

## **Recruitment: Conducting Interviews**

This advice note is intended for the use of clerks employing staff in other roles or replacements for their post. This advice note should be read in conjunction with advice note AD398 on staff recruitment and AD182 on job advertisements.

You have shortlisted successfully and selected the people for interview and now you are inviting them to attend.

1. You should ask all applicants invited for an interview if they need any reasonable adjustments so they can attend – for example by making your office accessible for an applicant who has a disability.
2. It is a good idea to have a small panel to carry out the interview, rather than one person. It is also a good idea not to have the full council, where this is a large body. It is further recommended that the Clerk be a member of this panel and able to contribute to it.
3. Tell the applicants what to expect at the interview. For example, your Council may want a presentation about a certain subject or an in-tray exercise, or some other task to undertake. If this is the case, give adequate notice of this beforehand for time for them to prepare. Have pens and papers to hand and ensure the technology works for any presentation they may have.
4. Tell them who will be carrying out the interview and what each person's role is.
5. On their arrival make them at their ease as far as possible and offer a cup of coffee or tea or have water available during the interview.
6. The interview should be confidential with no interruptions allowed. The room should be private and quiet and suitable for all attending.
7. Prepare a set of questions that will be asked, and the interview structure and format agreed.
8. Have a matrix against which each applicants' answers can be rated for each person carrying out the interviews.
9. You must not discriminate in the questions asked and should avoid any personal questions. For instance, you cannot ask whether they intend to have children soon.

10. Ask the same questions of each candidate. Ensure these are open questions designed to have the candidate talking about themselves and their experience. An example of some of the questions are set out below. Please note this is not an exhaustive list and feel free to adapt the questions you use.

- a. How did they hear about this role?
- b. Why do they want this job?
- c. What skills can they bring to the role?
- d. Are they applying for other jobs?
- e. Tell you about their previous experience and how you think this will help them in the post?
- f. Tell you about a particular stressful or pressurized situation they had and how they dealt with it?
- g. When you are balancing multiple projects how do you keep yourself organised?
- h. What are your strong points and what do you not do so well?
- i. Why are you leaving/have left your current job?
- j. Why is there a gap in your employment (if there is one)
- k. Can you explain why you want to/did change careers paths
- l. Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?
- m. What do you think we (the Council) can do better or differently?

11. Supplementary questions are difficult and potentially an area where you could leave yourself open to discrimination. Any such questions asked should only be based on the facts presented at the interview and on the job description and person specification.

12. There is a school of thought that the interview questions be sent to all applicants before the interview to prepare them and to have responses ready. The counter argument to this is that you may want to see how the people answer these questions on the spot and how well they have thought about the post and your organisation beforehand.

13. Leave enough time for the applicants to ask any questions they may have.

14. Once all the applicants you have been interviewed you need to decide upon the question of which one is to be appointed. First, you should consider whether there is any suitable applicant.

15. In making the decision the panel will need to check how they scored each applicant against the job description and person specification. There may need to be some time for discussion about the merits of each prospective candidate so there should be sufficient time set aside for this purpose.

16. Once you have decided on a suitable applicant for the post, you will need to contact them. You can, by all means phone the applicant chosen to tell them

the decision of the panel, but it is advisable to confirm this offer in writing as soon as possible.

17. If you require references, which is recommended, you should follow up on these.
18. Out of courtesy you should also call the other applicant(s) to let them know their application has been unsuccessful.