

**Interviewing accessibly**



Interviews can be daunting for most people. The traditional interview style involves a panel asking a candidate a set of unseen questions, is reliant on strong memory recall, and the ability to apply this thinking to set criteria. Using this approach to assessment can be challenging for those with anxiety, neurological conditions or disabilities, or those with neurodiversity such as those with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD).

#### Pre interview checklist

- Is the environment relaxed and friendly?
- Is the environment accessible for individuals?
- Do they require any equipment or adjustments?
- Have you explained the structure of the day to applicants and provided a timetable?
- This is useful if the day has several parts such as a group task, written task and interview.

- Have you explained the role they are applying for?
- You could also provide information about the organisation, team and/or department.
- Have you provided a copy of the interview questions to the candidate? The interview should not be a test of memory.
- Have you highlighted any staff networks or campaigns that demonstrate the inclusive culture of the organisation?

## Assessment exercises

Following shortlisting, the next stage of the recruitment journey is establishing the exercises to assess candidates. These could include traditional interviews, assessment centres and/ or group tasks, and written tasks.

There are specific ways you can mitigate against barriers and exclusion for those with disabilities/learning disabilities in assessment. Ask or provide an opportunity for applicants to share any needs they have - this is key to understanding whether an assessment process is appropriate for them.

## Making an offer

For those who declare a learning disability, or other neurological condition/neurodiversity, it is crucial that you use accessible language when communicating the outcome of the interview stage. For successful candidates, you can use this checklist.

- Explain clearly that they have been successful in securing the role.

- Explain the processes which need to be completed from the organisation's point of view.
- Ask the candidate if they have any questions at this point.
- Explain that you need to carry out right to work and reference checks (and ensure that they provided the relevant details)
- how long this process is likely to take and why it is done
- that you/ a specific colleague will be on hand (provide contact details) to answer any questions they may have at any point.

You could invite the individual to visit the workplace ahead of their start date. This could ease anxiety and help plan additional considerations such as access needs. If they accept the offer, it would be useful to show them:

- the space they will be working in
- communal areas, such as toilets or catering
- car parking or how the building/office space is accessed
- introduce them to their immediate team or induction buddy if you have this system set up in your organisation.