

Checklist for Recruiting Staff

Business Information Factsheet

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Introduction

This checklist sets out the main stages involved in recruiting a new member of staff and summarises key legal aspects of recruitment, such as avoiding discrimination and carrying out right to work checks.

The checklist does not provide information about using a recruitment agency or about hiring temporary workers or freelance contractors. These topics are covered separately in BIF371 Choosing and Using a Recruitment Agency, BIF 246 A Guide to Hiring Temporary Workers and BIF432 A Guide to Hiring a Contractor.

Employment legislation is complicated and this checklist is intended as a starting point only. Anyone who is recruiting a member of staff should always seek appropriate professional advice when necessary.

The main stages of recruitment

- Write a job description

This should include:

- Job title.
- Main purpose of job.
- Manager or supervisor to whom the person will be responsible.
- Responsibilities and tasks.

- Write a person specification

This should set out the skills, experience and personal qualities that are essential to carry out the job, and those that are 'desirable' but not essential.

- Decide how applicants should provide information about themselves

Typically, applicants are asked to provide one or more of the following:

- A completed application form.
- A CV.
- A covering letter.
- The names and addresses of two individuals who can supply references, one of whom should normally be the applicant's current or recent employer.

- Write a job advert

Job adverts should contain the following information:

- The location of the job.
- Description of the business.
- Job title and a summary of responsibilities.
- Summary of required skills, qualifications and experience.
- How to request further information and apply for the job.
- Make an application pack

This can be posted or e-mailed to applicants on request, and should include the job description, person specification, application form (if one is being used) as well as some information about your business. Where possible, online job adverts should provide the opportunity to download the application pack.

- Advertise the job

Places where jobs can be advertised include:

- Jobcentre Plus.
- Careers services and local schools, colleges and universities.
- Local newspapers.
- Online jobs boards.
- Social networks such as LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook.

- Shortlist applicants

As best practice, two people should be involved in shortlisting applicants to ensure that the assessment is objective, consistent and fair.

- Interview shortlisted applicants

For information about conducting a job interview, see BIF213 A Guide to Planning and Conducting a Job Interview.

- Make a verbal job offer

When you have selected the applicant that you would like to recruit, you can make a verbal job offer. You should make it clear that the offer is subject to a right to work check, and mention any other pre-employment checks that will need to be carried out before the offer is confirmed (such as a reference check).

- Carry out legally required checks

- For all jobs, you must carry out a 'right to work check', to ensure that the candidate would not be working in the UK illegally. For more information, see BIF540 Right to Work Checks.
- For some jobs, such as working with children or in healthcare, a criminal record check must also be made. This is to prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups. For more information, see BIF255 Applying for Criminal Records Checks in

England and Wales, BIF514 Applying for Criminal Records Checks in Scotland, or BIF515 Applying for Criminal Records Checks in Northern Ireland.

- Take up references, if these are required
- Send the successful applicant a written job offer

If all checks are satisfactory, a written offer should be sent to the successful applicant. This is an important document and should be carefully worded to include:

- The title of the job that is being offered.
- Terms such as salary, hours, benefits, pension arrangements, holiday entitlement and place of employment.
- Start date.
- What the applicant needs to do to accept the offer or turn it down.

Because your preferred applicant may turn your offer down, or fail pre-employment checks, it is good practice to select a reserve applicant who can be offered the job if necessary.

- Send rejection letters to unsuccessful interviewees

When you have made a job offer and it has been accepted, you should send rejection letters to the unsuccessful interviewees.

Key legal aspects of recruitment

- Avoid discrimination

Under the Equality Act 2010, employers must not discriminate against employees or job applicants on any of the following grounds:

- Gender.
- Race (colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin).
- Age.
- Marital status or whether they are in a civil partnership.
- Being pregnant or having a child.
- Disability.
- Religion or lack of religion.
- Transsexuality.
- Sexual orientation.

To ensure that you can provide evidence, if necessary, that your recruitment process was not discriminatory, you should keep all application forms and letters of rejection on file for six months after the recruitment process has ended.

For more information about avoiding discrimination, see BIF473 A Guide to the Equality Act 2010.

- Comply with data protection regulations
 - Provide job applicants with clear information about what personal data you collect from them and what the purpose for collecting it is (for example, to assess their suitability for the job, or to monitor the business's equal opportunities policy).
 - Ensure that you only collect personal data that is necessary for the stated purpose, and that you do not use it for any other purpose.
 - Ensure that you do not keep it for longer than necessary. If you wish to keep the details of unsuccessful applicants on file for future consideration, you must request their permission for this.
 - Allow employees and job applicants to view the personal data that is held about them on request, and to correct it or have it erased in certain circumstances.
 - Ensure that personal data is stored securely.

Hints and tips

- Templates for writing job descriptions, person specifications, application forms and job offer letters are provided by Acas at www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1392.
- It is important to keep up to date with legislation relating to recruitment. Your local Jobcentre Plus (www.gov.uk/jobcentre-plus-help-for-recruiters/recruitment-advice-and-support) or Acas (www.acas.org.uk) office can provide further information.
- If applicants are expected to have particular skills, such as typing or bookkeeping, it can be worth arranging a suitable test before or after the interview. Psychometric tests are also available that can identify specific personality traits, although carrying out these tests requires specialist training. Let the applicant know in advance about any tests that will be held.

Further information

- BIF042 A Guide to Written Statements of Employment Particulars
 BIF084 A Checklist for Inducting a New Employee
 BIF129 An Introduction to Employing Part-time Workers
 BIF213 A Guide to Planning and Conducting a Job Interview
 BIF246 A Guide to Hiring Temporary Workers
 BIF255 Applying for Criminal Records Checks in England and Wales
 BIF371 Choosing and Using a Recruitment Agency
 BIF432 A Guide to Hiring a Contractor
 BIF457 An Introduction to Employing Staff on Fixed-term Contracts
 BIF473 A Guide to the Equality Act 2010
 BIF514 Applying for Criminal Records Checks in Scotland
 BIF515 Applying for Criminal Records Checks in Northern Ireland
 BIF535 A Guide to the Immigration Act 2016
 BIF536 A Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
 BIF540 Right to Work Checks

Useful contacts

Acas provides information, advice, training and conciliation services about all aspects of employment, including recruitment.

Tel: 0300 123 1100 (Helpline)

Website: www.acas.org.uk

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) is a professional body for those involved in the management and development of people. It publishes online resources covering HR management, organisational culture and workforce trends.

Tel: (020) 8612 6200

Website: www.cipd.co.uk

The Equality and Human Rights Commission works to prevent unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities in England, Wales and Scotland. It publishes guidance for employers on preventing and dealing with discrimination in the workplace.

Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland works to prevent unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities in Northern Ireland. It publishes guidance for employers on preventing and dealing with discrimination in the workplace.

Tel: (028) 9050 0600

Website: www.equalityni.org

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