Student Internship Bureau 2011 case study

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Housing Trust: Organisational Challenge Internship, Summer 2011.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is an endowed charity that funds a large, UK-wide research and development programme. They seek to understand the root causes of social problems, to identify ways of overcoming them, and to show how social needs can be met in practice. Also based in York, The Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust is a registered housing association, managing around 2,500 homes, and is a registered provider of care services.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Housing Trust (JRF, JRHT) engaged with three University of York interns through the Student Internship Bureau over the summer of 2011, each assisting with different projects that responded to JRF and JRHT’s key strategic objectives. One project was managing the ‘organisational challenge’, which looked at ways for JRF and JRHT to cut costs and become more environmentally efficient.

Second year Criminology and Sociology student, Baxter Willis, was responsible for researching, promoting and delivering specific money saving schemes for the JRF and JRHT, with a strong focus on initiatives to reduce the organisation’s carbon footprint. With the help Baxter provided in investigating new cost cutting and ‘green’ ideas, as well as the work he undertook promoting the ‘organisational challenge’ internally across the whole organisation, JRF and JRHT made huge progress towards the goals they had set at the start of the year. As part of his internship Baxter was also able to provide valuable communications support to the Facilities and Knowledge Management team, which deals with health and safety, information services, and document and records management.

Julia Unwin, Chief Executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has said that ‘the internships provide a great opportunity for us as an organisation to promote a wider and greater understanding of the exciting work we do here, and to be more integrated into our local community’. Other internships conducted by University of York students in 2011 with JFR and JRHT included a project to create a framework to control and monitor the organisation’s policies and procedures, and a project to produce a strategy for delivering effective work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for students and young people within the organisation.