

4

Recruiting staff

People are an organisation's most valuable resource. The effectiveness of an organisation depends on its staff. Good quality work requires good quality people. An organisation which uses a fair and effective recruitment process is more likely to employ the right person for each job. An organisation that has a poor recruitment process is unlikely to recruit the right people. This may lead to poor performance, low quality projects and possible risks in areas such as child protection.

This section looks at the process of recruiting staff, from identifying a new role, to finding and recruiting the right person. In addition to permanent staff, it is wise to use this process as much as possible for the recruitment of casual staff and volunteers.

STEPS	ACTIVITIES IN THE PROCESS
1	Identify the need for recruitment
2	Describe the job (Job profile)
3	Complete a Recruitment Request Form
4	Agree the grade and salary for the job
5	Advertise the job
6	Select candidates to interview
7	Interview candidates
8	Collect references for the successful candidate
9	Offer the job
10	Inform interviewed candidates who are unsuccessful
11	Open a personnel file about the new recruit

STEP 1 Identify the need for recruitment

The recruitment process starts when a vacancy arises. This may be a new position or as a result of a staff member leaving the organisation. For each vacancy it is important that someone with an overview of the organisation considers:

- Does the role fit with the organisation's mission, values and purpose? Does it fit with the organisation's strategy and existing organisational structure?
- Does the role add value to the organisation? Organisations should invest funds where the impact will be the greatest.
- How will the role be funded? Organisations should always consider the cost of employing staff in their annual budget. Costs include: cost of recruitment; salary; benefits; desk space; equipment such as a computer; other services.

The line manager would usually identify the vacancy within their own team or department. They should describe the job by writing a job profile. A job profile should be developed for a job whether it is to be filled by someone on an employment contract or by casual staff and volunteers.

STEP 2 Describe the job – the job profile

The job profile usually consists of two parts – a **job description** and a **person specification**. To describe the job, two questions need to be asked:

- What are the main roles and responsibilities of the job? The answer to this question forms the job description. The job description outlines the job and the expectations of the person in the job and shows how the job fits with the rest of the organisation.
- What skills and qualities will the person need to carry out the job? The answer to this question forms the person specification. The person specification defines the type of person required and plays a big part in the process of selecting people to interview. It is important that the requirements in the person specification are directly related to the needs of the job. If the requirements are more than are actually needed for the job, someone might be disappointed and unhappy in a new job when they find they are not fully able to use their gifts.

Job description

Consider the main roles and responsibilities involved in the job. Then write a job description based on them. We suggest a structure for a job description below.

Main purpose of job	Up to two sentences stating why the job exists. For example, a job purpose for an administrator might be 'To provide administrative support to the Finance Director.'
Line management / Position in organisation	<p>This indicates how the job fits into the organisation. In which department will the job be based? Who line manages the person in the job? Does the job involve management of other staff? If so, which staff? Who will the person in the job work with closely? This section should also mention the decisions that the person in the job can make without asking their line manager, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can they recruit and dismiss staff? ■ How much can they spend or allow other staff to spend? ■ Can they be entrusted with funds? If so, what level of funds are they responsible for? <p>For example, for an Administrator role, this section may state: 'This role is based in the Finance Department and will be managed by the Finance Director. The main aspect of the role is to carry out administrative duties for the Finance Director. It also involves providing administrative support to the Payroll Officer during the last week of every month.'</p>

Scope of job This section is used to identify the major activities of the job. A maximum of eight major activities should be given. They should be prioritised in order of the time the person in the job will spend on the activity, starting with the activity requiring the most time. This section may not be necessary where there is only one major activity.

For example, for an Administrator role there may be two key activities: Providing administrative support to the Finance Director; and Assisting the Payroll Officer with the payment of staff.

Duties and responsibilities Underneath each major activity, list the specific duties and responsibilities. Start each duty or responsibility with a verb. The box of verbs below may be helpful. There is no need to give a description of *how* the work is to be done.

For example, the duties and responsibilities of an administrator might include:

- Maintain the calendar of the Finance Director
- Take accurate minutes at team meetings and distribute them
- Make travel bookings for team members.

Examples of verbs to use when writing duties and responsibilities

Advise	Coordinate	Inspect	Participate	Research
Approve	Create	Issue	Perform	Select
Arrange	Design	Lead	Plan	Set up
Assist	Develop	Liaise	Prepare	Submit
Carry out	Direct	Look after	Produce	Supervise
Check	Ensure	Maintain	Provide	Support
Compile	Establish	Manage	Receive	Train
Complete	Evaluate	Monitor	Recruit	Update
Conduct	Implement	Own	Represent	

Person specification

This part of the job profile is used to assess whether someone has the right qualities and experience for the job. The table on page 12 can be used for the person specification.

- The 'essential' column contains the minimum qualities and experience needed for the job. All applicants should be judged against these. If there are any that are not met by the applicant, they may not be considered for the job.
- The 'desirable' column lists qualities and experience that are not necessary for the job, but would be useful. If there are many applicants who meet all the essential requirements, the desirable column can be used to identify a smaller number of candidates who can be invited for interview.

PERSON SPECIFICATION		
	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<p>Qualifications The level of formal education that would enable someone to carry out the role effectively.</p>	<i>Insert essential qualifications for the job here.</i>	<i>Insert qualifications that would be helpful for the job here.</i>
<p>Experience The amount of relevant experience that will enable someone to perform the role well. Be as specific as possible. For example, a water and sanitation coordinator might need experience as a water and sanitation engineer working on hand-dug wells in a community context.</p>	<i>Insert essential experience for the job here.</i>	<i>Insert experience that would be helpful for the job here.</i>
<p>Skills and abilities Skills such as communication, presentation and computer skills, languages, skills in prioritising work and organisational and administrative skills. Abilities such as coping with pressure, team working, initiative and ability to work with other people.</p>	<i>Insert essential skills and abilities for the job here.</i>	<i>Insert skills and abilities that would be helpful for the job here.</i>
<p>Personal qualities Aspects of a person's character, such as maturity in their Christian faith, whether they are approachable, and whether they are flexible.</p>	<i>Insert essential personal qualities for the job here.</i>	<i>Insert personal qualities that would be helpful for the job here.</i>

Bible study

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Peter 4:10.

- *What kind of gifts does the Holy Spirit give?*
- *Does every Christian have gifts?*
- *Do all Christians have the same gifts?*
- *What are gifts for?*
- *How can our organisation benefit more from the gifts that staff have?*

- *Which roles in our organisation could benefit from particular gifts?*

Notice that some of the gifts are related to character rather than ability.

- *Why is character as important as ability?*
- *How can we recruit Christian staff who show both ability and good character?*

Once the job description and person specification have been drafted, look through the job profile and ask the following questions:

- Is it realistic?
 - Consider whether it is possible for one person to carry out the tasks and responsibilities.
 - Ensure that there is not too much or too little to do.
 - Consider whether it will be possible to find someone to carry out the job. If the range of tasks is too wide, it might be very difficult to find someone with the right set of skills.

- Is it clear?
 - Consider whether someone who does not know the organisation will be able to understand what the job involves.
 - A clear job description should attract the right people to the job.
- Is there equal opportunity for all?
 - Ensure that what is asked for in the person specification can be applied equally to all groups, where possible. For example, check that the person specification does not discriminate on the basis of gender or disability.

STEP 3 Complete the Recruitment request form

Once the job profile is written it is important to have a process where line managers make an official request for the new position to the Human Resources Department or the leadership of the organisation. A suggested template for a recruitment request is given below.

RECRUITMENT REQUEST			
Job title			
Location			
Line manager			
Needed from	Start date	End date (if not permanent contract)	
Reason needed (Give justification in relevant box)	Replacement for current position	New position, with reasons	
Funding (Tick as appropriate)	General funds	Specific donor funds (please give details)	
Job profile	Attached?		
Child protection	Does the job involve work with children?		
Advertisement	Suggestions of appropriate places to advertise the job		
Requested by	Name	Signature	Date
Approved by	Name	Signature	Date

STEP 4 Agree the grade and salary for the job

Once the job profile has been developed and approved, it is necessary to agree what the grade and salary of the job should be. For detailed information about this, see Section 2.

STEP 5 Advertise the job

Once the job description, person specification and salary have been finalised, it is time to let people know about the vacancy.

There are many ways to advertise a job. Consider sending an advertisement by email to staff or other organisations, putting an advertisement on an office or community notice board, and advertising on the internet or in newspapers. It is worth thinking carefully about targeting places where people with the right skills and personal qualities are likely to see the advertisement. For example, a Christian organisation may send the advertisement to local churches. There may be particular websites that will advertise jobs related to relief, development and advocacy work. Word of mouth is often the best method.

Wherever the job is being advertised, the principles of developing the advertisement are the same. The job advertisement should be clear and well presented as it may be the first time that people have come into contact with the organisation. It should include the following information:

- **Brief description of the organisation** – what kind of work it does and where; organisation's values.
- **How the role fits** into the work of the organisation.
- **Location** of the job.
- **What the role involves** – this is taken from the job description. To get people's attention, this could be written in personalised form, such as, 'You will be an excellent communicator ...'. The introduction to the advertisement could be written in the form of a question, such as 'Do you enjoy working with children?'.
- **What kind of person** the organisation is looking for – this has already been identified in the person specification. If a Christian organisation is looking for someone who is a committed Christian, this should be stated in the advertisement if it is legal and safe to do so.
- **Salary** – the salary range for the job.
- **Start date** if the vacancy needs to be filled urgently.
- **Closing date for applications** – some organisations interview candidates whenever they apply for the job, but it is helpful to set a deadline for applications and consider a few candidates at once.
- **How to apply** – some organisations provide an application form while others ask for a Curriculum Vitae (CV) with a letter. Some organisations enable people to apply for positions using the internet. Others prefer receiving applications by email or post.
- If the job involves working with children, the organisation's child protection policy should be referred to.



Bible study

Read Genesis 1:26-27.

- *What do these verses tell us about the way that God values human beings?*

Read Galatians 3:26-28.

- *How does God view people in his kingdom? What is their identity?*
- *What can we learn from this as we recruit staff?*

Read James 2:1-13.

- *What does this passage teach us about discrimination?*
- *Why should we be careful not to favour some people over others?*
- *What can we learn as we recruit new staff, or in the way that we treat our current staff?*

Application form

It can be helpful to provide an application form because it is easier to compare candidates and select people for interview if the applications are all laid out in the same way.

As people are providing personal information in application forms, they should always be treated as private and confidential. This should be clearly marked at the top of the application form to reassure applicants. When a vacancy is filled, the application forms of the unsuccessful applicants should be kept only if they have said that they wish to be contacted if a relevant vacancy arises in the future. Otherwise they should be destroyed to protect confidentiality.

Content of application forms

The table on page 42 suggests a structure and content for an application form.

All applications that are received should be acknowledged. For example, a standard email could be drafted to acknowledge receipt of applications and another email template could be drafted to notify unsuccessful applicants later on. However, if email is not commonly used and it is likely that many people will apply for a job, it may be helpful to state on the advertisement that applicants should consider themselves unsuccessful if they have not had a response from the organisation within two weeks of the closing date.

HEADING	EXAMPLE QUESTIONS or INFORMATION REQUIRED
Position applied for	Job title
Personal details	Full name, address, email address, date of birth, nationality
Availability	<i>If selected for this job, when would you be available to start?</i>
Education and training	<i>Please provide details of your educational and professional qualifications. For each, give relevant dates, school/college, qualification and grade.</i>
Employment history	<i>Please provide details of previous employment. For each, please give dates, employer, details of tasks and responsibilities, and reason for leaving.</i>
Other relevant skills	<i>Please provide details of other relevant skills you have, such as computer skills and languages.</i>
Interests	<i>Please list your interests, activities and hobbies outside work.</i>
References	It is helpful to ask for two or three references, including one from the current or most recent employer. Christian organisations may like one reference to come from the applicant's church leader.
Health	<i>Are you in generally good health? Good, fair, poor. How many days of sickness have you experienced in the past year?</i>
Christian life and experience (for Christian organisations)	<i>Describe the beginning and growth of your Christian faith, your involvement in a local church, and how you are seeking to live out your faith at home, work, church and in your social life. How do you deal with problems and challenges in your life?</i>
Application for job	<i>Why do you want to work for this organisation? Why do you think your background, training, skills and experience equip you for this job? What do you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses in applying for this job?</i>
Declaration	I confirm that to the best of my knowledge all the facts set out in this application are true. Signed: _____ Date: _____ Christian organisations could also use this section to ask applicants to state that they agree with the organisation's basis of faith.

Open applications

Some people may wish to register their interest in working for the organisation without applying for a specific job. This is called an open application. These people could be asked to complete a general application form so that they can be contacted when a relevant vacancy arises. This can be helpful in places where it is sometimes difficult to find suitable staff.

STEP 6 Select candidates to interview

When the closing date for applications has passed, it is time to review the applications in order to select candidates to interview. It is not appropriate to interview everyone who applies for a job because:

- Often the application form shows that people are not suited to the job. Rather than being interviewed, these applicants should be told that their application has not been successful.
- There is rarely time to interview all the applicants. An interview usually lasts for one hour, so it is only possible to carry out six interviews in one day. It is therefore appropriate to select only four or five people to interview.

The people who select candidates to interview should ideally be the people who will carry out the interviews. More than one person should select candidates for interview to avoid bias.

To select candidates to interview, compare each application against the person specification. The form below can be used to do this.

Transfer the 'essential' and 'desirable' criteria from the person specification into the form. Add new rows for additional criteria. In the next column, write down whether the criteria are essential or desirable. Then allocate a column to each applicant. It can be helpful to give applicants a number to avoid confusion if applicants have the same name. The form below has been filled in using a simple person specification for a nurse.

Job title: <i>Nurse</i>			APPLICANTS		
			¹ <i>Alice</i>	² <i>David</i>	³ <i>Ruth</i>
CRITERIA IN PERSON SPECIFICATION		ESSENTIAL / DESIRABLE			
Education	<i>nursing certificate</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>
	<i>university degree</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>
Experience	<i>working with trauma patients</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>2</i>
	<i>managing people</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>
Skills	<i>speaks English</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>
	<i>computer skills</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Personal qualities	<i>flexible</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
	<i>good communicator</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
TOTAL SCORE: Essential			<i>9</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>9</i>
TOTAL SCORE: Desirable			<i>1</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>4</i>

Go through the application forms and put a score in each applicant's column against each criterion, using the scoring system below:

Score	Description
2	Above criteria
1	Definitely meets criteria
0	Below criteria, but can probably be trained
F	Below criteria
?	No evidence given, and unable to identify from details supplied

When scoring, it is important to be strict. There is no point in interviewing people who may not be suitable for the job. If no-one is good enough to be interviewed, it is better to re-advertise the job.

Once every applicant and their score have been added to the form, cross out any candidate who has a score of 'F' or '?' against any of the 'essential' criteria. These candidates should not be considered further. In the example above, David's application would have to be rejected because he has no experience of working with trauma patients. Although Alice does not have computer skills, her application is still considered as computer skills are not essential for the job. For the remaining candidates, add up each person's scores for the 'essential' criteria and then add up each person's scores for the 'desirable' criteria.

From these scores, it is possible to see who strongly meets the essential criteria and who strongly meets the desirable criteria. Spend time discussing the information given in the table to decide which of the candidates should be interviewed for the job.

- Ensure that when doing so, only the applicants' ability to meet the criteria is discussed. Be careful not to discriminate against people due to their sex, race, disability and so on.
- Look carefully at the employment section of the form. Check that there are no long gaps in employment. There may be valid reasons for such gaps, but these can only be investigated during the interview.
- Consider how likely the applicant is to stay in the job. For example, if someone has had a number of jobs over the last few years and has never stayed in a job for longer than a few months, it is unlikely that they will stay for a long time in this job. This means that time and money would need to be spent recruiting a replacement within a few months.

If only one person meets all the 'essential' criteria, and is therefore the only person who can be selected for interview, they should still be asked to attend an interview. Some application forms make people appear perfect for the job, but during the interview it might become clear that the applicant would not be appropriate.

- Personal qualities, such as having a positive attitude and being a strong team player, can be more important than the right experience and skills. Application forms do not show this, but interviews can.
- It is common for people to exaggerate their skills and experience on the application form. The interview provides an opportunity to question the applicant face-to-face.

When recruiting staff, ensure that the process is fair and transparent. Be careful not to write thoughts or personal opinions on the application forms and ensure that anything that is written down is factual and fair. It is important to be prepared to explain why applicants were unsuccessful.

Once candidates have been selected for interview, contact the applicants to invite them to come for an interview or to tell them their application has not been successful. Ensure that letters inviting candidates to an interview include:

- the date and location of the interview, with a map.
- details about any tests and presentations that they will be expected to carry out as part of the interview. They should be informed of the length of time these will take.
- documentation that they will need to bring with them, such as a passport, work visa and education certificates.

STEP 7 Interview the candidates

The aim of an interview is to discover how well suited someone is to the job. The interview provides an opportunity to meet the candidate and further explore what they wrote on their application form.

Interviews should usually be carried out within a week or two after candidates were selected. Identify a date when all the interviewers can attend and ensure that an appropriate venue can be booked.

It is good practice for at least two interviewers to be present at each interview. Usually this would be the line manager of the vacancy and a member of the Human Resources Department. To ensure that the interviews are fair, an interviewer should not interview a relative. For senior roles, a bigger panel of interviewers, including another senior manager, is a good idea.

Preparation for the interview

Each interviewer should ensure that they read and familiarise themselves with the interview papers, including the application forms of those to be interviewed and references if these are available. The interview panel should meet before the interviews to prepare the questions that will be asked. These should relate to the job description, person specification and application forms. In the interviews, try to find out about:

- Gaps in employment
- Experience relevant to the job
- Reasons for leaving a particular job
- Personal abilities.
- Relevant academic qualifications

To ensure fairness and consistency try to ensure that each candidate is asked the same questions, but be aware that further questions may need to be asked to explore issues raised in the candidate's answers or on their application form. Tips on asking questions are given in the box on page 47.

Exploring issues in an interview

Work experience When investigating the candidate's professional work experience, ask for specific examples. Try to gain an understanding of the manner in which the work was carried out and the candidate's attitude towards it.

Skills and abilities Ask the candidate to provide specific examples that demonstrate they have the necessary skills and abilities.

Team working Find out whether the candidate would fit into a team environment. For example:

- *How easy do you find it to adapt to the working styles of other people, especially when these are in conflict with your own preferred way of working?*
- *In your past experience, how have you demonstrated an ability to communicate effectively?*

Motivation Find out about the candidate's commitment to the organisation and the role by asking why they want to work for the organisation.

Child protection (for a role involving contact with children) It is important to be assured that the candidate is unlikely to mistreat children. Questions to ask include:

- *What experience do you have of interacting with children?*
- *What particular kinds of behaviour would you avoid when you are with children who are not your own?*
- *What would you do if you were concerned about someone else's behaviour towards children?*

It can be helpful to outline an imaginary child protection situation in order to find out how a candidate would react and to identify any learning needs.

Spiritual questions (for Christian organisations) Ask Christian candidates to describe their relationship with God, their knowledge of the Bible and their church life. For candidates who are not Christians, find out how they feel about working for a Christian organisation.

Before the interviews, the interview panel should agree responsibilities for:

- chairing the interview
- welcoming the candidate
- introducing the interview panel
- ensuring the interview keeps to time
- asking the questions – each interviewer could be responsible for a set of questions.

At the interview

Remember that interviews are two-way. While the organisation is assessing the candidate's suitability for the job, the candidate is deciding whether they want to work for the organisation. The candidate will usually be nervous so it is important to put them at ease. If the candidate is relaxed, they are more likely to give honest and realistic answers to the questions. Here are some tips:

- Offer the candidate a drink.
- Check that the candidate is able to sit comfortably.
- Ensure that all the interviewers are introduced.

- Explain the format of the interview, including when the candidate will make their presentation, if relevant.
- It is appropriate for Christian organisations to start the interview with a prayer to ask God to give everyone wisdom and guidance.
- Ensure the first question is about something the candidate is likely to feel comfortable talking about, such as leisure interests.
- During the interview, show interest in what the candidate has to say. Only interrupt them if they start to give answers that are too long or that do not relate directly to the question.

Tips on asking questions

There are different types of questions:

- **Open questions** encourage the candidate to talk, such as:
 - *What led you to apply for this job?*
 - *Describe a situation when ... How did you approach that situation and what was the outcome?*
 - *Give examples of ...*
 - *Where did you learn most about ...?*
 - *Why did you make that choice?* (Be aware that questions starting with the word 'why' can sometimes appear aggressive)
- **Closed questions** are helpful for getting specific information and are useful if the candidate keeps giving long or irrelevant answers to questions. Closed questions usually have a one-word answer such as 'yes' or 'no'. For example:
 - *Do you enjoy working on your own?*
- **Follow-up questions** are useful for investigating an issue further, such as:
 - *You have said you are familiar with computer programmes. Which ones have you used?*
 - *Which are you most familiar with?*
 - *What was the most difficult task you have completed in that job?*
- **Summarising questions** help the interviewer to check that they have understood what the candidate has said, such as:
 - *You have said that you prefer to work as part of a team. Am I right in understanding ...?*

Interviewing dos and don'ts

DO

- Do let the candidate do most of the talking.
- Do ask further questions if clarification or detail is needed.
- Do ask for practical examples.

DON'T

- Don't interpret or hope the other interviewers understood something the candidate said if you did not. If in doubt, ask further questions.
- Don't tell the candidate they have given a 'wrong' answer. If necessary, ask them further questions.
- Don't ask questions about the candidate's family unless they are directly related to the role, such as to find out whether the family will be accompanying the candidate where relocation is necessary.
- Don't ask leading questions as these types of questions tend to make assumptions and can push candidates to a give an answer that they otherwise would not have given. For example:
 - *You didn't like your last line manager, did you?*
- Don't ask more than one questions at a time as this can confuse the candidate. For example:
 - *What made you decide to leave that job and why have you applied here?*

It is important that every interviewer makes notes during the interview and that the interview notes contain what is said rather than the interviewer's opinions. For example, it would be better to write 'Did not demonstrate any experience of accounting procedures' than 'Unsuitable for accounting work.'

A checklist can be used by each interviewer to record the candidate's answers, such as the one below. The criteria are taken from the person specification.

INTERVIEWER'S CHECKLIST						
Name of candidate:						
Criteria	Weak	Okay	Good	Very good	Not demonstrated	Notes
Accounting experience		✓				Occasionally assists accounting officer in current role.
Computer skills				✓		Uses Microsoft® Word. Colleagues often ask candidate to help them to use this programme.
Etc						
Etc						

Tasks and tests

Tasks and tests are useful methods of assessing candidates in addition to an interview. The assessments chosen should depend on the skills required for the role. Assessments could include computer tests, verbal presentations, written language exercises, letter writing and financial tests. There is no need to use all of these types of assessment for a single role, but it is worth considering one or two.

Choosing the successful candidate

Never offer a candidate the job at the end of the interview. Even if only one candidate is being interviewed for the job, it is important that the interviewers meet together to ensure they are all happy about recruiting the person for the role. The candidate may also need time to think about whether they would be willing to accept the position if they were offered it. If more than one candidate is being interviewed, it is best to wait until the last candidate has been interviewed before discussing who is appropriate for the job. Each interviewer should refer to their checklists when discussing the candidates and the panel should complete a joint interview checklist for each candidate.

If there are two or more candidates that are suitable for the job, the outcomes of the assessment tasks or tests should be considered. If the interview panel still cannot decide between them, it may be necessary to invite them back for a second interview. If none of the candidates are suitable, it will be necessary to re-advertise the job.

It is important to mark clearly on the joint interview checklist the reasons why a candidate has been successful or unsuccessful. The interview panel should write down areas where training or support is needed for the successful candidate.

STEP 8 Collect references

References play a very important part in the recruitment process. Information from past employers is often the best way to understand how a new staff member will fit into the role and the organisation. References should also raise any issues of concern.

References are normally collected after the interview for the most successful candidate or candidates. Although having references before the interview can be helpful, they can take a long time to obtain.

References can be collected in written form or by telephone. Be aware that written references rarely say bad things about people because referees are usually diplomatic and consider carefully what to write. When reviewing references, it is worth noting whether referees have avoided answering any questions. Consider whether this could be because they have doubts about the candidate in that area. It is important to telephone referees who have provided a written reference to confirm that the reference was genuine. Telephone references may give a more realistic picture of what the candidate is like, since referees do not have long to think about diplomatic responses to the questions. It is important to make detailed notes of the telephone call so they can be looked at later.

Ensure that referees are asked child-related questions if the job involves working with children. This will help to ensure that people who abuse children do not try to take advantage of such jobs.

Questions to ask referees

The reference should first confirm the candidate's relationship with the referee – how they know each other and for how long.

There is a range of questions that referees can be asked:

- Some questions should relate to the **specific job** that is being applied for. Ensure that referees are provided with information about the job and the selection criteria. Referees could be asked to comment on the applicant's ability related to each criterion or they could be asked a more general question about strengths and weaknesses related to the job.
- Some questions should relate to the applicant's **character**, such as honesty, time-keeping, relationships with other staff, response to criticism and absence from work.
- There should be a question asking whether the referee would **recommend** the applicant for the job.

Ensure that all references are received and reviewed before offering the job.

STEP 9 Offer the job

Where possible, the line manager should telephone the successful candidate to offer them the job. A decision from the candidate on whether to accept the job should not be expected immediately, but a timeframe should be agreed. If the job specifically requires someone who is fit, the job offer could be conditional upon a successful medical examination. If the candidate does not accept the job, there may be a second choice candidate who could be offered the job. If there are no suitable alternative candidates it is necessary to re-advertise the job.

When a successful candidate accepts a job, the starting dates should be agreed. A job pack should then be prepared and sent to them.

Job pack

The job pack contains all the paperwork needed for the successful candidate to start working with the organisation.

The following paperwork in the job pack should be signed and returned to the organisation to be held in the individual's personnel file:

ACCEPTANCE FORM

This form is an official acceptance of the job.

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Organisations should use a standard contract template which has been checked by a qualified legal practitioner to ensure it fulfils all the national legal requirements. All employment contracts must be signed by the new recruit and the line manager and both should have a copy. Where relevant, they should be written in the local language in addition to the official national language. The contract should be read to new recruits who cannot read. See Section 3 for guidance on what to include in a contract.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL DATA FORM

This form can be referred to if medical information is needed in an emergency.

SELF-DECLARATION FORM

In the absence of a police check to find out whether the new recruit has a criminal record, new recruits should sign a Self-declaration form. They sign this form to say they do not have a criminal record.

PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEET

Information requested could include: family details and next of kin, passport or identity details, bank details if the salary is to be paid directly into the bank account, church details.

The following paperwork in the job pack is for the new recruit's information only:

EMPLOYMENT OFFER LETTER

This letter should give the new recruit all of the practical details about their employment, such as role, location, salary and benefits.

STAFF HANDBOOK

The staff handbook outlines general terms and conditions of employment as well as explaining the working environment of the organisation. If the terms and conditions are different for the specific role, this should be stated in the contract of employment. See Section 3 for more details about writing a staff handbook.

STEP 10 Inform unsuccessful candidates

Candidates who were unsuccessful must be told as soon as the successful candidate has accepted the job. It is not necessary to state why they were unsuccessful, but be prepared to provide constructive feedback if requested. Interview notes and tests completed by unsuccessful candidates should be kept in a file for as long as local law requires. This file may be useful if the decision is questioned by the candidate or if the candidate asks for feedback on their interview.

STEP 11 Open a personnel file

A personnel file should be set up for each new staff member. This file is confidential, and only the Human Resources Department and line manager should have access to it. It should therefore be stored in a locked cabinet. The personnel file should contain all information relevant to the staff member. It is important that it is kept up-to-date and it is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department or line manager to ensure that it is maintained in accordance with local law.

Each personnel file should hold some or all of the following items for each staff member. The amount of information held will depend upon the person's role.

PERSONAL DETAILS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marital status and number of children and their ages, if relevant • Date and country of birth • Home address • Telephone number • Personal email address 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity card, immigration papers, passport, visa and work permit details • Emergency contact details and next of kin • Home church / church leader details • Photograph • Driving licence details

RECRUITMENT INFORMATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment application form or Curriculum Vitae • Employment interview notes • References 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results from selection tests • Contract of employment and job offer letter • Results of police checks

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment history • Medical and psychological reports and notes • Appraisal and development records • Disciplinary records • Notes and correspondence on employment issues, such as requests for unpaid leave • Sickness and absence records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary records • Expenses records • Bank account details • Social security and income tax details • Correspondence with external agencies and firms, such as banks, solicitors • Annual leave

REFLECTION

- What recruitment process does our organisation have?
- What are the benefits of a clear process?
- Do all the jobs in our organisation fit with the organisation's mission, vision and strategy?
- Does every job in our organisation have a job description? If not, who would be responsible for ensuring that every member of staff has one?
- Where does our organisation advertise vacancies? Are there other places where we could advertise?
- How do people apply for jobs with our organisation? Should we produce a standard application form if we do not already have one? What information would it ask for?
- What are the disadvantages of interviewing all applicants for the job? If we select only a few applicants for interview how can we ensure that we do this in a fair and consistent way?
- In what ways could we improve our interview processes? Could staff on interview panels benefit from training to ensure we get the right people?
- What are the benefits of collecting references for successful candidates? Are there ways that we could improve this process?
- What information do we give to successful candidates before their first day at work? Should we develop a job pack to send to them?
- What information does the organisation keep about its staff? Is this locked away? Is any of this information unnecessary? Is there any information that it would be helpful for the organisation to know about its staff?