



## **GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS FOR EMPLOYMENT**

### **SUPPORTING OUR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OBJECTIVES AND OUR AMBITION TO BE A GREAT PLACE TO WORK**

Dudley Integrated Healthcare Trust strives to be an employer of choice across Dudley and the Black Country region. We are passionate about equality and inclusion, aiming to proactively encourage applicants from our local area, from traditionally under-represented groups, such as those from black, Asian or ethnic minorities, individuals who may have long term health conditions or disabilities, or those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, gender fluid or non-binary. We'd also like to see more men employed as the NHS is traditionally made up mainly of females.

To facilitate this ambition and desire, we have put together this support and guidance for people who might wish to apply for roles with us. This document aims to support and guide you on writing a great application, what you can expect at an interview and how to prepare for your interview.

#### **Writing your application**

- ❖ We hope that our job descriptions and associated person specifications give you enough information to help develop a good application form.
- ❖ Our application forms use the standard NHS Jobs format. If you haven't applied before or haven't got a saved profile, you will need to fill out all the details. The good news is that once you have done it once, the NHS Jobs site will save your profile and you won't have to duplicate the information for future applications. On the person specification it will tell you what we'll be looking for on your application to shortlist you for the role, so make sure you've covered those elements in your application.
- ❖ If the advert provides contact details for someone to discuss the vacancy with, by all means make contact to have a brief discussion.
- ❖ If English isn't your first language, or you have any form of learning difficulty, seek some help to complete your application. If you require application support due to these reasons we would advise you seek help from any networks you may be affiliated with for support, if not please contact us via email [dihc.people@nhs.net](mailto:dihc.people@nhs.net) and we will do our best to help you.



## **Employment History**

- ❖ You will need to know your employment history and dates, for example, what jobs you've held, the month and year from which you held that post and when the employment ended, and be able to give a very brief outline of what you did in that job.
- ❖ We'll be most interested in any jobs you've held previously that align closely to the job you're applying for. That's not to say that other jobs won't have skills that could be relevant, but focus more on any that are similar, or highlight tasks that you did in jobs that are similar to those in the job description. Keep it brief but informative – bullet points for your skills and responsibilities are fine.
- ❖ For example, if you're applying for an administrative role but have never worked in an administrative role as such, then do you have experience working in retail where you had to use the tills, or enter information into a computer system?
- ❖ If you've got gaps in your employment history – tell us about those and why.

## **Qualifications / Education**

- ❖ You'll also need to outline your qualifications and education, what exams you've done, and grades achieved.
- ❖ Ensure you include all your qualifications, particularly the most relevant, for example Maths and English and ensure you include the grade you achieved.
- ❖ If the specification states 'or equivalent', then consider how you can outline how your experience demonstrates that you don't need the qualification. On the form in your supporting statement say something like 'I do not have the xxx qualification, however, I believe I demonstrate ability through my experience'

## **Supporting Statement**

- ❖ This is probably the most important section to pay attention to as it's your opportunity to outline how you meet the qualities and experience more so.
- ❖ We would recommend that you look at the person specification and pick out the personal qualities and experience, bullet point them on your application and write a brief paragraph outlining how you meet that element of the specification. This will make it much easier for the person shortlisting to see and help draw attention to what you really want to focus on.
- ❖ Many people think that writing lots is best, but actually it's better to keep it a bit shorter but really emphasise the points that will matter. Make sure in your opening line you mention the actual job you're applying for, as this shows that it's not just a copy and paste from other applications.
- ❖ For example, if the person specification states that you'll need excellent organisational and prioritisation skills – tell us in a few sentences or bullet points, what you've done or how you'd approach this and why you think you meet the specification.
- ❖ Make sure to spend time checking spelling and grammar.
- ❖ Demonstrate how your qualities and experience align with the Trust values/commitments. These can be found by researching the website and show that you have taken the time to research.



## **Preparing for your Interview**

- ❖ If you are shortlisted for interview, then get some preparation done.
- ❖ Look at our website and find out a bit about us. Read the recruitment pack that came with the job advert and re-visit the job description and specification.
- ❖ Carefully review the person specification and think of examples that you might have to demonstrate what you've done and how, what you've done well, what you learnt, what you might do differently.
- ❖ If you haven't done specific things before, think about where you might have something that could be similar and make a note of those.
- ❖ How do you approach things like prioritisation? How do you cope with a busy workload?
- ❖ We'll definitely ask you questions about your values and integrity, so think about some scenarios such as:
  - ✓ A time when you made a mistake – what did you learn from it?
  - ✓ A time when you might have had a conflict with someone at work – how did you deal with it?
  - ✓ A time when you've had to deal with a difficult patient or customer – what approach did you take?
  - ✓ A time when you've heard someone being rude or using inappropriate language – what you did?
  - ✓ A time when you've had to report an error – how you went about it?
- ❖ Again, if you haven't got a real-life example, have a think about what you might do in these kinds of scenarios. The panel won't expect you to have a perfect answer for every question so don't be afraid to say you haven't done something before and would need development in that area. You should still state what you think you would do in that situation though.
- ❖ If you've been on other interviews, you'll know what you were asked then. Reflect on how you answered and think about how you could improve.
- ❖ If English isn't your first language, or you have any impairment that may make it more difficult for you at your interview, or for any tests, let the panel know in advance so they are prepared and can make appropriate adaptations to support you to do your best.
- ❖ Think about any questions you might want to ask at the interview.

## **The Interview**

- ❖ Your interview may be face to face or via video call (Teams or Zoom).
- ❖ If it's face to face, make sure you find out where you're going, give yourself plenty of time to get there, allowing for traffic and hold ups and if you're driving, know where to park. Have change for the car park or the app downloaded. It's far better to be very early than rushing. Wear a mask to the interview (unless exempt) – the panel may say you can take it off once you have started the interview but expect to have to wear it.
- ❖ The more preparation you do, the less stressed and anxious you'll feel.
- ❖ Wear something appropriate, smart, but also comfortable.



- ❖ Bring some notes with you so you can refresh your mind prior to going in, bring anything else you've been asked to, and also prepare any questions you might want to ask the interview panel. Remember to put your notes away for your actual interview!
- ❖ If it's via video link, make sure you've checked all your IT is working the day before and if possible, half an hour before, that you have everything downloaded etc. One advantage of being remote is that you can have notes to refer to more easily but, make sure you'd don't get too distracted by them and that you aren't reading from them as it'll show, and mean your interview doesn't flow so well.
- ❖ Try and make sure you've got a quiet space with no interruptions, phones are switched off, doors shut etc. and ask other members of your household to respect that you need to be alone with no distractions for the duration of the interview. The interview panel will likely be 2 to 3 people, but this will vary. You are usually told prior to the interview who will be on the panel so ensure you are familiar with their names.
- ❖ They will introduce themselves to you, their name and their role, and they will outline how the interview will run.
- ❖ They will have pre-prepared questions to ask and will rotate between the interview panel so each of them will ask you questions.
- ❖ Make eye contact with the person talking to you but, if in person, also talk to the others in the room when you're answering questions.
- ❖ The panel will likely ask you a 'relaxer' question, which will be something like 'tell us a bit about yourself, why you want this job'. Keep this relatively short and interesting. Remember they should have read your application form, so they'll have all that information already, so just pull out some key things and if you feel comfortable to, maybe a little about you as a person, your interests outside of work. Talk about why you've applied for the job, the panel will be looking for those who show enthusiasm for the job and the Trust.
- ❖ After this, they'll move into the questions properly, and these will be a range of questions which will cover what is in the job description and person specification.
- ❖ There may be some 'technical' questions if that is relevant to your role. These types of questions will be utilised to gage your experience and approach to varied situations and scenarios.
- ❖ The best answers will often be where you can recall a time when you've done something similar and can outline what you did, so an actual scenario. It's always good to say what you didn't do so well too as none of us are perfect, but importantly, reflect on what you learnt from that and how you'd do it differently next time.
- ❖ Don't be afraid to pause to think before you answer questions or to ask the interviewer to repeat something if you're not clear. Sometimes you might get a question that has several parts so don't be afraid to jot down notes as you're asked or to answer the first part and then ask them to remind you of the next part.
- ❖ At the end of your interview, you will be given the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. Ensure you have some prepared for the panel as this shows you are enthusiastic and prepared. These could be linked to the team, organisation as a whole or the job itself.

### **Test/Presentation**

- ❖ Some interviews may include a test of some sort or a presentation. If there is one, you will be told prior to your interview – you won't be surprised by it.
- ❖ The test will always be relevant to the role so could be, for example, a prioritisation list, asking you to say what you'd do in what order and why, or a spreadsheet to do some work on.



- ❖ Presentation titles would be given before the interview, so you'll have had time to work on that – again, advice is always to keep to a few slides that aren't too wordy. Use images or bullets and make sure you've really thought about the title and what you think they might be looking for. If you've been told a specific amount of time, make sure you have timed yourself and don't over-run or feel like you've got to rush through it.

### **Remember**

- ❖ Interviews aren't designed to trip you up or make you look foolish. They are to test out if you've got the right skills, attitudes and behaviours to work in the role that's been advertised. No-one will ever have everything, and we want people who can grow and develop with us. Honesty and authenticity are really important. Being able to build some rapport with the panel will make a huge difference to how your interview goes.

### **Ask for Feedback**

- ❖ Successful or not, you should ask for specific feedback from the panel about what you did well and what you could have done better. Ask them to be really honest with you as it's all learning for the future.

**Good luck!**