

Please see below the summary of notes from the January 2026 Social Economy ROUNDTABLE meeting focused on Health and Social Care Social Economy Organisations:

Gen Z Is Redefining Recruitment and Service Delivery in the Social Economy – What are the implications for Sector Leaders and organisational delivery?

Executive Summary

By 2025, Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012) will comprise nearly 30% of the global workforce. This cohort brings distinct expectations shaped by digital nativity, economic uncertainty, and heightened social/environmental awareness. They prioritise purpose-driven work, flexibility, community, and transparent employer practices. As a result, social economy organisations must modernise recruitment, employer branding, and service delivery.

This has been such an interesting topic for our first Roundtable of 2026, encouraging reflection regarding how to recruit and support staff going forward, and very importantly, what these generational differences mean for inclusion and service delivery.

BSSEC would like to thank [Alison Smith](#) from [Roots HR | Charity HR Consultancy](#) for her tremendous insights into recruiting Gen Z. We would also like to thank one of our BSSEC directors [Mariam Yate](#) who shared her experiences of recruiting and employing Gen Z in her social business.

Understanding the Generational Differences

- Millennials emphasise job security; Gen Z emphasises purpose, balance, and growth.
- 82% of Gen Z prefer instant messaging and video over email.
- Gen Z prioritises financial security and career progression.

Gen Z expects immediacy, transparency, and meaningful impact. They are digital-first, socially aware, and highly values-driven.

What you need to be aware of when recruiting Gen Z; they generally have core values that need to be met when they are selecting work opportunities. They expect fast, mobile-friendly recruitment processes. We were told that if an online application process takes longer than 15 minutes, 92% will not complete it.

Gen Z are looking for:

- Work-life integration
- Purpose-driven work
- Growth and development
- Wellbeing support

How Gen Z Will Change Recruitment Going Forward

- There will need to be strong employer branding
- Fast, transparent processes, and be prepared for candidates to give you feedback on the process
- Personalised, human candidate experiences

Tools

Recommended By Roots HR: [hireful](#) – they support the not-for-profit sector with recruitment, including advertising and an Applicant Tracking System that can make administration and facilitation of a recruitment process, including an AI shortlisting tool, which allows for human review (so as not to fall foul of data protection legislation etc).

They also have useful resources on their website, including:

Blogs:

<https://www.hireful.com/blog/how-our-ai-shortlisting-works>

On-demand webinars:

<https://www.hireful.com/webinars> - Including topics such as using AI within your recruitment processes and building a great candidate experience

Adapting your recruitment strategies

- Emphasise values
- Provide flexibility
- Leverage technology
- Strengthen DEI
- Invest in talent development

Service delivery preferences

- Use of digital channels and live chat
- Importance of reviews and peer recommendations
- Omni-channel support
- Personalisation and authenticity

Discussion insights

Sector leaders emphasised the need to adapt to new funding routes, workforce expectations, and digital communication preferences. Gen Z's desire for collaborative environments and rapid feedback loops were highlighted.

Conclusion

Gen Z is reshaping recruitment and service delivery. Organisations must modernise processes, strengthen authenticity, and invest in inclusive, flexible working practices to attract and retain this generation.

Many thanks to our speakers and all who attended. It was a great session!