

Chapter 10

Job descriptions and other job information

10. Job descriptions and other job information

10.1 Having an up-to-date, agreed job description is essential in ensuring that employees and their line managers/employers have a common understanding of what is required of a job. The required information is generally set out in the form of a list of job duties, after a statement describing the key purpose of the role. Person specifications are usually drawn up to support recruitment as they list the key skills, knowledge and attributes needed for the job. The skills and attributes listed as essential in the person specification must be relevant to the duties required of the job.

10.2 An up-to-date and agreed job description and person specification is also required to facilitate the job matching or evaluation process (see chapter 11, paragraph 3.1 in matching procedure). Accordingly, the NHS Staff Council advice is as follows:

10.2.1 There is no recommended format: the format and content of job descriptions are matters for individual organisations to agree in partnership and should be appropriate to the needs of the organisation. However, having an agreed job description template may support the consistency checking process.

10.2.2 While it may suit the needs of the organisation to include information on the competencies required for the role in the job description, it should be noted that job descriptions which are exclusively competence-based are not helpful for matching purposes.

10.2.3 A Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) or other competency-based framework outline should not be used for job matching

10.2.4 Job descriptions should not follow the national JE profile format (written as the 16 factors) or use the same terminology as the profiles/JE

scheme. Profiles are not job descriptions and do not fulfil the main purpose of having job descriptions.

10.2.5 JE practitioners are trained to challenge use of factor language in job descriptions for example highly complex or intense concentration. Likewise they should not accept at face value person specifications that are out of line with the duties of the job, for example requiring a masters level qualification if there is little evidence of use of the level of knowledge or responsibility.

10.2.6 Information required for matching, which is not usually included in job descriptions or person specifications (for example, in relation to the effort and environment factors) should be collected by other means, for instance, by short questionnaire or through oral evidence.

10.2.7 Where generic job descriptions are in use, post holders and their managers must ensure that they adequately reflect the complete nature of the role and amend if necessary. This may trigger a review (see chapter 13).

10.2.8 If job descriptions are used that have not been generated from within the organisation, it is essential that there is a robust audit trail outlining the job evaluation processes used to determine the banding of the job. Organisations must not simply rely on pay bandings determined by other employers without assuring themselves that they could defend the outcome if challenged.

10.2.9 Job descriptions used from other organisations must be checked for consistency against other posts in the organisation. Failure to do so could result in equal pay challenges.