

Recruitment and selection

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Recruitment and selection

It is important to ensure that the recruitment and selection process maximises all opportunities in attracting the best people when recruiting for staff. Many of the considerations stemming from this Guide would also be considered best practice in recruitment generally.

Job description

The job description should always reflect the requirements of the job accurately and should always be in clear language. It would be good practice to review regularly every job description and not only prior to recruitment. This will help to distinguish between the main activities of the job and marginal activities that may not be essential parts of the role. This will enable you to consider reasonable adjustments, as it will be easy to see if tasks could be transferred to another member of staff or if they are fundamental to the role.

Person specification

A person specification should always be prepared and used throughout the recruitment and selection process, outlining the essential skills, experience and other attributes that would be necessary for an individual to carry out the job. The person specification should also indicate those attributes that are desirable for the individual to possess, to help distinguish between different candidates and select the best applicant. It is important to scrutinise all criteria carefully. Care must be taken to avoid including any unnecessary requirements that may lead to discrimination and to ensure that any personal, medical or health-related criteria are absolutely necessary for the performance of the job.

The essential characteristics/minimum criteria within a person specification should not include qualifications and experiences that are not necessary to the job.

EXAMPLE

If the role includes driving a delivery van once a quarter (a marginal activity), it is likely to be reasonable to allocate those duties to another member of staff if the best candidate in all other respects was unable to hold a driving licence due to their disability. In comparison, in a job that involves driving a delivery van for most of every shift (a main activity), it probably would not be a reasonable adjustment to reallocate these duties and it may be reasonable to require applicants to hold a valid driving licence.

EXAMPLE

A managerial job includes essential travel to a rural location away from the office on a weekly basis and there is no public transport that can be used. Commonly, in a post like this, a driving licence would be included as an essential requirement; however, this could be indirect disability discrimination against people whose disability prevents them from holding a driving licence. Therefore a more appropriate essential requirement would be the ability to drive, travel or for the employee to arrange a driver.

Advertising

When advertising a post, either through a newspaper, agency or social media, it is important to make it clear in the advert that you can provide the information about the post in accessible formats but only if required.

Job advertisements should, as a minimum, give brief details of the job content as well as key essential attributes required for the post.

Advertisements must not make discriminatory statements in relation to disabled people. Care needs to be taken not to use language that could imply that applicants with a disability are unwelcome. Try to avoid unnecessary wording regarding mobility or character such as: strong; agile; prepared to work long hours.

A best practice approach to recruitment advertising would be to include a welcoming and encouraging statement in your advertisements. This is a public statement of policy and intent and lets potential applicants know that you will be able to understand and meet the needs of disabled people.

A statement encouraging disabled people to apply is not discriminatory against people who do not have a disability.

Employers should consider advertising in publications aimed at disabled people or notifying local disability organisations of all vacancies. See Sources of Support on page 57.

EXAMPLE

You could include this on all forms of recruitment advertising:

We welcome enquiries from disabled people and value diversity in our workforce

and/or

We are willing to consider flexible working arrangements

and

The application form is available in alternative formats including:

Audio
Electronic
Large print

Application forms

Employers should not generally ask questions regarding health and disability on job application forms. The focus should be on identifying the applicant's ability to perform the requirements of the job.

Employers may wish to display a positive approach on their recruitment process by stating on their application form: "We make reasonable adjustments to our application process for candidates who indicate that, owing to a disability, our arrangements might otherwise disadvantage them. If you have a disability, including dyslexia or another non-visible one, which you believe may affect your performance at any stage of the application process, we will be happy to make reasonable adjustments to our processes for you if you advise us in good time."

Application forms should:

- Not insist on hand-written replies.
- Ensure that any forms are easy to follow and read (without using jargon or complicated language), and have adequate space for replies – this will help all applicants, not just disabled people.
- Ideally, and where practicable, forms should be available in different formats. This may include audio, large print and electronic, then allowing candidates to submit the form in an alternative format. If the application is to be made online, provide a paper based form as an alternative.



Job Creation / Job flexibility

Working with Supported Employment agencies

Over the years, job creation/job flexibility is a method that has been developed by Supported Employment agencies such as the Guernsey Employment Trust. This is where a job is created by identifying parts of a role or tasks that the employer needs completing and can be completed by the disabled applicant. This can take imagination and creativity on the part of both the employer and the Employment Support Worker but in many cases it can lead to a win-win situation for both the employer and the prospective employee.

CASE STUDY

A small local cleaning business met with an Employment Support Worker and disclosed the high costs involved with cleaning their fleet of vehicles, using a professional car wash facility. The Employment Support Worker deliberated on this with the business owner and together they were able to create a part-time role for a disabled person who had the experience, skills and independence to provide a car wash and valet service, as well as weekly and quarterly maintenance checks. The disabled person was pivotal in developing the role and the position provided them with the opportunity to utilise their skills whilst in meaningful employment. It also solved a problem for the employer, saving them money and allowing them to work in a more efficient way.

Strategies for job creation and job flexibility include: job carving, job stripping and job enrichment:

- Job carving is when the tasks of the new employee are taken from the job descriptions of different existing jobs in the company. In that way, a new job is created that fits to the abilities and strengths of the supported employee. The other employees in the company have more time to do the tasks which they are qualified for or better suited to do. Job creation can benefit the organisation and the individual in many ways by working to the strengths of the individual and the needs of the organisation.
- Job stripping is taking away some tasks from the regular job description that the employee finds more difficult to do because of their disability, for example reading or carrying heavy objects. In exchange, the person might take over other tasks from his/her co-workers.
- Job enrichment is the adding of new tasks to the job description according to the abilities of the employee or to foster inclusion in the company. For example, in a job with little contact with co-workers during the day, the task of collecting mail in the company is added to allow the person to have more contact with co-workers. Job enrichment can lead to job satisfaction by increasing the level of responsibility of the employee.

Job creation can be the ideal solution for both the employer and a disabled person. There are occasions when a person, due to their disability, can only work for a few hours each day or each week and a required task by an employer can be tailor-made for that individual.

CASE STUDY

A young woman on the autistic spectrum was seeking work in an office/administration environment. Due to her disability she was not comfortable with performing a wide range of mainstream office tasks, such as telephone answering, reception duties and interaction with customers. She did, however, have a great skill for detail, even when the work was repetitive. On discussing the situation with a prospective employer, the Employment Support Worker identified that the task of maintaining and filing invoices was not being carried out by the relevant team, due to a lack of time and a general view that the work was not of significant importance. However, the fact that the invoice filing was not being performed was causing considerable problems within the organisation, due to not being able to identify whether payments had been made and not being able to find invoices when discussing issues with the customer. The young woman with autism was able to perform all the invoice maintenance and filing tasks to a high standard, due to her attention to detail, and a job has been specifically created for her within the organisation. Both the employer and the employee are very satisfied with the outcome.

Short-listing

It is good practice to invite all disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria for the post to interview. This is called a Guaranteed Job Interview initiative (see Employers' Disability Charter on page 55).

It is important to avoid asking for evidence of qualifications or experience that are not necessary to do the job. Where it is not clear if a disability might have an effect on an individual's ability to complete the essential activities of the job, negative assumptions should not be made and the applicant should be given the opportunity to evidence their skills and explore what reasonable adjustments might remove any barriers. A disabled person will know the effect of their disability/impairment and they should be given the chance to demonstrate whether they can do the job.

References

Reference requests for all candidates should only ask for information relevant to the job, based on the person specification (i.e. extent of skills, aptitudes and experience). No isolated reference to a disability should be made.

Interviews

Most adjustments required at interview are easily provided. If you know in advance that a candidate needs some reasonable adjustments for an interview, you will need to arrange these. However, if you do not know in advance, you should try to accommodate any needs a disabled person might have when they arrive.

It is always beneficial to encourage applicants to discuss any requirements early in the application process as this will avoid any last minute problems and make the interview process easier for both candidate and interviewer.

Using the following paragraph in your invitation for interview letters may be useful:

If you require assistance to attend this interview, for example, use of a signer or interpreter, or car parking within close proximity to the interview venue - or if your disability affects your access to or mobility within buildings, please contact [named individual] at the above address, who will be happy to provide you with assistance.

All selection interviews should be objective and non-biased and all applicants should be allowed an opportunity to evidence their abilities and skills in relation to the job.

When interviewing a disabled person, do not let any misconceptions or assumptions about disability influence your view on whether a person can do the job. Asking about a disability should only be done in a positive manner and in relation to the effect on someone's ability to do the job and focusing on what adjustments might remove any barriers. Employers should follow a code of good practice by inviting a disabled person to reveal his or her disability through such questions as:

- How would you perform the tasks of this position?
- What skills and abilities do you possess that make you suitable for the job?
- What, if any, type of aids, adaptations or equipment would you require to help you do this job?

Selection tests

Tests should only be used if they are strictly relevant to the job functions and/or measure an important aspect highlighted on the person specification. Care must be taken when selection tests are used that these do not act unfairly against individuals with disabilities. Employers may need to make reasonable adjustments to selection tests to enable candidates with disabilities to adequately demonstrate their skills.

Examples of adjustments could include:

- Providing more time to complete the test
- Providing a personal reader/writer
- Providing a signer/communicator
- Providing support equipment, e.g. induction loops, adapted keyboards
- Allowing a break in a long test
- Adjusting how the test is scored

However, practical tests can be more appropriate for some disabled people, as this means they are given the chance to show they can do a job. Sometimes, job applicants are given a chance to try out the job to see if they fit into the working environment.

GOOD PRACTICE ADVICE

Practical working interview/tests may be more appropriate for a person with learning or communication difficulties, especially when a person finds it difficult to articulate their skills in a standard job interview. Consider a job taster/work experience placement or even a short practical test.

Medical Examinations / Post offer health screening

Some employers require all successful candidates for employment to have a medical examination and it would be appropriate for an employer to include a disabled person in this process. However, it is not appropriate for an employer to insist on a medical check for a disabled person and not for others, without justification - having a disability need not affect a person’s general health. Occasionally it may be appropriate on health and safety grounds to complete a medical check with a view to implementing reasonable adjustments.

In asking medical questions, you should make it clear that individuals are welcome to discuss any health-related matters in person and in confidence with an appropriate member of your staff, either in addition to or as an alternative to filling in a questionnaire. Some people living with certain conditions prefer to be able to explain in more detail how they are successfully managing their condition and be on hand to answer any questions, rather than rely on a form.

GOOD PRACTICE ADVICE

Throughout the Recruitment and Selection process it is advisable, and general good practice, to retain all data used and notes made with regards to selection decisions and the reasoning for selecting one candidate over another within the selection process. This would include original application forms, interview notes and selection test results, which should be kept after the interview for a period of generally no less than 3 months, (taking into account the likely time limits for bringing any disability related tribunal claim) and no more than 6 months (taking into account data protection principles). This will be of great assistance if an applicant wishes feedback or to appeal against your decision.

