



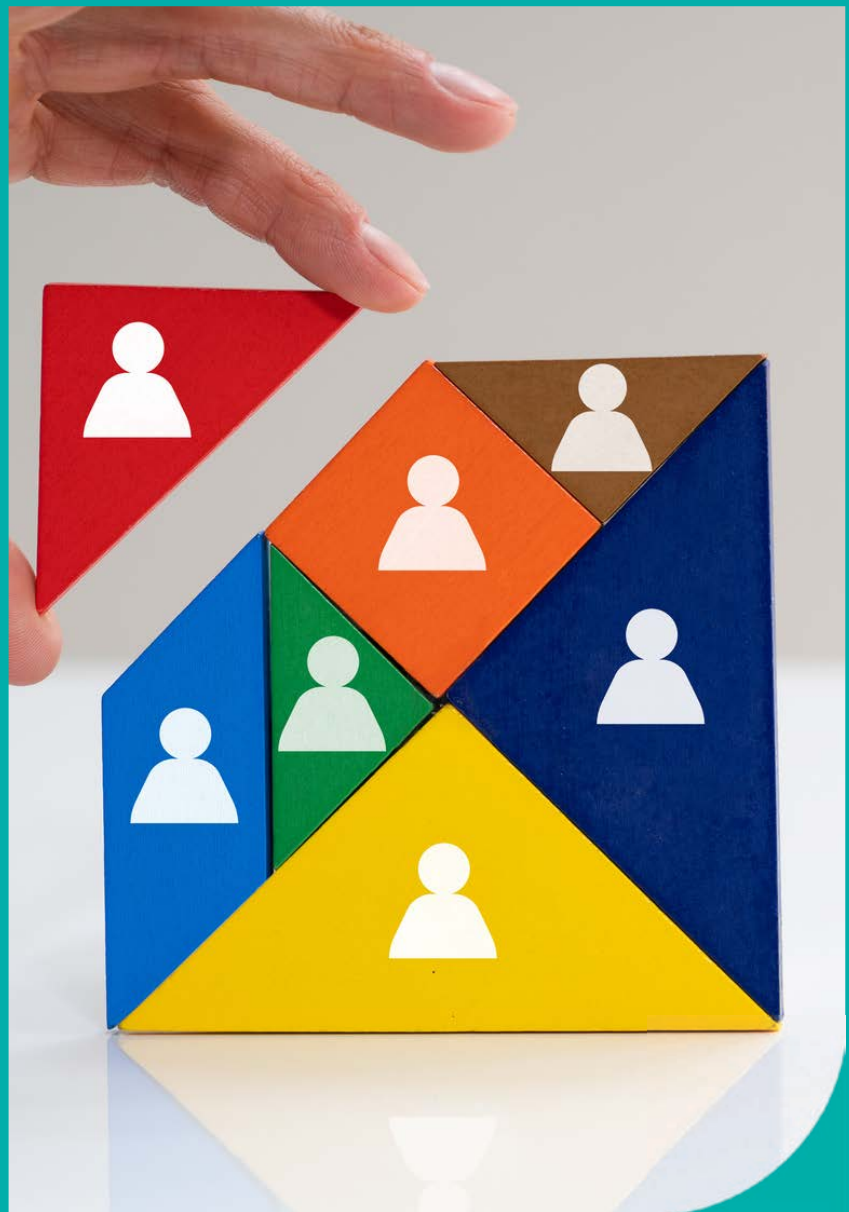
# Effective recruitment and selection

A manager's guide to effective  
recruitment and selection

face2faceHR

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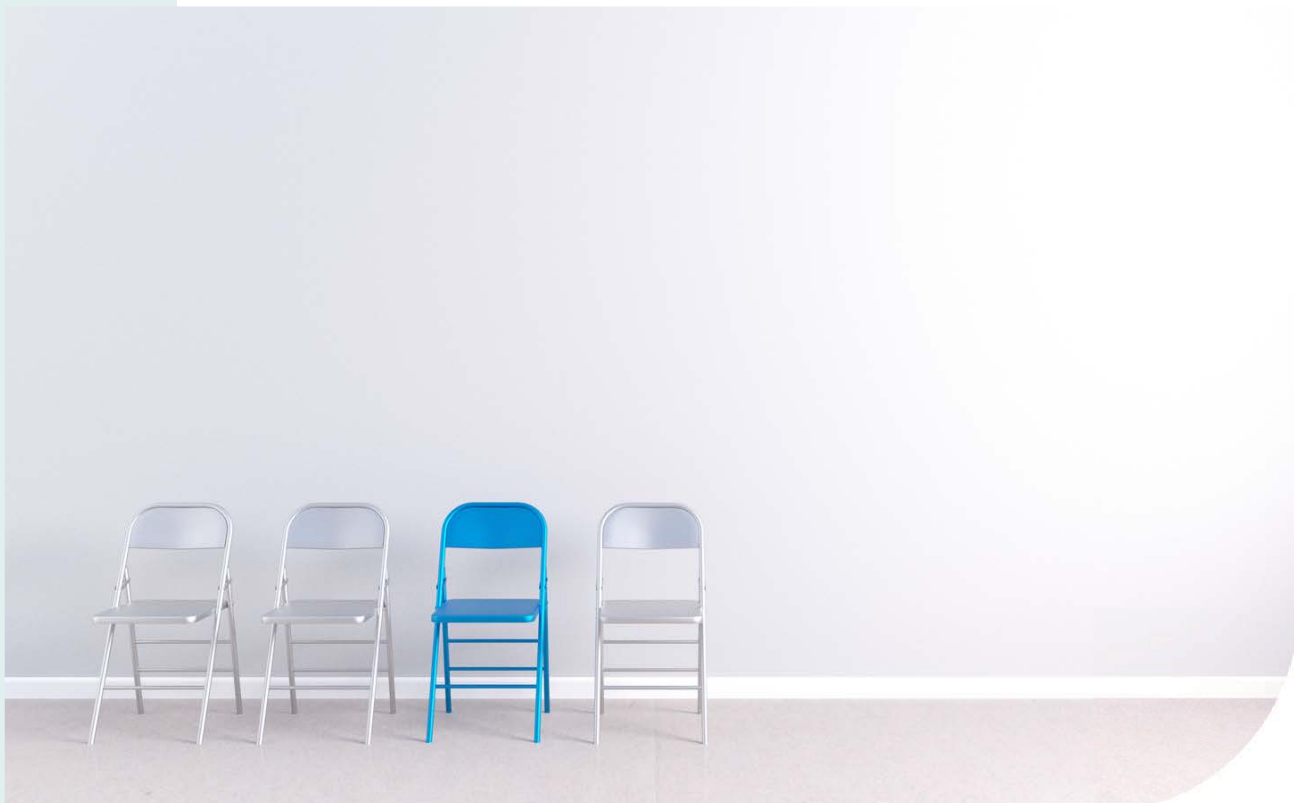
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# Introduction

Effective recruitment and selection is crucial to any business. Getting the right people to work with your team leads to higher achievement and increased profit margins. Getting it wrong can cost thousands of pounds in management time, lost productivity, a disrupted workforce and dismissal and re-recruitment costs.

This guide takes you through the recruitment process from start to finish, giving you the information you need to make sure you recruit high-performing, motivated and productive people for your business, in a cost-effective way. You will find practical tips on each stage of recruitment, from working out exactly what you need through to your new employee's first few months at work.



# Defining what you need

Often you will be recruiting for a vacancy following departure of the previous incumbent, and the temptation is to recruit an exact replacement. However prior to commencing recruitment it is a good idea to assess the job again to redefine your requirements. You may find you don't need to recruit to exactly the same job again. Before you start, the following points should be examined to maximise the effectiveness of your recruitment campaign and to ensure you meet the organisation's requirements.

## Do you need to recruit at all?

Look at what the previous postholder was doing, do you actually need someone doing that role? Technology, different ways of working, or different circumstances within your organisation may have overtaken the need you initially had. You may be able to save costs by reassigning the workload elsewhere, providing development opportunities for other staff, or subcontracting it out.



## Does the role need changing?

If it was a full-time role previously, does it still need to be? If the workload is adjusted or partially reassigned elsewhere, you may only have a part-time need. Does the role need to be at a different level? Look at how the role will fit with the rest of the organisation and adjust the level if that would work better.

## Find out what is needed

Get feedback from people who have an input or interest in the role you are looking at, such as colleagues or clients. Exit interviews with the previous incumbent may also provide helpful insight into how the role could be changed for the better.



# Guidelines for drafting job descriptions and person specifications

## Job Description

Once you have defined the role you need, you can write the job description. This will outline the role to be filled and detail the responsibilities involved.

Job Title	This should be a concise statement preferably no more than eight words.
Purpose	A simple concise sentence or two outlining why the job exists. No more than 50 words, less is better.
Reports to	Job Title of immediate manager - the person responsible for measuring performance, directing or allocating work.
Direct reports	Jobs (not names of people) which report to the job holder - for whom the job holder is responsible for managing and measuring performance.
Main Responsibilities	The broad areas of responsibility/accountability, usually a sentence or couple of sentences for each one. Ideally there should be no more than six to eight responsibilities.
Measures of performance	The means by which Job Holders' performance in their main responsibilities are measured. State the measures not the standard. Measures will relate to the job, standards will relate to the performance of a job holder and can vary on an individual basis.
	Examples: Quality of staff management; level of public awareness; achievement of targets (timeliness, quality, monetary); effectiveness of interpersonal style



# Person Specification

The person specification sets out the knowledge, skills and experience that are required. This needs to be accurate as this document will be used for shortlisting, interviewing and final selection. You should ensure that all the criteria you specify are justifiable and necessary for the role. You may wish to list criteria which are 'essential' and criteria which are 'desirable'.

Knowledge	This section could outline knowledge of IT software, office procedures or specific professional areas of knowledge required for the job.
Skills/attributes	This section outlines the personal attributes the candidate will need in order to perform the job. Try to be as specific as possible. For example 'good interpersonal skills' is vague and open to wide interpretation. Think about why the person needs these skills, what do you actually require them to do for this role. It may be liaising effectively with a wide range of people, or presenting proposals in a logical manner. The more specific you can be, the more effective your selection of candidates will be.
Qualifications	Formal qualifications from a professional awarding body, degrees, diplomas, NVQs, licenses should be listed here, together with level of education required. When listing formal qualifications, where possible add 'or equivalent' to recognise similar level qualifications from other awarding bodies i.e. this does not exclude applicants of different ages or across different nationalities. Remember to only ask for qualifications or standards of education if they are actually necessary for the role. There may be roles for which a degree in a specific subject may be necessary to perform the job, but you must be able to specify which type of degree is necessary and if questioned be able to explain why this is necessary to perform the role. Think instead about what you actually need in terms of skills. Abilities which may have been gained from studying for a degree could also have been gained elsewhere.
Experience	When outlining experience needed, avoid giving a required number of years. Individuals learn at different rates, and this could also constitute age discrimination. Instead think about what you would specifically like people to have had experience of, specific tasks, projects or responsibilities. i.e. 'demonstrable experience in, or sound knowledge or as examples.
Circumstances	You could include here information about potential flexibility of the role in terms of working hours, where the role is based, any travel required. Avoid requiring candidates to be able to drive unless absolutely necessary. Specifying a need for the ability to travel regularly around a specific area will convey what you need and will enable those candidates who are disabled or unable to drive for another reason to propose how they could do the job without a car.





# Sourcing candidates

When deciding how you are going to source your candidates, you need to think about the following:

- What is your budget for recruitment?
- What is your timescale?
- How much time do you have for dealing with recruitment administration?
- What type of job is it?
- What are the job search behaviours of the candidates you would like to attract?

This section contains information about some of the different methods you can use to source your candidates, with advantages and disadvantages for each one to enable you to make the right decision for the role you are recruiting to.

When deciding how to source your candidates, bear in mind that your goal is not necessarily to reach the largest number of people, but to reach a well-defined and targeted audience so that you get the right number of suitable applicants.

## Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre plus is a similar service to a recruitment agency, but is free of charge, so can be a good option if you have little or no budget for your recruitment. However it is worth bearing in mind that the audience it reaches may be limited – many candidates who are looking to move on from an existing role may not look here for their next career move.

Visit [www.jobcentreplusoffices.co.uk](http://www.jobcentreplusoffices.co.uk) for more information on this service.

## Internet recruitment

Choosing the right recruitment website will help target your search effectively in a large market. Usually for a fee, you can place your vacancy on the chosen website, and applicants can then apply online if you have this facility, or download information to enable them to apply. As many candidates perform searches to find suitable roles for them, think about the wording used and job title of your role, you may want to think about standardising them to ensure that candidates performing searches for roles such as the one you are recruiting to are always linked to your post.

There are websites dedicated to specific sectors, but websites which are not sector specific may also meet your needs.

Disadvantages of internet recruitment can include a large number of irrelevant or poor quality applicants, adding to your administrative burden.

## Social Media

Social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter are increasingly popular methods of promoting current vacancies and reaching both active and passive candidates in a fast and either completely free or (if using a premium service) a certainly more cost effective way.

If utilised correctly, social media has many advantages and is great for generating direct applications and referrals – social media networks allow companies to engage easily with candidates and to help identify whether the candidate is a good cultural fit for the company or not.

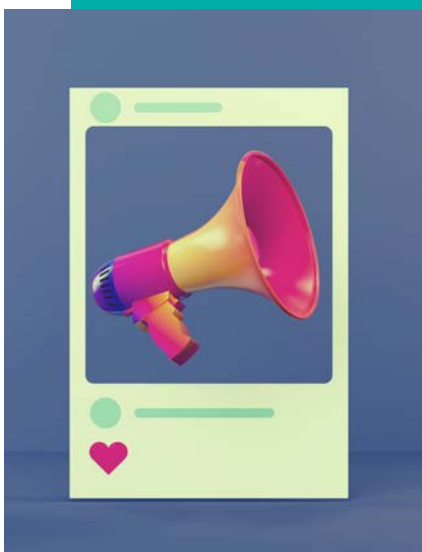


The key to social media recruitment is not about using it as a job-advertising platform, but using it to build and promote the employer brand. The competition on such sites is fierce and connecting with and engaging potential candidates ahead of any recruitment campaign will help to provide a competitive advantage.

Social media recruitment should be a direction not a destination for the advertisement of vacancies i.e. any social media recruitment advertising should be short, intriguing, engaging and direct the candidate to a main company website/job advertisement or details on how to find more detailed information about the role and requirements.

Whereas there are many benefits to using social media in a recruitment strategy, it is not advised to use it as a single point plan as recruiting (or assessing) potential recruits as it can exclude people who do not have access to these facilities or who are not 'connected' to the sites you are using.

Care should also be taken in not assessing someone's potential suitability/employability based on their online profile/presence alone as this could lead the door wide open for discrimination claims and/or unethical practices.





## CV Databases

Many job boards now allow candidates to upload their CV to a database, which for a fee, you can search directly by typing in key search words in line with your requirements.

Fees vary depending on which database you choose (careful thought needs to be given on where your candidates are 'likely' to upload their details); however many providers will offer a free trial service before you commit to purchasing credits – so it is certainly worthwhile to utilise this in establishing the best provider for your company.

If recruiting for multiple roles, this can be a more cost effective method than using recruitment agencies (and 'taps' into the same information they are using), but still requires a lot of the administrative burden that comes with direct sourcing i.e. validating and screening candidates prior to interview, arranging interviews and providing feedback directly to candidates.

CV databases are simple, quick and easy to use. The challenge however is that there are now so many job boards and/or CV databases to use, it is often difficult to establish which one will reach out to the desired candidates you are looking for.

Another challenge is that everyone who has access to the CV database has access to the same information and candidates, so competition can be high.

CV databases can reach out to active and passive candidates (some CV postings can date back 6+ months ago). However, it provides you with direct access to the candidate, so you can tailor a targeted approach in contacting and engaging a potential recruit.

Utilising the search functions on such CV databases is crucial in maximising the potential candidate pool i.e. when searching for key words, this highlights words used in the candidates CV (such as job title or experience). It is therefore important that you also search for alternative words that may have been used to describe a similar role in a different organisation.





## Newspaper or magazine advertisements

### Where to advertise?

Press advertising has the advantage of reaching large audiences, however there is also the disadvantage that there is often a great deal of wastage, in terms of how much of the readership will actually be interested in the role you are advertising.

Advertising in the right publication can help you target your audience more accurately, and enquiries about make-up of readership prior to placing the advertisement will help make this decision. You should also think about your ideal potential audience in terms of things like geographical coverage and whether sector, trade or occupational publications are appropriate for your role.

### Other problems

It usually takes longer to recruit this way than some other methods, the administrative burden is usually high, and you do incur a cost whether your campaign is successful or not. Researching about what the job seeking behaviour of your target audience is will help you decide whether advertising is the right method and where to place an advertisement.

## Writing an effective recruitment advertisement

### Principles

When designing your advertisement you are trying to achieve neither too many unsuitable responses, nor too few with suitable qualifications.

You need to:

- communicate effectively with a selected audience, achieved with the correct media;
- produce an adequate response, by describing the job and the requirements of the suitable applicants accurately and effectively;
- minimise wastage which will happen if you fail to target either a relevant medium or the correct audience within that medium because of a poor advertisement;
- build the image of your organisation.

## What to include in an ad

### The job title and main responsibilities

The job title should be clearly understood and unambiguous, and there should be a brief summary of the main duties involved.

### The name of the organisation

A lack of information about who the employer will be is likely to result in a lower response. Unless it is a well-known organisation, some brief information about what the organisation does should also be given

### Person specification

Key qualities of the person required should appear, particularly those which are essential. This will enable those who will definitely not be suitable to 'self-select' themselves out, minimising unsuitable applications.

### Rewards

Salary or salary range should be stated. Advertisements which use statements like 'attractive salary' or 'salary negotiable' result in lower response rates. Potential applicants may come to the conclusion that if the salary really was 'attractive' the actual figure or scale would be advertised. Other benefits available or intrinsic rewards such as training and development opportunities could also be mentioned.

### Location and travel requirements

Place of work should be stated as well as any travel requirements. As in the person specification, for discrimination purposes do not state 'must be able to drive' or similar, instead give the specific travel requirements you have in terms of frequency and geographical range.

### Action required

You should be clear about how the applicant should apply, what the deadline is and if possible, a potential start date and/or timescale for the recruitment campaign, to avoid lots of telephone calls from applicants who are unsure by when they should have heard about their application.



## Recruitment agencies

### Types of agency

Recruitment agencies consist of 'high street' agencies dealing mainly in manual workers and white collar staff up to supervisor level; agencies or consultancies specialising in technical, management and professional staff; and executive search consultants, specialising in very senior positions. You will need to decide which type of agency is most suited to the vacancy you are filling. Agencies are often the first port of call for candidates looking for their next career move, so you should reach a good range of suitable applicants for your role. Agencies also have the benefit of good knowledge of the recruitment market which can be invaluable if you don't recruit often or are recruiting a specialist role.

*To get the most out of the process, ensure that you communicate with the agency in terms of what your requirements and expectations are.*

## Communicating with the agency

It is advisable to send the agency a copy of the role and person specification for the vacancy and provide further information about the context of the role and company i.e. what information will help 'sell' the role and company to potential applicants.

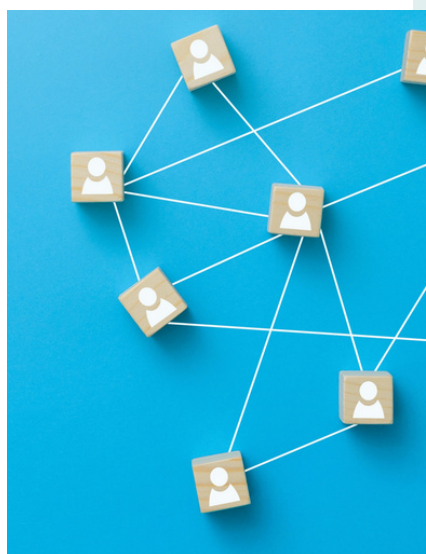
Be realistic with the agency about your expectations and set timeframes for feedback and updates. What are your ideal timescales for the recruitment process; how many CVs are you hoping to see; when will you provide feedback etc. This will help prevent agencies chasing you on a daily basis or not contacting you regularly enough.

Remember regular feedback is not only important for the 'candidate experience' of your recruitment process, but also provides valuable information to the agency in terms of refreshing their search criteria on a regular basis.



## Where will candidates come from?

Agencies often have a database of applicants which they can search and will often also advertise for candidates for your role and shortlist on your behalf. Agency recruitment will often save you time and effort in this respect and the candidates who are put forward for the role should all be fairly suitable and targeted to the requirements you have specified – you should not get lots of unsuitable applications as you may get if you advertise.



## Agency fees

Agencies can be more expensive than other recruitment methods, however bear in mind that a large proportion of the administrative burden of recruitment will be taken away from you by appointing an agency, and you would normally pay nothing unless a candidate is successfully appointed to the role.

Ensure you agree terms before you appoint an agency. Most agencies will have standard terms and conditions, involving a fee expressed as a percentage of the salary for the role being recruited. It is worth trying to negotiate these fees if you can, some agencies will give a discount to voluntary sector organisations for example, or if you have several roles you wish to recruit.

There is usually a structure of partial fee reimbursement should the candidate leave employment within a short period of time, and as with fees, it is also worthwhile to try and negotiate a longer rebate period wherever possible.

## Networks

Depending on the industry you are working in you may find informal networks can be effective for sourcing candidates. These have the advantage of a much targeted audience, eliminating the problem of too many unsuitable applicants, and also very low recruitment costs.

However the audience is not wide, meaning that you may be missing out on good potential candidates who either are not currently within your sector or do not have access to your networks. You may find networks are a good recruitment tool to use together with an advertisement or agency reaching a wider audience.

## The application process

You need to decide what the application process for candidates will be. This section outlines some of the options available to you with advantages and disadvantages; discussing application forms and CVs; what information you need to provide to candidates and how to do this; and tracking applications.

### Application forms

A well designed application form used for applications has the following benefits:

- It can be designed to gather information specific to the selection criteria you have defined.
- All applicants are required to provide the same information.
- Comparison of information is easier as information is all presented in the same way.

- Equal opportunities monitoring is easier as the forms can be designed to remove from consideration any information which may be a source of discrimination, for example information about sex, ethnic origin, age.

However if you are placing an advertisement you need to think about how candidates will access the application form and other information.



## CVs

Requesting a CV with covering letter can bring the following benefits to your recruitment process:

- They can facilitate a speedy recruitment process in a tight market, as candidates do not have to contact you for an application form.
- They are generally preferred by candidates, some of whom may have a good up to date CV ready but may be put off applying for a vacancy if there is a lengthy form to complete.
- There is more freedom within this format for a candidate to 'sell' their skills and experience and how they choose to do so may give you more of an insight into the candidate than a standardised application form.
- It could be said that a covering letter accompanying a CV may give you an idea of the candidate's work (although you have no guarantee the letter was written by the candidate).



## Information for candidates

You should decide at the beginning of the recruitment campaign what information you would like candidates to have access to in order to facilitate their applications.

You may decide if you have a website that the information you have about your organisation on there is sufficient. However depending on the vacancy there may be additional information which would be useful for candidates in enabling them to decide whether they are suitable for the position and whether your organisation is somewhere they would like to work.

Providing additional information like this can reduce the number of unsuitable applications you get.

## Using your website

The best way for candidates to access an application form, if applicable, and other information they might need is to have an application pack for the role available for them to download on your website. This could include:

- Job description and person specification.
- Application form (if using one).
- Summary of terms and conditions of employment, for example salary and/or salary scale, Annual leave entitlements, any other benefits.
- Information about the organisation.
- Details about the recruitment process, including when and where interviews will be, expected start date, details of how candidates will hear if they are successful.



## Tracking applications

You may find it useful to have a system set up for tracking applications, particularly if you expect a large number.

This can be a very simple system such as a spreadsheet, enabling you to list all applications you receive and track them through the process so you can check off and see at a glance which applicant has been shortlisted/received rejection letters and reached different stages in the process.

This is very useful particularly if the closing date to appointment timescale is fairly long and you may get enquiries from applicants; being able to see at a glance what stage you are at and what correspondence each applicant has been sent makes dealing with these enquiries much easier and also give a better impression of your organisation.



# Shortlisting

This section provides guidance on shortlisting candidates for interview and a template example shortlisting criteria grid which you can adapt for your vacancy.

## Tips for effective shortlisting

### What should be the criteria for shortlisting?

The criteria for shortlisting would normally be those things you have put in the person specification section of the job description.

Here you would have listed those skills, personal attributes and experiences you require the candidate to have, so you should assess each application against those to decide who to shortlist.

You may have 'essential' and 'desirable' criteria listed, and if you have too many candidates who achieve all the essential criteria you can shorten your list using the desirable criteria.

A good way of ensuring you shortlist fairly is to list all the criteria on a grid, and measure each candidate against each criterion, filling in the grid as you go. You can use a scoring system or simply make notes.

### Who should shortlist?

Ideally shortlisting should be done by more than one person, preferably the individual who is 'owning' the recruitment, together with someone else who will be involved in the interviewing process or has an input or interest in the role.



### Comparing candidates

Remember you should always compare each candidate to the criteria you have decided upon, not to each other. This way you will end up with a fair and appropriate shortlist; all of the candidates you have selected should match up with the criteria, and any candidate who did not match up at least to the 'essential' criteria will have been rejected.

### How many?

You would normally expect to shortlist up to six people for interview, however you should not feel you have to 'find' this many people to interview if there are not that many suitable applications. If you have decided on some 'essential' criteria for the role when drafting the person specification, these should remain as essential.





# Example criteria grid to adapt to your vacancy

## CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT

Job title:

Candidate

Assessor

Criteria	Score	Comment

Assessor's summary

Scoring (Using scale of 1-5, where 5 is high)

- 1: no credible experience
- 2: some experience
- 3: reasonable amount of good experience
- 4: lot of good experience
- 5 excellent relevant experience

Recommend for interview? (please circle)  
YES NO

# Interviewing

This section provides guidance on interviewing, including deciding on interviewers; preparing for an interview; things to remember during an interview; second interviews; and also some guidance on other selection methods you could consider.

## *Who should interview?*

Managers should not interview alone unless this is unavoidable. This is for two reasons; firstly to provide a useful second opinion on the candidate and the answers they have given; and secondly to protect you as a manager and the organisation.

Unsuccessful candidates can legally challenge a recruitment decision if they feel there has been some discrimination in the recruitment process, and your position is much better protected in the unlikely event this happens if there were two interviewers present.



*Ideally the other interviewer would be someone else who will have involvement with the post or input into the recruitment decision, but someone who can provide a second opinion or even just witness the interview and take notes would be fine.*

# Preparation for the interview

## Information for candidates

Ensure candidates invited for interview are informed of the following:

- Location, timing and anticipated length of the interview.
- How to get there; include a map if necessary or directions.
- What they should bring in terms of documents if any.
- Who they should ask for on arrival.
- Who will be conducting the interview (names and job titles).
- Details of any presentation or test involved.
- Your willingness to cater for specific requirements, for example due to disability. Details of how they should inform you of any special requirements.

*Make sure you allow plenty of time for interviews and for a bit of over-running too*



## Logistics to think about

- Prepare the interview room properly, with water available to drink.
- Avoid sitting behind a desk if possible – this can be confrontational or put up a barrier between you and the candidate.
- Ensure there will be no interruptions.
- Brief other members of staff, for example receptionists.
- Allow plenty of time for each interview.



## Writing interview questions

### Deciding what to ask about

Use the criteria you outlined when writing the person specification to develop your questions. If you have specified certain skills, experience or personal attributes as being essential or desirable to the job, ensure you have a question which will enable or prompt the candidate to demonstrate how they meet those criteria.

### What to avoid

- Closed questions, which allow the candidate to give very short limited answers, and are limited in the amount of information they give you.
- Hypothetical' questions, instead ask for specific actual examples of what the candidate has previously done.
- Changing questions for each candidate. Ask each candidate the same set of questions to ensure each has the same opportunity to demonstrate their suitability. If you need to ask follow up questions or questions clarifying specific things on a candidate's application, these are fine.
- Irrelevant questions which could be seen as discriminatory, such as asking whether a candidate has children, is planning children, or how they will manage childcare.

### What are 'behavioural' type questions and why do they work?

A good rule to remember is that past behaviour is by far the most reliable indicator of future behaviour. If you ask a candidate for his/her opinion on how they would deal with a certain situation, they will provide you with the answer they think you would like to hear, and give their version of the 'ideal' way to behave in those circumstances.

If, however you ask the candidate to give a specific example of a time when they were previously in a similar situation and ask them to explain how they dealt with it, you will get a much better idea of how the candidate is likely to deal with such a situation in the future. It is also much more difficult to make up an actual situation that happened than to come up with a hypothetically ideal way of behaving. This means the information you are getting is likely to be more reliable.

You can also follow on from asking for examples of past behaviour by exploring with the candidate why they dealt with the situation in that way, whether they feel they would do anything different in the same situation again, and what they learnt from the experience. A hypothetical 'what would you do if...' scenario does not give you this opportunity.

## During an interview

### Structure

Start by welcoming the candidate and putting them at ease. Introduce yourself and other panel members, and explain what the structure of the interview will be.

Ensure you have decided beforehand which of the interviewers will ask which questions to avoid confusion.

When you have finished asking questions, ensure the candidate has an opportunity to ask any questions themselves.

Make sure the candidate is informed about what the next steps in the process are and when and how they will hear the outcome.

### Other things to bear in mind when interviewing

Avoid making your mind up within a few minutes of meeting the candidate, as your opinion is likely in this case to be based on appearance or shared views and experiences rather than ability to do the job.

If you provide information about terms and conditions of employment, be sure that this is accurate. If you are not sure about these and you are asked, do not speculate, but tell the candidate you will check and let them know, and ensure you do.



## Second interview

For some posts it may be a good idea to hold second interviews, usually on a later date soon after the first interviews.

Try and keep at least one interviewer from the first interviews if possible, in addition to a new interviewer who could be someone more senior, or someone else who has an input into the recruitment decision.

It is essential that you only put forward individuals for second interview who have a realistic chance of being successful. Do not feel you must second interview a certain number of candidates whether or not they have met the criteria during the first interview.

*Ensure you keep good notes recording what was said during the interviews and how the decision was made, and nothing else.*



## Other selection methods

Interviewing alone is not always the most reliable indicator of the best candidate for the job. Depending on the role you are recruiting you may want to consider some other selection methods as part of your recruitment process.

### Practical tests

These could be a case study to give feedback on, or an 'in-tray' type exercise, or a typing test. The test should always be relevant to the job in question.

### Psychometric tests

These tests are administered by a qualified person and often require a fee for their use. They can be used to assess skills such as problem solving, decision making and interpersonal skills.

### Presentations

These would help you assess the candidate's presentation and verbal communication skills and/or their knowledge on a specific subject.



Things to bear in mind if you are considering using any of these alternative methods of selection

- Ensure you know which criteria, as defined in the person specification, you are assessing with each test.
- Don't use irrelevant tests, for example if someone is unlikely to be required to make presentations as part of the job, it is unlikely to be relevant to require a presentation as part of the assessment.
- Make sure you make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates.

# Sample interview questions

Thinking of interview questions can be difficult. You need ones that will cover all the information you need and make sure you get your candidates talking about the things you want to hear with examples of their past experience. It's important you ask at least one question to cover each item on your person specification so that you can be sure all candidates will have to address each criteria.

Below you will find lists of questions grouped into a number of different topics that recruiters often need to cover when interviewing.



## Intro, CV

- Please pick out from your cv the skills and experience you have gained which you feel is most appropriate to this role.
- How do you think this role fits in with your career plans or development goals?
- Talk us through what you have been doing in your previous role which is particularly relevant to this role.



## Events

- Describe an event you have been involved in organising from conception to delivery
- Tell me how you set about planning the timeline for the last event you organised
- Describe a crisis or difficult situation that occurred on the day of an event you were running. How did you deal with it and would you deal with it differently or do anything differently to avoid the same situation occurring again?
- Can you give an example of a particularly high profile event you have organised? What particular issues arose due to the high profile nature and how did you deal with these?
- Tell us about the largest event you have ever been involved with. What problems did you encounter and what would you change next time?



## Admin

- Give me an example of some of the systems you have been responsible for maintaining and describe how you did this.
- Describe any systems you have been responsible for initiating and setting up yourself.
- Can you describe a situation where you have been responsible for supporting a team remotely. What were the particular issues you encountered because of this and how did you deal with them?
- Have you had a situation where the person whose diary you are managing has been suddenly called away and has no idea when they will be back, e.g. for personal reasons. How did you deal with it?
- Can you describe a situation where you have been responsible for managing the diaries of several individuals. Did that present any particular challenges and how did you deal with them?
- Can you talk us through a situation when you have been responsible for providing admin support for a team. What challenges did this present and how did you deal with them?

## Team working

- What is the best team you have worked in and what made it work?
- What role do you like to play in a team?
- Can you describe the last team you worked in? What was your role within it and what do you think made it successful?
- Tell me about the size and structure of the last team you led.
- Tell me about a time you led a team through a large project.
- What support would you expect to get from your team?
- Can you think of a time when you were part of an unsuccessful team? Why was it unsuccessful and what do you think with hindsight you could have done to remedy the situation?
- What steps have you taken in the past to establish yourself with a new team?



## Building relationships & interpersonal skills

- Can you give an example of a situation when you have had to develop and maintain excellent external relationships? What particular issues did this bring and how did you deal with them?
- Tell me about a time when you had to build a relationship with a difficult company or colleague. How did you approach it?
- Can you tell us about a time when you have had to deal with a particularly difficult person/customer/colleague. How did you resolve the situation?
- Give an example of how you have reacted to a colleague who seemed to be over-worked or stressed.
- Have you been in a situation where you have had to liaise closely with staff based in another region? What challenges did this present and how did you approach the situation?



## Communication

- Have you ever had to communicate a message to a wide range of people? What different methods did you use to ensure effective communication of the message across the board?
- Can you give me an example of when you have written an important letter to a client? How did you ensure the message was clear and appropriately communicated?
- Describe a time when you have had to communicate a complicated idea to another person or team. How did you go about this? What was your strategy to ensure they understood and how did you check that they had understood?

## Project working

- Can you describe a recent project you worked on? What was your role? Is there anything you would approach differently in the future?
- Tell me how you communicate with your present manager concerning project progress, concerns and suggestions.
- Describe a time in your present role where you've had to motivate and drive project participants. How did you do this and how did you deal with any decline in motivation?
- Can you tell us about a project that you have worked on that was particularly successful? What was the part you played in it?

## Negotiation/influencing

- Can you give an example of when you have had to negotiate with someone more senior than yourself. What were the challenges and what was the outcome?
- Have you ever had to liaise with two different sides of a potential conflict? How did you manage the situation effectively?
- Describe a situation when you were given a deadline by someone with higher levels of authority which could not possibly be met. How did you handle it?
- Tell us about a time when you have had to convince a colleague of your point of view. What positive messages and benefits did you outline and why?
- Tell us about the types of negotiating and influencing situations you have been involved in. How did you approach them and what specifically did you do to ensure success?
- Can you think of a time when you were championing an unpopular position and had to give up your cause? At what point did you know you needed to do this?

## Time management & prioritisation/planning



- Can you give an example of a situation when you have been under pressure and had lots of urgent demands on your time? How did you deal with this and would you do anything differently?
- Can you think of an occasion when you have had to organise something very last minute, or had your plans significantly changed with little notice? How did you deal with it?
- Can you tell us about a time when you have had to meet specific deadlines but also needed to lend support to the rest of your team. How did you deal with this?
- Can you tell us about a time you felt under a high degree of pressure. What did you do to help yourself cope with the situation?
- How do you prioritise your own work?
- How do you establish your own priorities?
- How regularly do you review your priorities?

## Flexibility

- Tell me about a change that occurred in your workplace recently. How did you and your team cope with it and would you deal with it differently next time?
- Can you give an example of a situation when your manager was absent and you were required to deal with an unforeseen problem. How did you deal with it and would you do anything differently in future?
- Give an example of a time when you have had a significant task to complete with limited resources. How did you achieve this?
- Tell us about a time when you made a decision with incomplete or contradictory information. What implications did your decision have and how did people react?
- What management mechanisms do you expect will be in place or would you like to put in place if you joined us?
- Give an example of when you have been required to significantly adapt a plan in order to respond to changes within the environment. Explain how you did this and what impact your action had on the outcome.
- Tell us about the last time you had to cope with a significant change in your daily work patterns brought about by factors outside your control.



## Strategic Thinking

- What are the key issues and trends facing your area of work at the moment? How will these affect your business? What ideas do you have to resolve this?
- What has been your strongest strategic contribution during the last two years?
- What do you think might be the key issues facing this department, and therefore you, and how would you go about addressing these?

## Leadership and management

- Can you think of an example of when you dealt with conflict at work? How did you manage the situation?
- How would you describe your current/last team? How do they work together?
- Give an example of how you have developed your team.
- Give an example of how you have persuaded your organisation to support an idea or initiative. How did you approach it?
- Can you give an example of when you have had to address poor performance by a team member? How did you go about it?
- Can you give an example of when you have had to deal with a difficult or sensitive issue with a member of your team? How did you deal with it?
- Have you had to deal with a team member who was obviously stressed or over-worked? How did you deal with the situation?
- Can you give any examples of when your personal energy and drive inspired others to see things differently and thus turned negativity or apathy into positive results?

## *Business experience, networking & partnership working*

- Tell us about a recent contract you negotiated. What pitfalls did you need to avoid and how did you do that; what difficulties did you encounter?
- Please outline the type of businesses you have worked with previously. How did you go about developing effective relationships with them?
- Can you talk us through your previous experience of working with multi-national businesses? What challenges did this present and how did you overcome them?
- Give an example of when you have worked with different stakeholders to achieve a common end. How did you approach this?
- Talk us through a situation where you had to do a lot of networking. How did you approach this to achieve your goal?
- Briefly outline your experience of working in partnership with businesses, schools, agencies and the government, particularly in relation to engaging them to commit to social programmes. What challenges did you face and how did you approach it?



# Financial management

- Talk us through the last budget you were responsible for managing.
- Describe the organisational budgeting process at your previous organisation and how you were involved in it.
- What has been your best experience of working with a budget and why was this?
- Describe a time when you had difficulty managing a budget, why was this and how did you deal with the situation?
- What has been your involvement in cost allocation?



## General

- Describe a situation when you demonstrated initiative and took action without waiting for direction. What was the outcome?
- What have you done in the past that demonstrates your commitment to continuous improvement?
- Talk us through how you solved a difficult problem recently. How did you go about it and what was the outcome?
- Can you tell us about a situation where you have had to liaise with individuals at different levels within the organisation you were working in?
- Can you talk us through a situation where you have had to demonstrate excellent attention to detail?
- How do you use IT in your current role? Do you think it could be used more effectively?
- Why are you looking to move on from your current role?
- Describe a situation where you have faced obstacles to achieving something and how you overcame them.

# Offering the job

Once you've completed your interviews and any selection tests you may be using, you will hopefully be in a position to choose someone to join your team. This section gives guidance on selecting the best candidate ensuring selection is open and fair.

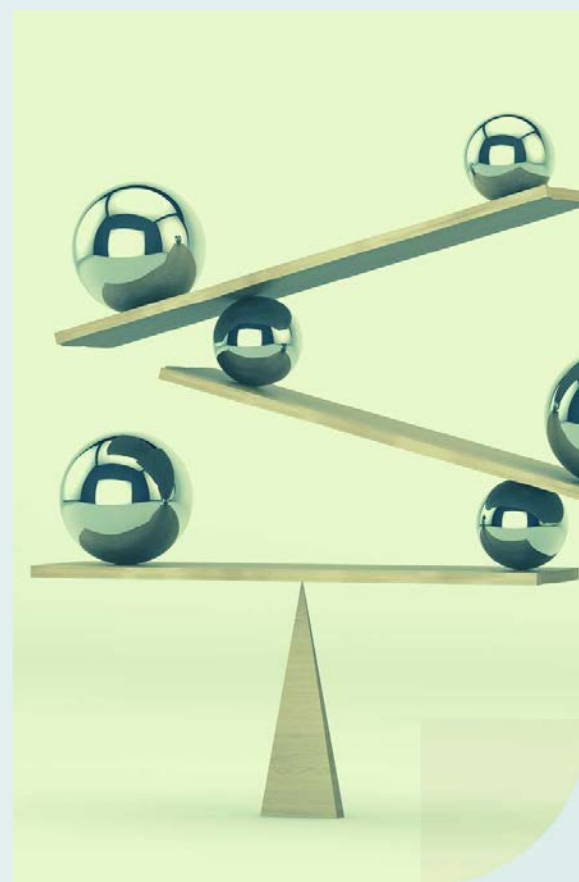
## Selecting the right candidate

Once all candidates have been interviewed and have taken part in any other selection tests you may be using, any individuals involved in the selection should review each candidate against the criteria you originally specified in the person specification.

Using a scoring system or similar for the extent to which each candidate meets each criteria can be a good way of deciding which applicant is the most suitable.

Problems with a scoring system can include:

- You may find yourself having decided who is the best candidate, and subconsciously 'fixing' the scores to match your decision. It is very important if using a scoring system that you don't do this.
- Be wary of simply adding up scores and offering the role to the person with the highest score – the highest score may have been achieved by scoring extremely well in most criteria but extremely poorly in one important criteria. A more balanced score over all criteria may be a better fit for the role. However if you choose not to offer the role to the candidate with the highest score, ensure you are able to justify your decision should it be challenged. You could consider 'weighting' certain crucial criteria, or deciding on a minimum acceptable score level in each criteria that must be reached.



*If you use a scoring system, ensure each panellist uses evidence to back up each score.*

## Making an offer

Once you have selected the most appropriate candidate for the role, you can inform them. You would usually send them a provisional offer of employment letter which should contain:

- Confirmation of the position you are offering them.
- Salary being offered.
- When you hope they will start.

You may decide you wish to telephone the successful candidate to offer them the role prior to sending out the offer letter.

Be aware that the selection process is not just about you assessing potential candidates, it is also about potential candidates assessing you and your organisation; the candidate may have questions or may require a period of time to decide whether they wish to accept your offer.



You may decide to state a deadline by when you need a firm decision, or put on the formal offer letter a date by which the role must be taken up.

This could be a date in the future allowing enough reasonable time for the candidate to decide and then work notice at their current job.

If you don't put a 'no later than' date, and instead leave the offer of employment completely open-ended, you may have potential difficulties if the first choice candidate takes too long making a decision.

*If the 'no later than' date has passed without a firm decision from the first choice candidate you can safely offer the role elsewhere without problems.*



## Salary

Ensure that any terms and conditions of employment mentioned while offering employment are accurate.

Be wary of candidates attempting to negotiate the salary up if they are offered employment. You will have decided the salary when commencing recruitment based on your evaluation of the role, the market and also based on existing salaries within the organisation, and increasing it may cause difficulties or unfairness within your organisation, or may take the salary outside the market rate.

It is worth remembering that as long as the salary was made clear in your recruitment advertising, each candidate applied for the role knowing what the salary was, and therefore should not expect it to be higher.

## When to make an exception

If you have had difficulty recruiting to the role, prior to commencing another recruitment campaign you may wish to look again at the salary to ensure it is an appropriate rate for the role.

If you did not make a specific salary clear in your advertising, you may find a degree of negotiation is appropriate based on the successful candidate's experience or skills they are bringing to the role.

## The contract of employment

The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides that a written statement of terms and conditions of employment must be given to any employee who will be employed for more than one month. This must be given to the employee by day one of their employment, so you may wish to send it all out with their offer letter.

It is advised that if you are compiling a new contract of employment or making adjustments to an existing one, you seek advice from an employment law or HR specialist.





## Rejected candidates



Ensure you let candidates know that they have been unsuccessful as soon as possible. Usually this would be done by letter although you may wish to telephone.

### Feedback

It is good practice to offer constructive feedback to candidates if you can, about which criteria they failed to meet or how they could have improved on their interview performance. A good idea is to offer this in a rejection letter, with a contact number they can use if they wish to take up the offer.



### Second choice

If you have a close 'second-choice' candidate that you would be happy to offer the role to should your first choice decline, do not send them a rejection letter. You may wish to telephone them or write to them letting them know they performed well, and you will let them have a decision shortly.



This is because it is possible that a candidate who has been rejected once and is then later offered the role as a second choice may not wish to take up the offer, or may continue to pursue other opportunities, so letting them know a decision is pending may be a better idea.

*Giving a timescale for a decision is helpful as it enables them to make plans with other job leads they may have.*

# References and other pre-employment checks



This section contains information and guidance on pre-employment checks for prospective employees, including references, Asylum and Immigration checks and CRB checks.

## References

References from previous employers should always be followed up once an offer of employment has been accepted. The current employer should not be contacted until the candidate has informed them of their acceptance of alternative employment with you.

### Pre-written references provided by candidates

Occasionally candidates provide 'to whom it may concern' pre-written references from previous employers. Do not accept these as a suitable check. This is partly because without contacting the referee yourself you have no way of knowing this reference was written by an appropriate person or even by the candidate him/herself. Also if you contact a referee yourself you can ask specific questions which may not be covered in a reference you are given by a candidate.

### Who should references be from?

Unless the candidate has not had more than one previous employer, one from each of the two previous employers is usual and is most helpful. If possible, get the name and contact details of the individual's previous line manager, as they are most likely to be able to provide useful information.

If the individual has only had one previous employer, an academic reference could be used.

Do not accept personal references. A personal reference will have no knowledge of the candidate in a work capacity, which is what you need. Also, the candidate is only going to select as a personal reference someone who will say positive things.

### What should I ask?

A request for a reference should cover the following:

- Post applied for.
- Request for confirmation of the post the applicant held with the referee, and confirmation of dates of employment.
- Reason for leaving employment.
- Whether there were any live disciplinary warnings on the applicant's file.

### You could also ask for:

- Comments on the applicant's reliability, trustworthiness, attendance, performance in the job and working relationships with others.
- Details of the number of sickness absence days.
- Comments on the applicant's suitability for the new role (supply a job description).

*The Data Protection Act 2018 allows employers to refuse to disclose a confidential employment reference to an employee or former employee if they request access to it.*

# Problems with references

## What are a referee's obligations?



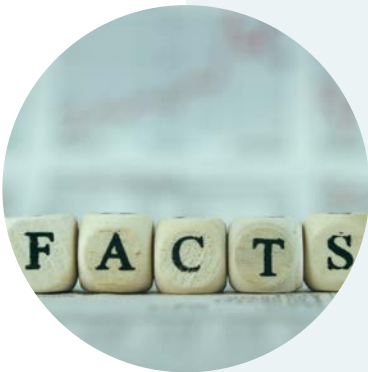
Legally, someone named as a referee is not obliged to provide a reference, however if they do, it must be accurate and truthful. Sometimes there is a concern about divulging sickness absence information to new employers.

The position is that if you enquire about the number of days absent, this is not considered sensitive information and the previous employer can release this information.

However if you ask what the reasons for absence were, this is considered sensitive information and should not be provided to you without permission of the employee so you are unlikely to get this type of information.

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## I have only received very basic information, is this negative?



Because of the concerns outlined above, some organisations now have policies of only giving basic factual information about employment, and some only allow HR departments to provide references rather than line managers.

If you only get a very basic reference back, it is not necessarily a reflection on the candidate that the previous employer chooses not to provide further information.

However it is also worth bearing in mind that if provision of any of the details you have requested would have resulted in what could be seen as a 'negative' reference, the previous employer may choose to provide basic information only instead.

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## Ways to address this include:



- Ensuring where possible you get the name of a line manager and contact them directly.
- Telephone the previous manager if you feel more information would be helpful. You may get more guidance in a conversation than through a letter, and you may also get more of a 'feel' if something is not right. If you take verbal references ensure you make detailed notes of the conversation.
- Ask the candidate for an alternative referee to contact if you have only received basic information.

# Asylum and Immigration Checks



The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act (2006), states that it is a criminal offence for an employer to employ someone who does not have permission to live and work in the UK. It is the prospective employer's responsibility to check this.

To avoid illegal discrimination the same procedures must be applied to **all** candidates. Under the Act, a prospective employer must obtain proof of a person's eligibility to work in the UK **before** employment begins. Proof must be produced in the form of an original document which relates to the person in question and is one of the documents described in the regulations. (See below for a detailed list of specified acceptable documents).

It should be made clear to **all** potential employees that they will be required to produce one of the listed documents or a combination of documents prior to appointment.



## Acceptable documents

A full list of acceptable documents can be viewed on the UKBA website.

Where the candidate is reliant on a visa, documents must confirm the holder has permission to enter or remain in the UK and take the employment in question.

*Make copies of all documentation viewed and keep on file.*

*Make a note of any date restrictions to the candidate's right to work in the UK.*

# Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

A Disclosure is a document containing information on an individual held by the police and government departments. Disclosures are provided by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

If you are recruiting to a post which involves working with children or vulnerable adults, you must obtain a Disclosure which is acceptable to you prior to confirming an applicant in post. Disclosures should only be sought on individuals to whom employment has been offered, not all applicants.

## Types of criminal record checks

### Standard Disclosures

These are primarily for posts involving working with children or vulnerable adults. They contain information about all convictions held on the Police National Computer as well as details of any cautions, reprimands or final warnings.

### Enhanced Disclosures

This includes the same as the standard check plus any additional information held by local police that's reasonably considered relevant to the workforce being applied for (adult, child or 'other' workforce).

'Other' workforce means those who don't work with children or adults specifically, but potentially both, e.g. taxi drivers. In this case, the police will only release information that's relevant to the post being applied for.

### Enhanced Disclosures with list checks

This is like the enhanced check, but includes a check of the DBS (formally ISA) barred lists.

## Registration for Disclosure Service

This service is only available to organisations who have registered with the DBS. Alternatively those organisations who have not registered can access the service using what is known as an Umbrella Body, acting on behalf of other organisations.

## Process for applying for a disclosure

- You should request an application form from DBS or an umbrella body (see above).
- You need to give the applicant (job candidate) the form to fill in and return to you along with documents proving their identity.
- You send the completed application form to DBS or their umbrella body.
- DBS sends a certificate to the applicant. You will have to ask the applicant to see the certificate.

## The Disclosure shows a criminal record, should the offer be immediately withdrawn?

If the Disclosure indicates that the applicant has a criminal record, you should consider whether the conviction is relevant to the post for which he/she is applying before withdrawing the offer of employment. It would also be best practice to meet with the individual prior to withdrawing the offer to invite them to explain the circumstances.

## When can the applicant start work?

If the post involves caring for vulnerable adults or children, the applicant cannot start work without their satisfactory Disclosure. However if this type of work is not involved, they can start work under full supervision.

**CRIMINAL HISTORY SEARCH REQUEST** 01

Personal Information	
Family Name	Given Name(s)
Mailing Address	City State
E-mail Address	Home Phone Number
Sex	Date of Birth
Eye Color	Race
	State of Birth
	Social Security Number

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Notary \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Guide to induction

Once you've offered the job, the candidate has accepted and all pre-employment checks done, you need to prepare for your new team member's first few months at work. This section gives guidance on induction for new employees, including why it's important and what to include.

## Why is induction important?

Employment is most likely to fail during the first six months.

Given the disruption of re-recruitment and the costs involved, a good induction that minimises the likelihood of this is vital. Productivity rates are also lower during the first six months, again a good induction programme can improve this.

Employees who are participating in an induction period in their new employment are:

- Less likely to leave that employment in the first six months.
- More likely to reach optimum productivity levels sooner.
- More likely to settle quickly within their new workplace.
- Less likely to take up management time in sorting out problems.



*A suitable induction programme makes a new employee feel valued and invested in and does not have to be expensive in terms of management time or training costs.*



## *What should be included?*

When they have completed their induction, a new employee should understand:

- What the organisation does, and the roles people have within it.
- What their role is and how they should undertake it.
- How their role fits within the overall aims of the organisation.

## *Getting ready for a new employee*

Before a new employee arrives, ensure they know when they should arrive on their first day and who they should ask for. Ensure they have received their written statement of terms and conditions of employment, and any other documentation, such as a staff handbook or any policies they may benefit from reading prior to their first day.

Ensure people they will come into contact with are aware that they are starting, what their name is and what their role is. If the employment is desk-based, ensure they have a work station set up for when they arrive on their first day.

## *The first few days*

The first few days are a good time to complete any outstanding documentation, show the employee where things are, where to make or buy tea and coffee, lunch arrangements, and introductions to some key employees.

Ensure their line manager is available during this time to provide guidance, perform introductions and answer questions. Do not try and overload them during this time.

## Ideas for an induction checklist



Some kind of checklist covering each stage of induction and allowing items to be 'ticked off' is beneficial as it gives some structure to the induction, and ensures that the employee and manager know what has or has not been covered at any time. A checklist could also delegate responsibility for covering certain items to other individuals and could give dates for these.

Some things you may wish to include:

- Training to be completed, either on the job or other.
- Organisation policies that the employee needs to be given/have explained.
- IT systems.
- Rules and regulations.
- Key individuals to meet with.
- Security arrangements.
- History and activities of the organisation.
- Terms and conditions of employment.
- Details of how salary payments are made and when.
- Details of working hours, breaks, arrangements.
- Smoking policy.
- Dress code.
- Refreshment facilities.
- Health and Safety.
- Emergency procedures.
- Parking facilities/arrangements.
- Standard of work expected within the job.
- Supervision arrangements.
- Interaction with colleagues.



What should be included will obviously depend on the organisation, the role of the new employee and their own individual needs which may vary if any of the following apply:

- School or college leavers.
- People who have been out of the workplace for some time.
- People with special workplace requirements.
- Disabled employees.



# Legal considerations

This section gives guidance on the legal points you need to consider when recruiting, including avoiding illegal discrimination, and details of legislation affecting pay.

## Discrimination

It is the legal responsibility of the employer to ensure that no unlawful discrimination occurs in the recruitment and selection process on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin), religion or belief (including philosophical belief), sex or sexual orientation.



## Steps to take to avoid discrimination or the appearance of discrimination during a recruitment campaign

Ensure that the criteria you are specifying in the person specification or advertisement can be justified as necessary to perform the job satisfactorily. Be as specific as possible about the skills, attributes and experiences you need, be open minded about where and how these could have been acquired and avoid generalisation.

Consider how the role, working arrangements or workplace could be adjusted to suit a disabled candidate, or whether the role is suitable for flexible working, job sharing or similar.

In interviews avoid asking candidates questions which could be considered discriminatory, for example about personal circumstances, childcare arrangements or similar.

*Ensure that you state your willingness to make appropriate adjustments to allow disabled candidates to attend interviews, and ensure they are given every opportunity to request adjustments to be made.*

## What might a candidate do if they feel there has been discrimination?



If a candidate feels there has been discrimination in your recruitment process, they can challenge your decision in an employment tribunal. This means they can have access to all your recruitment paperwork including notes made during interviews, shortlisting and other documentation.

## Ensuring paperwork is free of discrimination

Avoid making notes about candidates of a personal nature on applications or interview notes, even if it is purely to refresh your memory about a candidate.

Keep detailed, clear notes of what was said in interviews, writing down what the candidates say in response to a question rather than just whether it was a good answer or not. This way you will have evidence that the candidate you selected did give the best answers to questions and meet the criteria you set. You should also then be able to prove that you did ask all candidates the same questions, giving each an equal opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for the role.

*Unless there is a formal system in place within your organisation for increments or length of service, paying the new employee a different rate from that paid to the preceding postholder may contravene legislation.*

## Salary - equal pay and minimum wage

### National Minimum Wage

You should ensure you familiarise yourself with the current rate of the National Minimum Wage, and check that the role you are recruiting does not fall beneath it. You can check the current rate by ringing the Pay and Work Rights Helpline on 0800 917 2368 or online [www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates](http://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates).

Be aware that the National Minimum Wage applies to any paid employment, in other words you cannot offer 'internships', 'work experience', 'work placements' or similar for a nominal weekly sum.

This would be considered 'pay' and as such would be subject to minimum wage regulations. You can however offer work placements or similar with reasonable expenses paid. These expenses should be 'real' and relate to actual expense incurred in the course of the placement such as lunch or travel costs.

### Equal pay and benefits

Under the Equality Act 2010, men and women are entitled to equal treatment in the terms and conditions of their employment contract if they are employed to do:

- 'like work' - work that is the same or broadly similar;
- work rated as equivalent under a job evaluation study; or
- work found to be of equal value in terms of effort, skill or decision making.



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