

## Guidance

### Top tips on inclusive shortlisting

- The purpose of a sift/shortlist process is to match applicants as closely to the role and person specification as possible in order to decide which applicants to invite for interview or the next stage in the recruitment process.
- Ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment process (including shortlisting), have undertaken diversity awareness training (including unconscious bias). Clear Learning can provide training in this area. Such training will minimise the risk of bias in their decision making.
- Staff involved in recruitment and selection should be kept-up-to date with employment and equality legislation.
- When sifting/shortlisting candidates it's important to have a robust and transparent system in place to assess applicants consistently, objectively and on merit against the competencies/criteria set out in the Person Specification. This will minimise the risk of a challenge of unfairness (i.e. putting someone at a disadvantage because of their 'protected characteristic') or discrimination.
- It is important that you do not introduce new criteria at any stage of the recruitment process.
- Be aware of who is protected by the Equality Act 2010 (refer to EHRC guidance for further information). The Equality Act 2010 defines 'protected characteristics' as follows:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage and civil partnership
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - race
  - religion or belief
  - sex
  - sexual orientation

- If you have asked for applicants to complete a diversity monitoring form this should be kept separate from the CV/application form and should not be included in the paperwork for members of the shortlisting panel.
- Avoid judgements on applicants with unusual names, gaps in CV (e.g. career break), level of English – such judgements have the potential to be discriminatory.
- Look creatively and understandingly at candidates with no employment history or with significant employment gaps. Voluntary work and life experience can reveal invaluable organisational and problem-solving skills. Challenge colleagues around their decisions based on criteria other than that listed on the candidate profile.
- A shortlisting panel should consist of a minimum of two people but three is appropriate to minimise the risk of bias. This can include the line manager, someone outside of the business unit and a member of HR if possible.
- Each panel member should independently complete a shortlisting form, indicating against the criteria, how well each candidate met the competencies, skills and experience for the role. Such decisions can be discussed with the panel members in order to agree final shortlist. Evidence on such decisions should be recorded, in particular, the reasons why a person has not been shortlisted. This will aid feedback to the applicant if requested, and provide evidence should the organisation be challenged on the decision making process.
- If the shortlisting meeting is going to be delayed due to sickness, annual leave, etc it is good practice to notify applicants as early possible, and keep them informed at regular intervals to avoid losing your best candidates.
- It is helpful to provide positive feedback to unsuccessful candidates, particularly if there are any aspects of their application where they could improve upon, which may lead to a successful outcome in future applications.

Remember the above points apply as much to senior roles where it is equally important to focus on what is to be achieved, rather than to be prescriptive about the 'how'.