

Recruit

Recruiting is much more than writing job descriptions, interviewing and carrying out pre-employment checks. Each step is as important as the next and it requires planning, clear processes and agreed timescales.

Have you looked at previous exercises and taken feedback into account? Of those interviewed and made appointable how many took up post? How long did the process take and if they didn't end up starting in role, do you know why? A review of this can help you identify any areas for improvement and prevent this pre-start attrition.

Recruitment needs to centre around a positive candidate experience. It needs to provide all potential employees with a quick and easy route to finding a vacancy and applying, which swiftly leads to a stimulating and fulfilling interview with an appointment offer, or notice made as soon as possible if they've been unsuccessful. This streamlined approach helps to ensure potential recruits feel engaged, motivated to continue with their application, aren't side tracked by another offer and have the confidence to re-apply once ready.

When a potential recruit spots your vacancy, ideally you want them to find out more about your organisation. Having your own careers website which is engaging, informative and enticing is key. Scroll to the advertising chapter of the toolkit to find out more.

It is also important to consider that many people search and often apply for vacancies using mobile technology. Studies by Glassdoor suggest that without mobile access, you could cut out nearly half of your potential candidates.

Positive action and accessible recruitment

Taking positive action during the recruitment process can enable you to diversify your workforce, and deliver against actions in the NHS People Plan, Workforce Race Equality Standard and the Workforce Disability Equality Standard.

The government's Equality act 2010: what do I need to know? A quick start guide to using positive action in recruitment and promotion states: "positive action provisions mean that it is not unlawful to recruit or promote a candidate who is of equal merit to another candidate, if the employer reasonably thinks the candidate:

- has a protected characteristic that is underrepresented in the workforce; or
- that people with that characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic.

However, positive action does not allow an employer to appoint a less suitable candidate just because that candidate has a protected characteristic that is under-represented or disadvantaged."

Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (or lack of), sex, and sexual orientation.

Most fundamentally positive action can support employers under the Equality Act 2010 to recruit and promote people from underrepresented groups to help them overcome disadvantages in competing with other applicants.

The government's positive action in recruitment guide outlines all of the steps throughout the recruitment process where positive action can be taken and includes examples of tie-break scenarios. Your recruitment team can also provide you with data throughout the recruitment process about the protected characteristics of applicants, to

support you with taking positive action during the process, or to understand where barriers in the process may occur.

Ensure that your recruitment processes are accessible to all too. Ask whether reasonable adjustments are required and if so provide them. This may be including hearing loops, accessible software for any computer-based activity, a wheelchair accessible space for all activities, papers in large print and colour filters available.

Find out more about our equality, diversity and inclusion programme and access our toolkit to help you support, recruit and retain disabled staff into your organisation, and represent a diverse workforce that delivers high-quality patient care.

Writing your job descriptions and person specification

An effective, engaging and inclusive job description is key. It should outline your organisational values, trust mission and provide an accurate, interesting account of the skills and competencies required for the role. A good job description should provide clarity for the individual and the manager so it's important to get it right.

Ensuring your job descriptions are available in an accessible form is the easiest way to prevent putting off a potential candidate. It's important to use clear and simple language when describing the tasks that will need to be completed.

Advertising

How organisations advertise can impact recruitment and when competing with your neighbours for hard-to-fill posts, it is important you get your advertising right.

Where you post your vacancies can impact the levels of interest your vacancies receive. You have many advertising routes available to you including job websites such as the free NHS Jobs service. In addition, you can use your local Jobcentre Plus, radio, trade media outlets and social media to promote your trust's careers website.

It's important to think about your audience and tailor your adverts to suit. For example the ambulance service often use radio advertising to target their audience who are typically out on the road.

Values-based recruitment

Values-based recruitment (VBR) is an approach to help attract and select future employees whose personal values and behaviours align with the NHS values outlined in the NHS Constitution.

Our resources section hosts information about VBR, resources, toolkits and case studies. Find out how ready your organisation is for VBR by using our readiness toolkit.

Shared learning from York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals

York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust overhauled its consultant recruitment process to align it to the trust's values of kind, open and excellent, and to ensure the process worked in a virtual setting.

Read how the trust's approach gave them a fuller picture of candidates and allowed them to recruit comparable numbers of consultants, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Interviews and selection

Interviewing has evolved over the years and employers are using a variety of methods to make the process quicker, easier, more accessible and more variable, all of which enhance the candidate experience. COVID-19 has changed the way we work and virtual interviews and recruitment will certainly become more prevalent in the future.

Interviews can be conducted at open days and exhibition events giving candidates a quick and easy recruitment experience while also saving time and resource in your organisation. To help widen your pool of applicants and manage the interview process in a resourceful way, some employers are choosing to carry out video interviews using Skype, or in some cases, pre-recorded interview questions which allow individuals to be interviewed at a time which suits them.

Shared learning from Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust has turned its assessment days into a one stop shop, ensuring a fast and effective process for both the candidate and the trust. By working collaboratively, it has streamlined the logistics of the day and can inform candidates of the many opportunities throughout the trust.

Recruit to retain

The first six months in a new role typically influences whether an employee stays for the long term, making induction and the onboarding process crucial.

An effective induction or period of preceptorship can help employees hit the ground running. Integrating staff into your organisation and setting out what is expected of everyone in a clear and consistent way can help the bedding-in process.

Effective mentoring, senior support, structured appraisals and a supportive learning environment are all effective ways of supporting new starters and will help staff to be as productive as possible in their roles.

For further good practice on how you can support new starters and other items that can help you to retain your staff for longer, read our Improving staff retention guide.

Shared learning from Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's Start Well: Stay Well model engages new starters at various stages, including on appointment and before they arrive as part of the onboarding process. The initiative is being adopted and spread across the trust, ensuring all new staff attend a Start Well: Stay Well event and have access to a buddy.

Shared learning from University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust offers new recruits a fresh eyes review after 90 days of their employment. Staff are offered a choice between a quick interview or the opportunity to complete a questionnaire to understand what is good about their new jobs and if there is anything that can be done to better support them in their new role. Staff feel listened to, valued and therefore are better engaged with the onboarding process.

Recruitment processes

Recruitment takes time but there are things employers can do to help speed it up and ensure your prospective employees feel engaged from start to finish.

Streamlining between trusts helps to deliver a quality and efficient recruitment experience which reduces duplication and unnecessary delays in getting the successful candidate started in the workplace. It involves organisations working collaboratively to embed and deliver consistency through HR best practice and includes joint working between professionals from the four key HR workstreams; occupational health, medical staffing, statutory and mandatory training and recruitment.

Efficient recruitment processes that centre around candidate experience can help you to expand your talent pool, recruit quicker and improve your employer brand.

Our recruitment processes pages provide guidance and examples from other NHS organisations on several topics that, done well, will help you improve the efficiency of your processes and keep you up to date with the latest trends in recruitment. These include:

- automating recruitment processes – the use of robotic process automation (RPA) to programme software to take care of routine, manual processes, freeing up staff to work on more value adding tasks.

- virtual recruitment – helping you identify key considerations to make before, during and after interview when recruiting remotely.
- trends in recruitment – this poster explores seven expected trends in recruitment in 2021, helping ensure you factor emerging trends into your recruitment strategy.

Pre-employment checks

Pre-employment checks are an essential part of recruitment and it is important they are carried out as efficiently as possible to avoid any delays in individuals taking up post. NHS Employers provides practical information, toolkits and resources on the pre-employment check standards including shared learning which demonstrate how organisations have simplified checking processes without compromising standards and patient safety.

Reviewing recruitment top tips

- Set clear recruitment objectives and targets.
- Think about the evaluation methods available to you.
- Track your website analytics, social media reach, media coverage tools and surveys.
- Ensure you carry out stay and exit interviews and identify any trends.
- Use staff feedback to identify trends

Onboarding

New jobs are exciting but can also be a bit stressful for a new employee, so it is vital to consider the human factors that personally affect individuals during the first few months of beginning a new role.

Onboarding and induction done well can help you settle and retain the staff you've spent time and money recruiting. Get it wrong, and you could need to re-advertise and potentially damage your employer reputation.

Shared learning from Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust

As part of its improving the employee journey project, Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust (LTHT) has introduced an online onboarding system. On receipt of log-in details, successful candidates can access new starter forms and book their pre-employment check meeting. This has resulted in HR saving an average of 33 hours per year. New employees can access information and ask questions about their induction and future career at LTHT. The onboarding system has won the in-house recruitment award (2017 Best Onboarding Strategy) and was a finalist in the HPMA Innovation in HR award in 2018.

Shared learning from The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust has introduced a postcard initiative that congratulates and welcomes new nursing recruits ahead of their start date. The postcards, costed at just 54 pence per staff member, are sent by both the chief nurse and lead nurse on their ward ahead of their start date. The initiative has been warmly welcomed by staff, making them feel 'valued and part of the team' even before they arrive.

