



Safer staff and volunteers – recruitment, induction and supervision

Writing person specifications and role descriptions

Person specifications

Guidance

1. Designing a person specification for a specific job or role may seem like hard work, but it is a very important step in successful recruitment and can save you a great deal of time in the long run. It is helpful because:
 - it enables you to think through what you need from the person who will be doing the job
 - it provides a clear set of criteria which candidates can use to complete their applications
 - it provides a benchmark against which you can assess the suitability of the applications you receive.
2. It is a good idea to think in terms of the following headings when writing your person specification:
 - Education and qualifications
 - Experience
 - Skills, abilities and knowledge
 - Values, attitudes and qualities
 - Any other requirements (eg driving licence)

You can either put the headings into the person specification itself, or simply use them as a checklist to make sure that you have covered everything.

3. If the role includes work with children and young people or is carried out in a situation involving children and young people, then you need to integrate safeguarding elements into the person specification. How you express this will depend on the role, but, as a minimum, it will need to include the “ability to work in a way that promotes the safety and well-being of children and young people”.
4. You also need to state on the person specification how the requirements of the job or role are going to be tested during the selection process. For example, this might be by means of the application form, the interview, or a test, presentation or exercise.
5. Some person specifications divide the requirements into essential and desirable items. Shortlisting and interview panels can then use the desirable category to distinguish between candidates who are otherwise fairly evenly matched. If you decide to do this, you must be clear on the person specification which requirements are essential and which are desirable.
6. It is helpful to list person specification points in the order of importance for shortlisting candidates. For example, if a post requires a qualification and the individual in question doesn’t have it, you can’t shortlist that person.
7. Try to limit your person specification to a maximum of 12 numbered points. This focuses your attention on what you really need for the post, and makes it easier to test all the points thoroughly. It also makes it more feasible for the candidates to address all the items in the person specification when they prepare their applications, and simplifies your job of shortlisting.

Job/role descriptions

Guidance

1. The job description is another important tool not only in the recruitment process but also in ensuring that the successful applicant, once in post, is clear about exactly what is expected of him/her. It provides a useful mechanism for you to ensure that the post holder is able to cover all aspects of their job, and acts as a helpful yardstick if the nature of the role changes. It is good practice to write concise job descriptions and not go into too much detail of every task. A good job description should be two or three pages long at the most.
2. It should contain the following:
 - the name of the employer
 - the title of the post or role
 - where the post is based
 - the hours to be worked
 - the name of the department or project within the organisation in which the post is based
 - the job title of the person to whom the person in this post reports
 - any CRB or other vetting requirements attached to the post
 - the overall purpose of the post
 - the grade and salary for the post (make sure that if it is part-time, there is clarity about whether the amount stated is pro-rata)
 - whether the post is subject to a permanent or time limited contract, and, if time limited, the time-scale involved
 - the main duties and responsibilities attached to the post.
3. As with the person specification, if the post involves any responsibility for children and young people, either directly or otherwise, then a duty to promote their safety and welfare needs to be written into either the overall

Example person specification

Project worker – Newtown Young Carers' Service

	Item (please note all items are essential)	Application form	Interview	Test
1.	Minimum NVQ Level 3 qualification or equivalent in a relevant field	X	X	X
2.	Ability to communicate effectively with children, young people and their families	X	X	X
3.	Ability to plan, organise and deliver a range of activities for children, young people and families both on an individual and on a group basis	X	X	
4.	Ability to prioritise and plan workload effectively, and maintain accurate and up-to-date records and written correspondence using basic IT skills	X	X	X
5.	Ability to engage effectively with other professionals to deliver support packages to families	X	X	
6.	Ability to work in a way that promotes the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults	X	X	
7.	Ability to work in a way that promotes equality of opportunity and respect for diversity	X	X	
8.	Knowledge and understanding of the issues facing young carers and their families	X	X	
9.	Knowledge and understanding of child development	X	X	
10.	Commitment to involving children and families in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services	X		
11.	Commitment to continuing learning	X	X	

Example job/role description

Project worker – Newtown Young Carers' Service

Location: Charlie Blake House, Newtown

Hours: 22 hours per week

Employer: Newtown Young Carers' Service

Department: Direct Services

Reports to: Project manager

Grade: £xxxxx per annum (pro rata)

Permanent/temporary: Permanent position

CRB requirement: Appointment to this post is subject to a satisfactory enhanced CRB check

Purpose

To be part of a team of workers and volunteers responsible for delivering a support service to local children and young people under 18 years of age, who perform a principal caring role towards another member of the household.

To promote the safety and welfare of young carers using the service, in accordance with the measures taken by Newtown Young Carers' service to keep children and young people safe.

Duties and responsibilities

1. To work with children, young people and their families in their own homes and in community venues in order to offer practical and emotional support on issues linked to the child's caring responsibilities within the household.
2. To develop work plans in response to families' individual needs, in partnership with children and families themselves.
3. To support young carers to take part in activities outside the home (eg, sports, arts, social and community activities) that will enrich their lives and contribute to their development.
4. To take part in the planning and running of groups for young carers where this is an appropriate response to their assessed needs.
5. To develop a knowledge and understanding of local resources and services and to work with them in order to deliver a co-ordinated approach to families.
6. To contribute to assessments carried out within the Child Assessment Framework and, if necessary, to attend and contribute to child protection conferences.
7. To ensure that work is carried out in accordance with the policies and procedures adopted by Newtown Young Carers' Service.
8. To attend team meetings and supervision sessions as arranged.
9. To work flexibly as may be required and to carry out any other reasonable duties.