



Guide to involving service users and carers in staff interviews

This document has been written to support staff when involving service users and/or carers in staff interviews.

At the end of this guide, there is a sheet that requires the signature of the staff member and service user/carer. This demonstrates that the information has been shared with and understood by both.

A Step-by-Step quick guide is also appended.

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Why we involve service users and carers on staff interview panels.

We recognise the importance of including people who use our services, either as a service user or carer, in the recruitment of staff. For over 10 years, service users, carers and volunteers have helped recruit staff; many of the staff currently working within the Trust were interviewed by service users and carers. This includes clinical staff working face-to-face in services and members of the Executive Team including the Chief Executive.

The reason we do this is to ensure that the people who come to work in the Trust have the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary, as well as the right values and devotion we would expect.

Preparing for being involved in an interview

What you should expect:

- Regular communication with you (offering to meet prior to the interview panel if needed)
- Communication and support in understanding the Job Description and Person Specification of the intended role
- Support to write value-based questions
- Timely communication with instructions for the day of the interview including the venue, date, timings, breaks and who will be joining you on the panel.
- For interview panels that are taking place via Microsoft Teams, all meeting invites and instructions to be sent in a good time.

What is expected of you:

- Two days before the panel make sure you have all information you expected/need, and please query this if not.
- Arrive on time/early, in the right frame of mind to conduct an interview.
- Follow the instructions given by the host and behave courteously.
- Wear appropriate, comfortable clothing.
- Refreshment will be available (if the interview is face-to-face), but should you need something specific please bring this along with you.

Nottinghamshire Healthcare recruitment process

All Nottinghamshire Healthcare vacancies are advertised via NHS Jobs and the use of the online TRAC system.

Job role advertised on NHS Jobs / TRAC system. Appointing officer makes decision on interview panel and invites Involvement Partners to be part of the panel

Applications received on TRAC system, each given unique number to ensure the recruitment process is fair

Shortlisting session and interviews offered to those successful

Interview panel formed to include at least 3 members: Appointing officer, staff member and service user / carer

Interview takes place, successful candidate is selected

Contributing interview questions

As a panel member, service users / carer should be offered the opportunity to contribute and ask questions to the candidates. The questions offered by the service user / carer would ideally be questions which enquire about a person's values and behaviour.

When designing the questions you want to ask the candidates, remember that open questions require more depth in their response and will therefore provide more insight into the candidate.

Below are some suggested topics from which you could form a question:

- Professional skills – communication, Leadership, a creative thinker etc.
- Personal qualities – non-judgmental, empathetic, kind etc.
- What's important to them – values, personal and professional
- How do they promote equality
- Recovery - what this means and how they would support people with their recovery
- Involvement of patients, service users and carers in their own care, and in how the service will run

It is important to ask questions in the same way to all candidates, giving each a fair and equal chance to respond.

Example questions:

- *If you were successful in this role, could you explain how you would communicate with and support carers whilst supporting their loved one?*
- *Can you please talk to us about what you think is most important when supporting someone on the recovery journey?*
- *It is important to the Trust that we encourage service users and carers to help develop services. How would you help them to do this?*

How the panel works

Interview panels usually consist of a minimum of 3 people:

- The Appointing Officer - the person who is leading the interview, has final judgement in the decision to

recruit and will likely be the line manager for the new member of staff. This person will have most knowledge of what is required from the person interviewing.

- The chair – the person who welcomes the candidate and ensures that the panel runs smoothly. In many cases, the chair will be the Appointing Officer.
- Staff member – a member of staff who has experience and knowledge of the service and is currently working in that setting.
- You – to give your expertise, as a service user or carer.

Recruitment paperwork

Once you have confirmed that you would like to take part in an interview, you will receive the Job Description and Person Specification for the role. These will help you to understand what the role is and what the Trust is looking for in the ideal candidate.

On the day of the interviews, you will receive paperwork which names all the candidates and lists the questions to be asked. You will also be asked to make notes, either on a sheet provided or on a notepad.

We know that this can be difficult so it's important that you are able to note down the things you feel are most important, and anything you would have concerns about. Your notes don't need to be perfect reflections of the answers given, it would be more sensible to make bullet points of pertinent comments/responses they give or important things they mention.



These papers will also be used for the final decision once all candidates have been seen. The Appointing Officer will either make a scan of your notes or take your notes with them.

It is important to know that these papers are a legal document and could be looked at if there was a dispute from a candidate.

Scoring

When you meet in preparation for the interview, the staff will explain the scoring process to you. This is a formal process and does need to be followed precisely. You will be properly supported to do this. This is the way we evaluate and score the candidates to inform the decision that is made.

Data Security & Confidentiality

We are all obliged to follow Data Security and Confidentiality for protection of our staff and service users.

When we talk about **Data Security** we mean maintaining accurate records of the candidates responses without identifiers (e.g. full names) and storing/destroying these appropriately.

When we talk about **Confidentiality** we mean that all candidates have the right to privacy in the recruitment process, meaning that you should not share details of the candidates with anyone, during or after the recruitment process. Once the interview panel has been completed you must not share information about what has happened or the details of the candidates. In most cases, you will know/be informed about who has been successful before the candidates know and before it is announced. You must keep this to yourself.

If these conditions are breached, you will not be asked to be involved with the recruitment process again.

What happens after the interview panel?

Once all candidates have been seen the panel will:

- Meet to discuss their thoughts on each person
- Score each candidate's responses
- If there is a suitable candidate for the role, a decision will be made as to who is offered the job.

All offers of employment will be subject to checks and references.

The Appointing Officer will then contact each candidate to inform them of the decision and provide feedback if requested.

The Appointing Officer should contact you after the interview to confirm who the successful candidate is. They may also want to collect feedback from you about what went well, what could be improved.

Confirmation of understanding

Assuming you have understood the information in this guide, you are now ready to take part in an interview.

Please ensure that you have completed the [Involvement Partners registration form](#).

I can confirm that _____ has completed this guide to interviews on _____

Staff member signature	
Print name	
Date	
Signature of IP	
Print name	
Date	