary band ensures that it doesn't come down to the person's negotiating skills and confidence, reducing the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps.

## The Application



### 1. Out with CVs, in with Application Forms

CVs include a lot of information that's not relevant to the role, but can cause bias nonetheless. This includes names, the school or university the candidate went to, and how they studied (eg full-time, part-time, distance).

Replacing the traditional CV and cover letter with an application form not only saves time by removing extraneous information, but it puts all candidates on a level playing field. It enables you to ask candidates specific questions that relate strongly to their suitability for the role. You should have a good understanding of the skills and qualities you're looking for the candidate to demonstrate with each question.

Just like with the job description, be mindful of not using coded language in the questions.

### 2. Consider flexible formats

If you can, offer a range of ways to apply. Video or audio applications may be more accessible to some people than written ones, for example.

### 3. Anonymised applications

This is an important step in ensuring bias doesn't creep in through answers about personal details (eg name bias) and equal opportunities questions (eg affinity bias). Identifying information should be removed from all applications before they are reviewed by the hiring team – just remember to use a reference ID so you can connect them up again afterwards.

### 4. Evaluate objectively and consistently

Review by question rather than by candidate – meaning, review all the answers to question one first, then question two and so on. Score each answer 1-5 for how well it meets the criteria you set when you wrote the application form, and be open to the many different ways a candidate might show the same skill or quality. Use the objective scoring criteria and be careful not to be swayed by gut feel.



## 5. Diversify evaluation

Include as broad a range of perspectives in the assessing team as possible. Have a group of people score the applications separately so they don't influence each other (conformity bias) and base your decisions on the totalled scores.

## 6. Increase accessibility

Be aware of the provisions you can make for candidates with disabilities and other accessibility needs. For example, using colours and fonts that are more accessible for people with colour vision deficiency or dyslexia, using Word formats instead of pdfs to enable use of screen-reading tools, remote interviews for physical and financial accessibility, or offering extra time for the interview. Encourage applicants to make use of these options and to suggest others.

### Pre-interview



#### 1. Be transparent

No matter how experienced you are, interviews are a source of anxiety for a lot of people. Providing information about what candidates can expect can mitigate this and enable each person to be at their best. For example, the name and role of the people who will conduct the interview, how long you expect it to take and an outline of what it will involve. For in-person interviews, directions can help too.

#### 2. Be flexible

Be as accommodating as possible of different people's circumstances. Even the best-laid plans can go awry if babysitters are sick, bus routes are cancelled or emergencies leave you without spare cash this month.

Can you offer both day and evening slots, for example, or child care in the building during the interview? Are you able to reimburse the cost of travel if an in-person interview is imperative? Do you have a quiet space in the building for someone to prepare ahead of time?

#### 3. Introduce a phone screening stage

Adding a phone screening to refine your list of interview candidates not only saves you time, it also makes the process more financially accessible and eliminates bias from visual judgements. Decisions can be based on answers alone.

### The interview



#### 1. Make accommodations for candidates with disabilities

Encourage candidates to let you know whether they will require accommodations to be made ahead of time. You can find a helpful list of accessibility accommodations on [Work Without Limits' website](#).

## 2. Have a diverse interview team

Just like at the evaluation stage, having a diverse interview panel will limit bias and increase the range of perspectives and experiences represented in the decision-making team.

## 3. Use objective scoring

As with every other stage of the process, scoring candidates' answers objectively gives you the best chance of avoiding bias. Each interviewer should score separately against predetermined criteria, and challenge yourself when you have an instinct, or a gut feeling, about something that's outside the scoring system set. Could it be unconscious bias?

## Culture



Recruitment is an important part of growing diversity in your team, but making sure you have an inclusive culture is crucial if you want people to stay. It's important that all staff are clear on the organisation's commitment to inclusivity and diversity, and that each team member understands and has easy access to your equality and diversity policy.

Having a new starter checklist is a great way to help new starters to feel welcomed and thought about in their first week. Using a Trello board to outline the expectations of new starters in their first week, month and three months makes the criteria objective and easily trackable – both for the new team member and senior staff.

Having an assigned buddy on the team – someone who does not have line management responsibilities for the person – can help them to settle in and feel part of the company culture.

Finally, and importantly, take people seriously and take action when they report issues like microaggressions.

# Advantaged Thinking core skills



These are the core skills every employee in the organisation needs to have to be able to work in an Advantaged Thinking way. Each one may be shown in their application form, interviews or practical challenges. They should be scored anonymously on the scorecard.



## 1. Talk

- Chooses positive language
- Avoids stereotypes
- Shows respect for others



## 2. Understand

- Adapts to different people and personalities
- Shows genuine trustworthiness and reliability
- Identifies strengths and assets



## 3. Work

- Is knowledgeable about a range of interventions and approaches
- Works in a solution-focused way
- Shows self-awareness and accountability



## 4. Invest

- Develops people through their strengths and assets
- Places importance on building sustainable behaviours
- Links actions with aspirations



## 5. Believe

- Believes in a positive future for each young person
- Links their personal 'why' to the organisations values
- Listens actively and praises descriptively



## 6. Involve

- Demonstrates a coaching approach
- 'Works with' young people rather than 'doing to' them
- Seeks genuine engagement and two-way feedback



## 7. Challenge

- Notices and positively challenges disadvantaged thinking
- Rolls with the punches and adapts flexibly when change happens
- Has the inner confidence to take positive risks, be brave and go above and beyond

# Foyer Coach Job Description



**Role title:**

**Reports to:**

**Salary range:**

**Role purpose:** To engage creatively with young people to identify, map and encourage growth of their strengths and talents as they develop into a sustainable and independent adulthood.

## Measures of success

- *How will you measure whether this person is succeeding? These should align with the key responsibilities and be measurable. 1-5 bullet points.*
- *Eg, x% of coachees have set goals and are on target to achieve them / Young people's views sought and advocated for during team meetings / x% of coachees have made progress in developing a skill or talent / All health and safety incidents are handled effectively.*

## Responsibilities



### 1. Coaching young people

- Act as a key worker and coach for x young people, encouraging them to take ownership of their personal development.
- Facilitate progression planning, empowering the young person to lead on identifying goals and actions.
- Coach young people to develop the tools and methods needed to navigate the ups and downs of adulthood, including managing crises, developing a strong network, and entering education, employment and training.
- Keep clear records of the young person's needs, risks, strengths, talents and outcomes.

### 2. Engaging young people in the service

- Seek young people's views, concerns, ideas and aspirations and act on them.
- Involve young people in service-level decisions.
- Proactively encourage and promote the Foyer offer, and creatively address disengagement.

### 3. Growing young people's strengths and talents

- Work proactively and creatively alongside young people to develop their assets.
- Encourage and assist young people to develop skills needed to live, learn and work.
- Deliver group or one-to-one sessions that provide a platform for young people's assets and skills to be recognised and developed.



#### 4. Safeguarding

- Prioritise young people’s wellbeing and safety in all the work you do.

#### 5. Housing management

- Dealing with non-compliance issues using restorative practices and working with the rest of the team.
- Shared duty management of the building(s) to ensure the health and safety of the site and its occupants.
- Undertake enquiries and interview with potential residents ensuring they are clearly informed of the offer and their responsibilities (the Foyer deal).

### Requirements



#### 1. Experience

Proven ability to work, engage and relate well with young people aged 16-25 is desirable, but not essential.

#### 2. Role-specific skills

- Proactive and self-motivated with a can-do attitude.
- Confident and capable communicator with the ability to inspire, engage, enhance learning and provoke thoughtful reflection.
- Understands and uses a range of methods for achieving positive results with people, and knows when to challenge and when to support.
- Able to build strong relationships with professionals in other organisations.
- Strong team player who can support and challenge colleagues when appropriate.
- Excellent planning and organisation skills, with the ability to manage several competing tasks at the same time.
- Excited by developing and implementing savvy new ideas to improve the service.
- Able to use digital technology at work.

#### 3. Core skills, as written by young people (you might also put the Advantaged Thinking core skills here)

Characteristics of a good Coach	Characteristics of a poor Coach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approachable and professional, with communication skills and enthusiasm</li><li>• Friendly</li><li>• Consistent</li><li>• Honest</li><li>• Confidential</li><li>• Goes the extra mile</li><li>• Positive attitude</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Broken or empty promises (saying one thing and doing another)</li><li>• Mixes professional and personal experiences at work</li><li>• Negative</li><li>• Demotivated</li><li>• Lazy</li><li>• Stressed</li></ul>

- Treats residents as they would like to be treated
- Empathetic
- Respects others' personal space, opinions and choices
- Knows their stuff
- Assists you or offers to assist
- Gives emotional support
- Helps explore other options
- Is well prepared
- Has the skills needed to work with people

- Doesn't have a positive outlook about moving on
- Talks down to residents
- Discouraging
- Lack of respect
- Invades personal space
- Overly nosy
- Gives you un-researched information
- Doesn't offer to help
- Lack of communication
- No action on complaints
- Poor inter-agency working

#### **4. Values**

*These should be your company's values, or the Foyer values if different*

## Foyer Coach job advert (long) ●●●●●●●●●●

Are you an enthusiastic, proactive, creative and empathetic person with a passion for inspiring people? Are you a positive, people-oriented team player who thrives on getting the best deal possible for young people experiencing homelessness and developing their strengths and talents?

If so, *insert company here* has an exciting opportunity for a Foyer Coach, working directly with young people as they transition into sustainable, independent adulthood.

**Role title:**

**Reports to:**

**Salary range:**

### **About *company name***

*This should include a brief paragraph that gives an overview of the organisation, and a brief paragraph that gives an overview of the team.*

### **About the role**

This is a rewarding and stretching role that gives you the opportunity to work with and positively influence young people who are facing challenging circumstances.

You will be the key worker and coach for a number of young people, who are residents in our Foyer accommodation and learning centre. Taking an asset-based approach, you will coach them to identify and grow their skills, strengths and talents, helping them to transition into adulthood while keeping safeguarding principles and practices at the core of the work you do. As a Foyer Coach, you will:

- Coach young people to develop the tools and methods needed to navigate the ups and downs of adulthood, including managing crises, developing a strong network, and entering education, employment and training.
- Seek young people's views, concerns, ideas and aspirations and actively involve young people in service-level decisions.
- Work proactively and creatively alongside young people to develop their assets.
- Innovate and deliver group or one-to-one sessions that provide a platform for young people's assets and skills to be recognised and developed.
- Facilitate progression planning, allowing the young person to lead on identifying goals and actions.
- Share responsibility for housing management, including handling enquiries and resident interviews, with the rest of our friendly team.

## **About you**

We're looking for a person who is passionate about young people, and who thrives in a fast-paced environment where two days are never the same! You will have experience of engaging others with energy and passion, and will have an unshakeably positive, can-do attitude with a high level of resilience.

A confident and capable communicator, you will demonstrate an understanding of and ability to use a range of methods to achieve positive results. You will have plenty of examples of times you've inspired or engaged people and enhanced learning through thoughtful reflective practices and taking positive risks.

As a natural people person and team player, you'll have the ability to build strong relationships both within the Foyer team and across connected organisations. You'll be excited by the chance to develop and implement savvy new ideas to improve the service. An excellent planner, you won't bat an eye at having several competing priorities to manage at the same time.

## **Why work with us**

*This is an opportunity to showcase the benefits of working for the organisation besides the salary. This might include the opportunity to make a difference to young people, the feel-good factor of the work, opportunities for training and professional development, progression routes, and the opportunity to be connected to a professional community and network through membership of the Foyer Federation.*



## Foyer Coach job advert (short) ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Are you an enthusiastic, proactive, creative and empathetic person with a passion for inspiring people? Are you a positive, people-oriented team player who thrives on getting the best deal possible for young people experiencing homelessness and developing their strengths and talents?

If so, insert company here has an exciting opportunity for a Foyer Coach.

**Role title:**

**Reports to:**

**Salary range:**

### **About company name**

*This should include a brief paragraph that gives an overview of the organisation, a brief paragraph that gives an overview of the team, and some information about the benefits of working for the organisation.*

### **About the role**

This rewarding, stretching role gives you the opportunity to work with and positively influence young people who are facing challenging circumstances. You will be the key worker and coach for a number of young people. You will:

- Coach young people to develop the tools and methods needed to transition into independence.
- Prioritise young people's safety and wellbeing at all times.
- Actively involve young people in service-level decisions.
- Work proactively and creatively alongside young people to develop their assets.
- Innovate and deliver group or one-to-one sessions.
- Facilitate progression planning, allowing the young person to lead on identifying goals and actions.
- Share responsibility for housing management.

### **About you**

We're looking for someone who is passionate about young people, thrives in a fast-paced environment, and has an unshakeably positive, can-do attitude with a high level of resilience. You will be:

- A confident, capable communicator with knowledge of a range of methods.
- Able to inspire others and enhance learning through reflection and positive risk-taking.
- A natural people-person and team player.
- Excited by developing and implementing savvy new ideas.
- Unfazed by having several competing priorities to manage.
- Able to use technology in day-to-day work.

## Foyer Coach application form



*The purpose of these questions is to help you quickly identify whether someone is likely to be a good cultural fit for the organisation before you bring them in for an interview. Each question should allow an answer of up to 250 words to keep time spent reviewing to a useful minimum. Consider accepting video or audio applications as well.*

*Set clear criteria for scoring the answers beforehand. Use a different member of your recruitment team to score each question keeping the names anonymous, ie Gill would score all the Question 1's and Tim all the question 2's separately. Then pull all the scores together to reach a shortlist. This ensures a fair and accurate process.*

*They have been written with five key traits in mind:*

- 1. Do they put young people at the centre of their solutions?*
- 2. Are they reflective and self-aware?*
- 3. Do they have the ability to plan and run a successful session with young people?*
- 4. Are they able to identify and grow young people's strengths?*
- 5. Can they keep their cool and manage a crisis?*

*The questions should be accompanied by the following and anonymised for review:*

- Personal details*
- Contact details*
- Qualifications if needed*
- Eligibility questions*
- Diversity and inclusion questions*

**Question 1:** Give an example of a time you successfully coached someone to achieve a goal or target. Outline the goal-setting process, how you helped them to reach the goal, and what about your involvement made this a success.

**Question 2:** Tell us about a session or workshop you have run. Focus on the things that were most difficult and the mistakes you made, including any learnings from this experience.

**Question 3:** How do you work with people to help them identify and grow their skills and talents? Can you provide an example of where you coached someone to take a positive risk to help them develop? What steps did you take to keep them safe and promote their wellbeing?

**Question 4:** Describe a time you managed a complex issue with a number of conflicting viewpoints. What happened? What were the key considerations? What action did you take? What was the result?

## Application scorecard template



*As far as possible, all applications should be reviewed at the same time to reduce the risk of becoming biased in favour of an early applicant. Applications should be anonymised before review – the candidate reference could be a collection of numbers and letters, but ideally shouldn't be based on the candidate's name.*

*Each panel member should score by question rather than by candidate, so all of the Q1 answers first, then Q2, then Q3 and so on. You might choose to have a different panel member per question. Objective scores should be given using the criteria below.*

### **Role:**

**Panel member:**

### **Scoring criteria:**

- 1 – no evidence or fails to meet requirements
- 2 – little evidence with significant gaps
- 3 – limited evidence with some gaps
- 4 – satisfactory evidence, meets minimum requirements
- 5 – strong display of evidence

Candidate ref.	Q1 score	Q2 score	Q3 score	Q4 score	Q5 score	Total
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

## Advantaged Thinking selection



A two-stage interview process gives you flexibility and time to find out everything you need to know about your candidates, and to give them a chance to decide whether they feel a connection with the role and organisation. There are a range of options you might choose to use – some of which are included here.

### **Phone screening**

A phone screening has many benefits as the first stage in your selection process. You may choose to use a phone call (this has the plus of being 'blind' to reduce bias, and accessible for people who may not have access to Wi-Fi) or a video chat, which most people have experience of using following the pandemic. The latter is also more accessible for deaf and hard of hearing people and enables you to read body language.

Phone screenings are more accessible to people with caring responsibilities or disabilities, and to those who face financial barriers. They're also a time saver for both the interviewer and interviewee as they give you a chance to filter out people who aren't right for the role without the larger investment of a face-to-face interview.

Members of our network have also found that a first-stage phone screening can reduce the risk of no-shows when you reach the in-person stage.

### **In-person interview**

At some point in the process, it's important to get the candidates into the service to get a feel for them in the environment of the role. A face-to-face interview is a great chance to do this. There are several components you might consider including in this stage:

#### **1. Competency questions**

This is the classic question-and-answer interview style, with questions designed to target the key skills, experience and competencies required for the role.

Inclusivity best practice is to ask the same questions in the same format to every candidate so you can score their responses objectively. Some follow-ups and probing are okay, but try to avoid unintentionally giving hints to some and not others.

The panel should ideally consist of the hiring manager and their manager (the grandparent principle). You might consider having a third person too, such as a resident or, if you're recruiting into a managerial role, someone who will report to them.

#### **2. Skills demonstration**

A skills demonstration is a practical way to check whether a candidate has the skills needed for the role. They often give a candidate the chance to



prepare beforehand. It gives you an opportunity to see how each candidate tackles a challenge and to observe how they work in a way that's more representative of reality than a traditional interview.

It also gives candidates who may not be experienced or comfortable in an interview setting, or who struggles with their nerves, an opportunity to show their abilities, so you're less likely to miss out on a fantastic candidate for reasons unrelated to their suitability and potential.

Examples of practical skills tests you can do include:

- Giving a presentation
- Questions the candidate can prepare for beforehand
- A task involving data, budgets, rotas or safeguarding challenges
- Holding a short session with young people
- Reviewing your service's marketing materials or website
- Planning a project based on a shared brief

When you include a skills demonstration in your interview, it's best to do this at the beginning to settle the candidate in and so they're not thinking about it the whole time you're interviewing them!

### **3. Youth involvement**

Involving young people is key to ensuring your process is Advantaged Thinking. Ideally, young people should be involved from an early stage and should have real decision-making power about the hire. This may be challenging depending on the level of autonomy you have over recruitment in the context of your wider organisation, so a bit of savviness and creative thinking might be needed to find a way.

Ideas for involving young people in the process include:

- Shaping the role profile and person specification
- Setting questions for the application form and/or interview, or choosing which questions to ask if you have a pre-approved list
- Being part of the shortlisting panel
- Being part of the interview panel
- A separate interview panel of young people with their own questions
- Giving a tour of the service when candidates arrive
- Participating in and assessing a prepared workshop delivered by a candidate

### **4. Advantaged Thinking focus**

At some stage during the selection process, it's important to find out whether your candidate is an Advantaged Thinker who can work positively with young people. The Advantaged Thinking Core Skills template contains the 7 tests and some ways you can

spot each one in practice. However, because not everyone will know about Advantaged Thinking theory or the 7 tests, it's a good idea to include a set of questions or a task that gives candidates an opportunity to demonstrate how their beliefs align with the organisations.

The Advantaged Thinking Action Pack flash cards are a helpful tool to use during interviews. There are several cards per test, and each one includes a skill and a challenge or question to encourage reflection and exploration. Some ideas for using them include:

- Ask candidates to choose one at random and complete the challenge or answer the question
- Ask candidates to choose one at random and outline how they embody it
- Ask the candidates to choose one at random and suggest examples of how the skill might look in practice
- Before the interview, hand them the deck and ask them to choose three they feel they're strong at and three they find most challenging. Use this to frame a discussion

Other ideas include:

- Explain the 7 tests to the candidate and ask which they align with most strongly and why
- Explain the 7 tests to the candidate and ask them to score themselves 1-5 on how well they think they practice each one

Score these just as you would any other part of the interview, and keep an eye out for how the candidate shows Advantaged Thinking characteristics during the entire process to build a full picture.

## Interview scorecard template



*Candidates should be scored objectively based on the content of their answers, so have one panel member type while the other asks the questions. It's important to use the candidate's words rather than an interpretation or impression.*

*Scoring should happen as soon as practically possible after the interview, and certainly before you conduct another interview. This will avoid your memory of the first candidate being impacted by another.*

*The Advantaged Thinking scoring box below uses the same 1-5 scoring criteria as the interview questions part.*

**Role:**

**Candidate name:**

**Panel member:**

**Date:**

**Scoring criteria:**

- 1 – no evidence or fails to meet requirements
- 2 – little evidence with significant gaps
- 3 – limited evidence with some gaps
- 4 – satisfactory evidence, meets minimum requirements
- 5 – strong display of evidence

No.	Response to question	Score
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Advantaged Thinking test	Evidence	Score
Talk		
Understand		
Work		
Involve		
Believe		
Invest		
Challenge		

## Advantaged Thinking recruitment checklist (1/3) ● ● ●

- The role** has been designed with Advantaged Thinking principles in mind regarding:
  - The title
  - The focus of the role
  - How time will be spent for this person
  - How their success will be measured

### **The job description:**

- Has been written with positive and engaging language
- Includes the salary/salary range
- Only contains required skills and experience that is 100% necessary for someone in this role and *can not be trained on the job* – particularly:
  - Minimum education requirements
  - Minimum years of experience
  - Sector-specific experience
- includes Advantaged Thinking values and focuses
- Has been checked for age-coded language
- Has been run through a gender decoder to removed accidental bias
- Contains no jargon
- Has been run through the Hemingway app to ensure it is easy to read
- Includes images that represent diversity, if any
- The application form** contains targeted, specific questions is used in place of a generic cover letter and CV.
- Applications by video and audio are welcomed.
- The job advert** contains the salary range.
- The job advert contains positive language and clearly outlines Advantaged Thinking characteristics and traits.

## Advantaged Thinking recruitment checklist (2/3) ● ● ●

- Assess which audiences will be reached by advertising in different places and plan to access a diverse talent pool by using different job boards, professional networks and varied social media channels.
- Applications are:
  - Anonymised with all personal details (gender, age, address) removed
  - Reviewed by a diverse group of people
  - Scored objectively going a question at a time rather than a person at a time, ie all the questions 1s, then 2s, then 3s – not person A, then person B.
- Applications contain optional equal opportunities monitoring questions to enable the organisation to track the candidates it is/is not attracting, and to encourage people with disabilities to request any provisions they may need you to make.
- Consider adding a **first-stage phone or video interview** to further shortlist and reduce the financial burden on candidates.
- When contacting candidates to invite them to interview, encourage them to request any provisions they may need for disabilities or other challenges, eg childcare responsibilities. Offer evening slots and video interviews if you can.
- When **inviting candidates to interview**, include as much information as possible about what they can expect, including:
  - The names and roles of the people on the interview panel
  - How long the interview will take and the format
  - An overview of the subjects that will be covered and, if possible, questions they can prepare for beforehand
  - Directions for in-person interviews and a link for video ones
- Ensure your interview panel is diverse.
- Have an objective scoring system in place for the interview and ensure all interviewers score separately.
- Involve young people in the process as early as possible to shape the role and have influence over the recruitment process.
- Include an Advantaged Thinking section in the interview.



## Advantaged Thinking recruitment checklist (3/3)

- Encourage diversity and reduce no-shows by adding a phone screening stage at the beginning.
- Use a two-stage interview process.
- Include a skills demonstration to enable candidates who may not be at their best in an interview scenario to show their abilities differently.
- Give decision-making power to young people when choosing who to hire.
- Create a new starter checklist to help new colleagues find their feet, and set them up with a buddy who is not their line manager.
- Ensure you have a policy and procedure in place for report microaggressions and review this with the team so everyone is on the same page.

