Recruitment Procedures – Seven Steps for Good Procedures

In order to avoid the danger of discriminating in some way, particularly unconsciously, employers must take care to develop and use recruitment procedures which will avoid the risk. Using sensible procedures will also inevitably improve recruitment decisions and the quality of the people taken on.

Professional advice should be sought before any action is taken.

Seven Steps

Sensible procedures would include the following:

1. Always produce **clear job descriptions** which identify both the essential activities of the job and the skills and attributes needed by candidates. It should be possible to see from this whether a disabled candidate would be able to deal with those essential activities. Avoid gender references such as he or she and only refer to qualifications and/or experience which are clearly required by the job. The danger is that any such attributes which cannot be shown to be essential could be inferred as being there to deter women, candidates from ethnic minorities or those with a disability.
2. In seeking candidates ensure that **any wording used does not imply that some category** (such as men or women) **are favoured candidates**, and be careful with words like energetic (unless this is a genuine requirement of the role) which might deter candidates with disabilities. The process for seeking candidates must also be non-discriminatory and not restricted in a way which could be seen to be discriminatory. An obvious error would be to put an advertisement in a place where it would only be seen by, for example, males (such as an all male golf club).
3. **Selection methods must be chosen** which will enable the appropriate skills and attributes to be assessed but should avoid anything which would in effect be discriminatory. An example could be written tests involving English comprehension for a basic cleaning job where the skills assessed by the test would be irrelevant. Where tests are used all candidates need to be given the same tests to avoid any suggestion of discrimination.
4. Be careful to **avoid discriminatory questions** at interview (eg when do you expect to have a family?) and generally try to ensure that all candidates are asked the same questions.
5. Do not ask candidates **health related questions** during the interview process or **before** an offer of a job is made, this would include questionnaires or general questions such as 'the number of days sickness during the last 12 months'. Enquiries as to whether any adjustments are required to enable candidates to attend an interview are permitted.
6. Consider **modifying the workplace** to make it suitable for candidates with disabilities - the code refers to a reasonable cost as being what the extra costs involved in recruiting a non-disabled person might be. You should also look critically at the physical arrangements for recruitment to assist candidates with disabilities to apply more easily (eg wheelchair ramps) and consider whether changes may need to be made to application forms. These should not ask questions which do not impact on the suitability of the candidate for the particular job and should not ask if a candidate is registered disabled.
7. It is essential that **good records** are kept for an appropriate period of time about applications, reasons for rejection and performance in any assessments and at interviews, and that these complement the job description and the skill requirements for the job. Obviously such processes help with selection anyway but these records may be essential if anything goes to an Employment Tribunal. The time limit for a candidate claiming discrimination is three months from the date of the last discriminatory act, which could be, for instance, when they were rejected or given feedback.

How we can help

We will be more than happy to provide you with assistance or any additional information required so please do contact us.

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