

Appendix 9 - Guidance on Interview Arrangements and Techniques

Interviews are generally the most common selection technique used. Other selection techniques can help to confirm information and provide additional evidence of a candidate's abilities and suitability for the post.

The structure and purpose of an interview is to establish whether:

- The candidate is suitable for the job
- The job is right for the candidate

Interview Arrangements

Managers are responsible for the administrative arrangements for an interview (unless attending a Nursing Assessment Centre). If possible give the candidates a brief tour of the department.

The role of the appointing manager is to chair the panel and to ensure that the interview is:-

- Conducted in an environment that will allow candidates to perform to the best of their ability
- Held without interruptions
- Conducted at a venue which is accessible to people with a disability (if this required)
- Conducted by **at least two members** on an interview panel, one of whom must be **trained** in recruitment and selection and equal opportunities. Unless a defined panel membership is required (for example medical staff) ideally the panel should not exceed three members

Candidates with a Disability

Consider whether any adjustments need to be made to accommodate an interviewee who has indicated a disability on the monitoring form.

For instance:-

- Candidates with a hearing impairment may only need to be able to clearly see the interviewer as they are talking, but may need communication support if they are not to be placed at a disadvantage.
- Is there an alternative to steps for access to the building? Can the interview take place elsewhere, where access might be easier for someone with a physical disability?

There are restrictions on questions that may be asked about disability or health.

You must only ask health or disability related questions that are relevant to establishing the person's ability to carry out functions that are intrinsic to the job.

For example:

- Whether the candidate has an impairment that affects their ability to use the telephone
- Whether the person has a disability when you are intending to exercise positive action in recruitment of disabled people. For example, where you intend to increase the proportion of disabled employees you employ
- Whether the person has a particular disability, where having that disability is an essential requirement of the job. For example, where the job is for a counselor for people with a particular disability, and having first-hand experience of that disability is essential to the Job

You must not ask questions about an individual's attendance record or absence history. Questions relating to health can only be asked after the unconditional offer has been made and once the occupational health check has been completed.

Issues of disability which may affect the job should be addressed positively and discussed during the interview. Panel members should not make assumptions, but talk to each disabled person about what might help or what the real effects of the disability might be. The individual may have useful suggestions or helpful clarifications.

General Guidance

- Under the 2010 Equality Act, when interviewing people for a job there are certain questions you should not ask; such as whether a candidate is married, is a partner in a same-sex civil partnership, plans to have children or any other question relating to age
- Selection decisions must be arrived at on the suitability of the candidate to do the job and must not be influenced by the racial or sexual profile, previous job holder/s or with the existing staff within the department
- Explanations must be sought in relation to any gaps in employment
- Care should be taken in using language or jargon which may not be understood by a candidate
- Job share candidates should be treated equally to those candidates wishing to work full time
- Questions should relate to the requirements of the job and, where it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect performance of the job (e.g. ability to work evenings or be part of an on-call rota), this should be discussed objectively with all candidates without detailed questioning based on assumptions about marital status, children, religion etc.
- If any member of the interviewing panel feels that discrimination has occurred in the selection process, the matter should be raised immediately with the panel and with a HR Manager. No selection decision should be made until the issue is resolved
- It is also worth remembering that what is said at interview can form part of a contract of employment if you offer the candidate the job, and may be legally binding. Therefore you should not make any salary offers which do not follow the Trust's Starting Salary Policy. Individuals who are transferring from another NHS Trust will have their service confirmed with an Inter-Authority Transfer and will be paid on the minimum of the band until this has been confirmed. Individuals coming from outside the NHS will generally start on the lowest point of the band

Interview Techniques

It is common for both interviewer and candidate to be nervous. Thorough preparation will help both of you. Be careful not to fill silences by talking too much – the aim of the interview is to draw information from the candidate to decide if they would suit the job. The candidate should do most of the talking.

Nevertheless, the interviewer will want to encourage candidates to relax and perform to the best of their ability.

The following pointers may be helpful in conducting the interview:

- Introduce yourself and other interviewers; this also gives the candidate time to settle down.
- Explain the format of the interview.
- Give some background information about the Trust and the job.
- Structure the questions to cover all the relevant areas. Ask open-ended questions (i.e. ones that can't be answered just by a yes or no answer), this will encourage the candidate to speak freely – they often begin 'what', 'why', 'when' or 'how'.
- Avoid leading questions.
- Explore any unexplained gaps in the employment history.
- Listen, and make brief notes which can be added to after.
- Have a time frame and keep to it, allowing sufficient time for candidates to ask any questions they might have.
- Make sure the candidate is familiar with the terms and conditions of the job, and they are acceptable.
- Tell the candidate what will happen next and when to expect to hear from the organisation.

Values Based Recruitment

Within the NHS, Values Based Recruitment is an approach to help attract and select students, trainees and employees, whose personal values and behaviours align with the NHS values outlined in the NHS Constitution. This approach aims to ensure that the NHS has the right workforce, with the right skills, in the right numbers, with the right values, to support effective team working and deliver excellent patient care and experience. You can find more information on the values based recruitment behaviour framework on the NHS Employers Website (<http://www.nhsemployers.org/case-studies-and-resources/2014/11/values-based-recruitment-behaviour-framework>).

The Recruitment Team can provide examples of values based interviews questions.

Internal Candidates

Where an applicant is an internal candidate, they should be treated in the same way as any external applicant. Where the internal candidate is offered the post, the offer will still be conditional on occupational health clearance, DBS checks (formerly known as CRB checks) and satisfactory references.

Interview Feedback

When informing the candidates of the outcome, the appointing manager should be prepared to give constructive feedback. Many candidates look upon the interview as a learning experience and feedback is an important aspect and should be handled sensitively. There needs to be a valid reason for the panel's decision not to appoint otherwise the panel could face a claim for discrimination.

Additional Recruitment Methods

Interviews alone are a poor method of assessing a candidate's potential. The use of skills tests will enhance reliability as they provide more information about the candidate and allow them to demonstrate such skills. Care should be taken to ensure that the skill or attribute being measured is necessary in order to do the job, and only properly validated tools and techniques should be used which do not discriminate and are only administered by appropriately trained personnel. The choice will depend upon the level of the job and the HR Recruitment Team will be able to offer advice and support.