



Skills for CHC Chairs

Unit 7: Recruitment & selection of
staff

HOW TO
USE THIS
UNIT

You will need:
* the Chair's Resource Pack
* pen and paper

You should set aside about an hour to work through this unit.
[If it takes you more or less than that, it doesn't matter, as long as you feel you've given enough thought to the ideas].

This Unit is different from the others. It deals with a set procedure, where there are right and wrong ways of responding. The exercises give you an opportunity to understand this procedure better, and to practice the skills. If you find that your answers are very different from the ones we suggest, you may find it helpful to talk them through, with the Chief Officer or another Chair.

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1. The Chair's role in recruiting staff
2. The Process
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ANSWERS

1. to make sure you get the best person for the job
2. to avoid nepotism and corruption
3. to guard against conscious prejudice, or unconscious bias, against an individual or a group [women, Black people, etc]
4. to help you think through exactly what skills you need [rather than looking for someone just like/unlike the last post-holder]
5. because a lot of people are already unfairly disadvantaged when they look for jobs, and you don't want to be part of that
6. to be seen to be fair and open [so that you can explain to someone why they weren't selected, if necessary]
7. to comply with the law [especially the Race Relations Act and Sex Discrimination Act]
8. to avoid the 'cloning' effect [left to ourselves, all of us tend unconsciously to recruit people just like us]

The procedures outlined here have been designed over a number of years to meet these criteria. On the next page is a chart showing the complete process.

3. Job description and candidate specification

The process starts with the job description [list of tasks and responsibilities]. Most Regions have agreed with the CHCs a standard job description for Chief Officer. However, if your CHC has special requirements, you may want to make sure that these are included.

READ

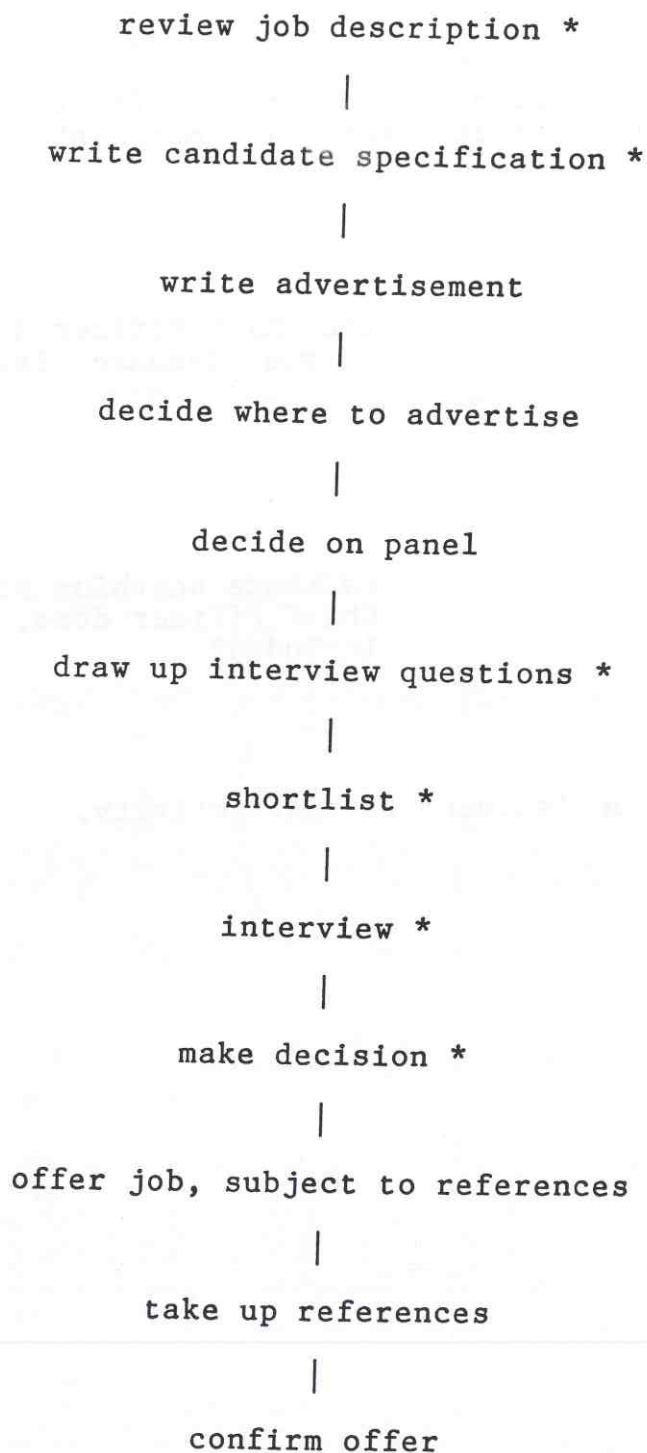
the Chief Officer job description
in your Resource Pack

NOW
CONSIDER

is there anything you know your
Chief Officer does, that isn't
included?

There isn't an 'answer' to this activity.

Recruitment and Selection Process



In general, the administrative work will be done by the Personnel Department at Region. The steps marked * are the ones where as Chair you are most likely to be involved.

Candidate specification

The candidate specification [or person specification] is the key to the entire selection process. It is a list of the skills and personal qualities candidates need on their first day in post. Everybody learns through doing a job, so you don't expect a new worker to have all the knowledge and skills of someone who's been there for years.

The key to writing a good candidate specification is to go back to basics. For instance, rather than looking for someone who has already been a CHC Chief Officer, you identify the 'transferable skills' they need, which they might have learnt in a very different context. In this way, you also avoid criteria which unnecessarily exclude people. An example is asking for a university degree [since women, or Black people, are less likely to have had that opportunity] rather than working out what skills and qualities you expect a degree to guarantee.

Again, most regions will have an agreed candidate specification. You may want to check that it covers any particular needs of your CHC.

A full candidate specification uses the following headings:

Skills

Knowledge

Qualifications

Experience

Personal qualities

Special requirements

Although you won't be drawing one up from scratch, we have provided some practice here, so that you get a feel of the process and principles.

PRACTICE

with your own 'job' as Chair.
Think through all the duties you
have. Then list just the **skills**
and **knowledge** you think a new Chair needs on her/his first day.
Try not to be too influenced by your own background!

Skills

Knowledge

NOW
COMPARE

your ideas with ours

[This isn't a definitive candidate specification, just a draft
for practice].

Skills

- * Excellent negotiating skills
- * Ability to facilitate and encourage others to work to their full potential
- * Ability to work constructively in close co-operation with others
- * Ability to deal with complex written information

Knowledge

- * Good general knowledge of NHS structures and operations
- * Thorough understanding of the role and operation of CHCs
- * Awareness of the social composition of the CHC area

For this exercise, it doesn't matter whether your list is the same as ours. The point is to practice this kind of analysis.

IF YOU
WANT

to do more work on candidate specifications, work through the remaining headings on page 7. Then compare your answers with the full specification in your Resource Pack.

2. Shortlisting

This is the first chance to check candidates against your candidate specification.

Some items won't be test-able at the shortlisting stage: you can't tell from an application form whether someone works well in a team, for instance. It's good practice to let candidates know which criteria you are using for shortlisting.

PRACTICE

Markhouse CHC and the Region are recruiting a new Chief Officer. These are the criteria which the panel is using for shortlisting.

Skills:

1. analytical skills, in order to deal effectively with NHS documentation

Knowledge:

2. knowledge of social services and voluntary sector involvement in care provision

Experience:

3. 3 - 5 years' experience at middle or senior management level in the NHS, other public or voluntary sector
4. experience of managing an office, staff and budget
5. experience of committee procedures and administration

On the next page is a summary of three candidates' application forms.

Jane Ahearne

- * 10 years as NHS personnel manager
- * degree in social administration
- * Chair of governors of local primary school
- * has to read and summarise new employment legislation in current job

Wesley Coleman

- * MBA [recognised postgraduate management qualification]
- * 5 years as care worker with people with learning disabilities [local authority]
- * 2 years as manager of voluntary sector unit for people with learning disabilities
- * 6 years as manager of private nursing home
- * volunteer counsellor for Samaritans
- * treasurer of local cricket club

Marie Trinh

- * 8 years as manager of reception centre for refugees from Vietnam [voluntary sector]
- * currently doing Open University degree in health service management
- * 1 year as voluntary co-ordinator of Vietnamese community organisation
- * frequent sessional work as interpreter for local hospital
- * published book on multi-cultural issues in health care

GO OVER

each application in turn, to see if it meets the criteria on the previous page. Remember you are comparing each person with the criteria, not with the other candidates. Fill in your answers on the grid below.

For each one, mark / if they have met the criterion; x if they haven't; and ? if you're not sure.

Criteria: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Candidates:

Jane Ahearne

Wesley Coleman

Marie Trinh

NOW
CHECK

your answers with ours

Criteria: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Candidates:

Jane Ahearne	/	?	/	/	?
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Wesley Coleman	/	/	x	/	/
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Marie Trinh	/	?	/	/	/
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Your answers may not be the same: shortlisting isn't an exact science, though we try to make it as exact as possible.

All of the criteria on the list are essential, so you can't shortlist anyone who has an x, however good they may seem otherwise. With the ?s, if there's only a slight doubt you may decide to shortlist, and find out more at the interview. You must make sure you treat everyone consistently in this case.

On that basis, we would consider shortlisting Jane and Marie. As there are two areas of doubt in Jane's case, she would be less likely to get to an interview.

4. Preparing for the interview

The members of the panel need to meet to prepare questions before the interview, [It should also preferably be before shortlisting, so that they are not influenced by having seen the forms].

The function of the questions [or practical tests, such as typing] is to test whether the candidates meet each of the criteria on the candidate specification. These are the only questions you ask; and you put the same questions to each candidate.

PRACTICE

Think of questions you could ask to test these criteria. Look for questions that will reveal actual experience, rather than just theory [eg ask for examples]

1. Ability to work with and motivate voluntary members

2. Empathy and sensitivity when dealing with bereaved or aggrieved individuals

NOW
CHECK

your answers with ours

1. Ability to work with and motivate voluntary members

The CHC consists of members who are volunteers, working in their own time. Can you tell us how you might help keep them motivated in their work?

2. Empathy and sensitivity when dealing with bereaved or aggrieved individuals

Can you give us an example of helping someone bereaved, in your work or personal life?

And what about someone who was aggrieved or angry?

Again, there are many ways of asking these questions. The important thing is to make sure the question does really test what you want. You also need to agree between you what would count as an adequate answer.

AS A
PANEL

you will need to decide who's chairing, and who's going to ask which questions.

5. Making a decision

After all the interviews are over, members arrive at their own, provisional rating of the candidates. They then compare notes, discussing any points of difference, and making sure they are being consistent in their decision-making.

Panels usually have a grid like the one on page 12, and go through the same /, x or ? process. The same system applies: all the criteria are essential, so you can't appoint someone who has an x. It's usually necessary to talk through the ?s in some detail, to identify how serious your doubts are.

Panel members have to work effectively as a team, listening to different points of view and being prepared to change their mind. It's notoriously difficult to be objective in evaluating replies: the 'halo effect', where you are favourably influenced by one good answer, can easily take over. This is where team working is essential.

If there is no candidate who meets the criteria, you need to re-advertise. Appointing someone who doesn't is tempting in the short-term, but usually disastrous.

IF YOU
WANT

to learn more about recruitment and selection, ask your Chief Officer if there are courses available.