Recruitment

When you are recruiting a paid employee, it is essential that you adhere to the legal requirements.

ACAS provide a comprehensive guide covering the following topics, to ensure you are following the law on discrimination:

- Discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Asking candidates about protected characteristics
- Diversity monitoring
- Positive action
- Trade union membership
- Hiring someone from outside of the UK
- Right to work in the UK checks
- Advertising
- Social media profiles
- Selection process
- Offering a position

Please use this link to access the comprehensive guide from ACAS

And below are some additional tips, including suggestions from our members to ensure that equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are at the heart of your recruitment.

Throughout your recruitment processes, be explicit about why information is being requested and how it is used relevant to the specific part of the recruitment process.

For example, you may be requesting disability information required to make appropriate adjustments at interview - no further disability information should be obtained at that stage as it is not relevant. If the candidate is successful then further information can be requested at next stage, for example to agree required adjustments to carry out the role.

Positive Action

You can ask for a protected characteristic or use it when deciding to hire someone, as long as you can prove you're doing this to help a disadvantaged or under-represented group in your business. This is sometimes known as **'positive action'**.

By law, you must always see if there's a less discriminatory way to make your workforce more diverse. Please refer back to the ACAS guide for more information on this topic.

If you are considering using positive action ACAS suggest that it is a good idea to seek legal advice to ensure you are complying with the law.
https://www.acas.org.uk/getting-legal-advice

Writing the job spec: EDI considerations

- Ensure there is transparency around role flexibility – for example if a post can be either part time or full time, ensure information is provided to highlight the key role requirements for a part time option.

- Consider a change of language from 'essential and desirable' to 'necessary and advantageous.'

- Aim to keep the 'necessary' criteria as short as possible

- Consider using a gender decoder to review language in job pack and role info, as research indicates that a higher use of 'masculine-coded words' may prevent women from applying: https://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/

- If the role requires IT skills, be explicit about exactly what packages and levels of skill are necessary versus those which can be learnt on the job and avoid broad statements such as "excellent IT skills."

Advertising: EDI considerations

- Research and utilise recruitment services that are targeted to specific communities.

- Considered undertaking paid outreach to relevant under-represented communities to obtain their input. For example, working with local faith communities so they can better understand your organisation in relation to their communities and can then support by sharing recruitment information.

- Offer 121s for potential candidates to discuss the role and organisation with a person who is outside of the recruitment process / interview panel, so that they can feel confident to ask anything without it impacting the recruitment process.

Shortlisting: EDI considerations

- It is good practice to develop a simple scoring system and ensure all staff involved in the shortlisting process are following the same system.

  For example, you could mark each necessary criteria with a numerical score. It's helpful to avoid complicated scoring systems such as a rating out of a 100 as each score has to be defined.

  Below is a simple 1-3 rating system
  1= not met   2=partially met   3=fully met

  It is best practice to retain all notes / scoring sheets for a short period after the recruitment process as candidates may request feedback or even challenge the outcome.

Reducing bias when shortlisting

- Blinding – by viewing answers without any other contextual data, you are forced to judge candidates on their answers only.

- Chunking – by viewing answers in isolation, you avoid the 'halo' effect where you start marking a candidate up (or down) because you feel strongly about their previous answers.

- Randomisation – by viewing answers in different orders, no one candidate gets unfairly penalised by fatigue.

Reach has produced a blog for more information on reducing bias: https://reachvolunteering.org.uk/blog/ditching-cvs-and-cover-letters

Interviews: EDI considerations

- Ensure you provide a simple process for candidates to request 'reasonable adjustments' at their interview.

  Often candidates with protected characteristics will have a clear view of any reasonable adjustments they need to work in the post, but adjustments at the interview stage may not be as apparent. Consider providing some examples of the types of adjustments that can be made available. Examples may include:

  o Providing the option of online and in person interviews.
  o Clarifying that captions / transcripts are available for online interviews.
  o Enabling candidates to bring notes into the interview and refer to them.
  o Giving extra time for people who might want longer to process questions.

- Ensure you utilise your scoring system (outlined in the shortlisting section above) at the interview stage too.

- Disability Confident Scheme: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guaranteed-interview-scheme

  It is extremely important to ensure with any quotas used or the Disability Confident Scheme that all panel members understand why they are being used and commit to the process.

- Consider providing interview questions in advance and where required, advise that some questions will be presented on the day if you need to see how candidates think on their feet.

- Consider providing a small task for candidates to prepare in advance.

- Consider including a 'wildcard question' at the end of the interview allowing candidates to talk about anything they choose to share.

- Ask about training needs (for example if there is a strong candidate who may require training to fulfil just one element of the role).