

Recruitment Process Guidelines and Checklist

prepared by:

Royal Mail

Disability Action Centre (DAC)

Did you know?

- There are 8.7 million disabled people in the UK.
- 18% of the working age population are disabled.
- These figures are increasing.
- Seven out of ten disabled people in employment acquire their disability during their working lives.
- Fewer than 5% of disabled people are wheelchair users.

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These guidelines have been prepared in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) Code of Practice - for the elimination of discrimination in the field of employment against disabled persons or persons who have had a disability. If you require further clarification on any of the subject headings please contact:

- your Personnel/HR team; or
- Disability Helpline

Job Description and Person Specification

When vacancies arise job descriptions and person specifications should be reviewed to ensure they contain no unjustifiable discriminatory requirements or preferences.

A **job description** typically covers the following:

- the main purpose and objectives of the job;
- how the job holder fits into the structure of the organisation, who the job holder reports to and for which staff (if any) they are responsible;
- the main duties and responsibilities of the job - essential tasks and marginal tasks;
- the regularity with which these tasks are performed;
- the relationship between this job-holder and others inside and outside the organisation;
- essential personal/behavioural attributes/qualities of the job-holder;
- which skills/abilities/knowledge/experience are required and to what standard.

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The **person specification** should:

- identify what essential criteria the candidate should meet to be considered seriously for the job; and
- be based on an existing or newly written job description.

A **person specification** would typically cover:

- skills and abilities;
- experience/knowledge;
- the level of skill or competence; and
- behavioural attributes or competencies.

A person specification will help focus attention on the skills and experience that are being sought in candidates and reduce the scope for unnecessary consideration of an applicant's disability, race, age or gender. When drawing up a person specification, care should be taken not to include requirements that would discriminate against disabled candidates unless they are an essential requirement of the job.

Example: an employer specifies that a driving licence is required for a job which involves limited travelling. An applicant for the job has no driving licence because of the particular effects in his/her case of cerebral palsy. He/she is otherwise the best candidate for that job, he/she could easily and cheaply do the travelling involved other than by driving and it would be a reasonable adjustment for the employer to allow this. It would be discriminatory to insist on the specification and reject his/her application solely because he/she had no driving licence.

The following list may help to reduce bias:

- have you described the required standards of skill/competence clearly and specifically;
- have you avoided using ambiguous criteria;

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- have you defined the required experience stating the length, standard and level of skills necessary for that specific job;
- have you avoided focusing on 'paper' education/qualifications when you really need to know whether candidates have the skills, abilities or aptitudes required to do the job effectively;
- have you defined the required abilities in terms of the real requirements of the job, not just in vague, non-specific terms;
- can you justify the criteria used.

Job descriptions and person specifications together form an important tool in effective equal opportunities practice, which can help in ensuring that legal duties under the DDA are fulfilled.

Advertising

When advertising a job vacancy, every effort must be made not to show discrimination towards a disabled person. Under the DDA an 'advertisement' includes every form of advertisement or notice, whether to the public or not. This would cover internal advertisements and includes:

- notices on internal company notice boards;
- oral communications; and
- notices broadcast in any type of media.

NB: A Tribunal will assume discrimination by an employer, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, if an advert can be taken to indicate either that the success of a job application might depend upon the absence of the relevant disability, or else the employer is unwilling to make a necessary reasonable adjustment.

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Simple steps can be taken to ensure that recruitment advertisements do not discourage disabled applicants:

- include a statement that makes it clear that applications from disabled people are welcome e.g. the Equal Opportunities Statement;
- use the Jobcentre Plus Disability Symbol ('two ticks') with the slogan 'positive about disabled people' (details on page 15);
- contact your local Disability Employment Advisor (DEA) based in the local Disability Service Team (DST). DEA's work from job centres and their role is to match unemployed disabled people with suitable vacancies and training opportunities (details on page 17);
- place advertisements in specialist publications (details on page 16);
- the Internet is an alternative way of reaching disabled job seekers and 'jobability.com' is an example of a job site for disabled people (details on page 17);
- use specialist employment agencies and publications such as Employment Opportunities for people with disabilities and Ready, Willing and Able (details on pages 16 and 17);
- ensure that, when required, your vacancy details can be made available in alternative format i.e. large print, audio tape, Braille or computer diskette (details of Master Transcriptions on page 18).

Application Forms

You are required under the DDA not to discriminate against disabled applicants and to make reasonable adjustments to enable them to compete on equal terms with non-disabled people. Application forms and any accompanying material must be reviewed to ensure they comply with the DDA. Such material should not in any way put

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a disabled candidate at a disadvantage in comparison with other candidates without justification.

Example: A question asking applicants whether they have a driving licence would be discriminatory unless the job involves the post holder having to drive (and there is no alternative to driving).

If, for example, there is a need for the post holder to be able to travel (but not necessarily to drive) then this requirement should be stated in the information sent to potential applicants. It is therefore unlikely that a person who cannot travel will apply.

As well as being aware of the above, the following points must be taken into consideration:

- you must ensure that you are using the correct application form. All new forms include a section on disability. **Any forms that do not include such a section should be destroyed.**
- can your application form be made available in alternative formats i.e. large print, audio tape, Braille or computer diskette?

Invitations to Interview

Job interviews are covered under the DDA by the duty of 'reasonable adjustment' which ensures that disabled candidates are not substantially disadvantaged in comparison with non-disabled candidates.

NB: 'substantial' is generally taken to mean 'more than minor or trivial' for these purposes, i.e. the level of difficulty experienced by a disabled person before the duty to make a reasonable adjustment is

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triggered is not as high as the everyday meaning of 'substantial' might suggest.

You should think ahead for interviews. Adjustments need to be made if you are aware, or could reasonably be expected to be aware, that they are required. However, in the circumstances where a disabled applicant arrives for an interview without previously notifying the employer of his/her requirements, the employer will still be under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment from the time when the employer first learns of the disability so as to prevent the applicant being placed at a substantial disadvantage. However, in these circumstances what might be reasonable may be different to what might have been reasonable had the employer had more warning of the need for potential adjustments. It may be that, if it is not possible to make the required adjustment simply because there has been no prior warning of the need for it (but it would otherwise be a reasonable adjustment), then it may be necessary to re-arrange the interview for a later date. The applicant should be encouraged to request any arrangements that they require in advance of any interview (this should be covered in the application form), except where an employer might reasonably be expected to know that an adjustment is necessary.

Example: if the employer was aware that one of the candidates was a wheelchair user, then it might be reasonable to expect the employer to hold the interview in an accessible venue, even if this had not specifically been requested.

- Ensure that the interviewee and interviewer are aware of any change of venue or adaptation for interview.
- If possible, inform the interviewee of a named contact within the organisation who is able to meet them at reception.

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- Ensure that any adaptations to testing procedures are available **before** the interview and that their operation is clearly understood by the interviewer.

The Interview

The interview must be conducted in a way that treats each candidate fairly. Reasonable adjustments must be made to ensure that the procedure is free from discrimination against any disabled candidates.

All people involved in the interview process:

- must know their legal responsibility to ensure that disabled people are not substantially disadvantaged in comparison with non-disabled candidates;
- must understand how the interviewing or other selection process will be carried out, including how to effectively implement any necessary reasonable adjustments to these processes.

All staff involved in the selection process should be fully aware of:

- the criteria set out by the person specification; and
- the requirements of the job description.

Questions should be drawn up that relate strictly to requirements of the above - these questions should be put to all interviewees, with follow-up questions where necessary and appropriate.

Questions relating to health are allowed but when used should be asked of **all** candidates. Health related questions can, however, be asked of a disabled candidate only when it is justifiable to do so, having regard to the particular job.

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Asking disability-related questions

Disabled people are unlikely to apply for jobs they know their disability prevents them from doing. Employers can expect that most disabled applicants have thought through any likely problem areas before deciding to apply.

A disabled candidate should only be asked about the effects of his/her disability:

- when it is, or may be, relevant to the person's ability to do the job – after a reasonable adjustment; or
- in order to find out whether it is relevant and/or what adjustments ought to be made.

If it is necessary to ask an individual candidate about his or her disability, interviewers should attempt to separate such questions from the rest of the interview.

NB: Such questions should never be considered in isolation to considering what reasonable adjustments might alleviate the impact of a particular disability.

Selection

The interviewing panel should consider every candidate immediately after his/her interview. Candidates should be selected on an assessment of their skills and experience against the requirements of the person specification and the job description.

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You should assess objectively a disabled candidate's ability to do the job, taking into account any reasonable adjustment that might help him/her perform the job, including any suggestions made by the candidate during the application and interview process. Where possible it could be very worthwhile encouraging a disabled candidate to visit the workplace before employment commences to consider whether proposed adjustments would work.

You may have concerns regarding the impact of a candidate's disability on his or her ability to do the job. Where this is the case you must always consider further discussion with the applicant, the Employee Health Service and/or any relevant body, when deciding upon any stage of the interview and selection procedure, so that a fully informed decision can be made. A medical examination may be required, but only if this can be justified and directly relates to the essential elements of the job. Initially you should seek advice from the Employee Health Service before any assessment is considered.

Selection panels and single interviewers should remember that in assessing a disabled person they should base their assessment on that person's capabilities **after** reasonable adjustments have been made.

NB: Failure to involve the candidate during this procedure may result in the failure to be able to make a reasonable adjustment, which could give rise to a case of discrimination.

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Unsuccessful Candidates

You are justified in giving a disabled candidate no further consideration if, in so far as reasonable adjustments can achieve this, the candidate has been treated equally with other applicants and one of the following applies:

- he or she has been found to be unsuitable because of lack of appropriate ability, skills or experience and this is not related to the candidate's disability;
- another candidate has better or more suitable skills and experience and this is not related to the candidate's disability; or
- the candidate's disability makes him or her substantially less suitable for the post, even if all reasonable adjustments were made by the employer to overcome the impact of the disability.

Unsuccessful candidates should be contacted as soon as possible after a decision has been taken. Where possible it is good practice to provide candidates with feedback as to why they were not chosen for the post.

Feedback can be a useful opportunity to give encouragement and support, and possibly advice about the likelihood of any future opportunities within the organisation. It may be particularly important for disabled candidates to be told that the reason for not being selected was related to their level of skills and experience rather than their disability.

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Job Offer

Terms and conditions in a job offer should reflect reasonable adjustment and a letter of variations to terms and conditions should be sent to the successful candidate.

Induction/Integration

- Ensure that the working environment is reviewed and ready **before** the commencement date and any reasonable adjustment has been carried out;
- ensure that any specific needs for induction have been accounted for;
- where necessary, ensure that the disabled new employee, Health & Safety, the Employee Health Service and any other relevant expert body have been consulted; and
- make sure that all co-workers are aware of any adjustments made, particularly if they play a part in ensuring an adjustment is successful.

The induction programme is obviously an important time for **all** new employees. Employers should aim to allay the anxieties of new employees, including disabled employees, and give him or her the necessary support to become competent in the job.

The requirements for the induction period will be individual to each new employee, but might include the following:

- Deaf people may need sign language interpreters while they settle into work to ensure that they are able to pick up all the information they need during the early days;

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- people with a speech impairment may need someone who knows their speech to assist with communication while co-workers become familiar with their way of speaking;
- people with visual impairments may need extra time and additional assistance until they become familiar with the layout of the workplace; and
- people with learning difficulties might need a friend, relative or support worker to accompany them to work while they get used to the environment.

Employers should discuss requirements with the new employee prior to him or her starting the job and should have the necessary provisions in place on the first day of employment.

It may be useful to organise a pre-start meeting where the disabled employee can meet colleagues and consider proposed adjustments **before** starting work. It should, however, be made clear that the job is not conditional upon this meeting.

Training and Development

- Ensure that disabled employees are considered for development programmes on equal terms with their non-disabled colleagues;
- consider alternative format for training programmes; and
- consider any reasonable adjustment that may be necessary for training programmes.

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Appraisals

- Ensure that disabled employees have appraisals on equal terms with their non-disabled colleagues; and
- ensure that appraisals are carried out on a regular basis i.e. six monthly, annually, etc.

The Disability Symbol ('two ticks')

The symbol is circular, usually green or black, with two ticks surrounded by the words 'positive about disabled people' and is used in order that :

- disabled people will know which employers will be positive about their abilities; and
- employers can show their commitment to good practice in employing disabled people.

The symbol is a recognition given by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have agreed to take action to meet five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees.

The five commitments are:

1. to interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities;
2. to ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what they can do to make sure they can develop and use their abilities;
3. to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment;

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4. to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make the commitments work;
5. each year, to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, to plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

Some specialist publications for reaching disabled people

Disability Now, Editorial Dept., 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW
Telephone: 020 7619 7323
Textphone: 020 7619 7332
Fax: 020 7619 7331

Website: www.disabilitynow.org.uk

- this monthly newspaper is aimed at all disabled people

New Beacon, RNIB, Editorial, 105 Judd Street,
London WC1H 9NE

Email: beacon@rnib.org.uk

Website: www.rnib.org.uk

- a monthly magazine for people with visual impairments published by the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB)

Ready Willing and Able, 27 Harborough Road,
London SW16 2XP

Telephone / Fax: 020 8696 7006

Email: rwa@lineone.net

Website: www.readywillingable.net

- a recruitment bulletin for disabled people

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Other contacts / sources of information

Employment Opportunities for people with disabilities,

123 Minories, London EC3N 1NT

Telephone: 020 7481 2727

Textphone: 020 7481 2727

Fax: 020 7481 9797

Email: eopps.ho@care4free.net

Website: www.opportunities.org.uk

- as well as helping disabled people find and retain work they offer a comprehensive service to employers, including a job-match facility.

jobability.com

The on-line recruitment website 'totaljobs.com', working with Microsoft Ltd and Leonard Cheshire have launched 'jobability.com' to give disabled people access to a wide variety of jobs as well as career advice. Disabled people can post their CV to the site. Employers can advertise jobs on the site, on the understanding that they offer any disabled person, who fulfils the person specification attached to the post, a guaranteed interview. Website: www.jobability.com

Jobcentre Plus - Disability Service Teams (DSTs) and the Disability 'two ticks' Symbol

Details of the DST local to the applicant's/employee's place of work, can be obtained from the local Job Centre or at the following website: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

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Master Transcriptions, MT Studios on the Common, The Pantiles,
Tunbridge Wells TN2 5TE
Telephone: 01892 516157
Fax: 01892 544796
Email: mastrans@argonet.co.uk

- alternative formats can be arranged through the contract set up with MT. Further details can be found in the DAC fact sheets 'Making our literature and forms accessible' and 'Transcription services'.

Recruitment That Works: Enriching your workforce through partnership: Employment Action File 1

- this Employers' Forum on Disability (EFD) publication provides employers with a template 'service level agreement' which makes it easier to structure relationships with Jobcentre Plus and specialist disability agents. It is based on a project which led to full-time employment for fifty disabled people and their carers. It costs £15 and is available from:

Employers' Forum on Disability (EFD), Nutmeg House,
60 Gainsford Street, London SE1 2NY
Telephone / Textphone: 020 7403 3020
Fax: 020 7403 0404
Email: efd@employers-forum.co.uk
Website: www.employers-forum.co.uk

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Whilst we endeavour to ensure the accuracy of information given in this fact sheet, it is intended for guidance only. Inclusion of supplier/organisation details does not imply Royal Mail Group plc approval. Any prices/terms/conditions must be confirmed direct with service provider.

**If you require these guidelines in an alternative format,
please contact the DAC via:**

Disability Helpline

Telephone: 0114 241 4731

Fax: 0114 241 4534

Calls are welcome through RNID Tynetalk and BT Text Direct

Email: dac@royalmail.com

Website: www.royalmail.com/dac

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Checklist

Job Description/Person Specification		✓
1	Have you described the required standards of skill/competence clearly and specifically	
2	Have you avoided using ambiguous criteria	
3	Have you defined the required experience stating the length, standard and level of necessary skills for the specific job	
4	Have you avoided focusing on 'paper' education/qualifications when you really need to know whether candidates have the skills, abilities or aptitudes required to do the job effectively	
5	Have you defined the required abilities in terms of the real requirements of the job, not just in vague, non-specific terms	
6	Can you justify the criteria used	
Advertising		✓
1	Equal Opportunities statement and/or the Disability Symbol ('two ticks') included in the advertisement	
2	Is the advertisement fair and non-discriminatory	
3	Can the vacancy details be made available in alternative formats	

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4	Have you ensured that the advertisement is placed in specialist publications	
5	Have you considered contacting the DEA and/or specialist agencies	
Application Forms		✓
1	Does the form include a section on disability declaration	
2	Can the form be made available in alternative formats	
Invitations to Interview		✓
1	Have any required reasonable adjustments been made for the interview	
2	Has the interviewee been informed of any adjustments/changes that have been made	
Interview		✓
1	Are all interviewers aware of their legal responsibility under the DDA to not disadvantage a disabled applicant	
2	Do all interviewers fully understand how the interview and selection process will be carried out	
3	Are all staff involved in the selection process fully aware of the criteria set out in the person specification and the requirements of the job description	
4	Do all interviewers fully understand when it is relevant to ask a disability-related question	

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Selection		✓
1	Has every candidate been considered for the vacancy immediately after interview	
2	Has every disabled candidate been considered for the vacancy after any reasonable adjustments have been considered	
3	Has there been further discussion, where there are concerns regarding the impact of a candidate's disability on his or her ability to do the job	
4	Would a visit to the workplace assist?	
Unsuccessful Candidates		✓
1	Has fair and realistic feedback been given to the unsuccessful candidates	
Job Offer		✓
1	Is the working environment reviewed and ready before work commences	
2	Have any specific needs for induction been addressed	
3	Where necessary, have Health & Safety been consulted	
4	Are co-workers aware of any adjustments made	
5	Are those responsible for the individuals induction, training, development and appraisals aware of the issues to be considered - see pages 13 to 15 of the guidelines	