

# STAFF & RECRUITMENT

## EXPERT IDEAS AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

### Positions Available



HR expert **Vicky Stanton** kicks off a new series on recruitment with a look at job descriptions and person specifications...

WE ARE  
HIRING

Recruiting the wrong people can lead to a drop in productivity, lack of commitment, low morale and rapid staff turnover, all of which can impact heavily on your bottom line and reputation – and you really can't afford for that to happen in your setting. When you're recruiting new people, you also need to ensure that you're complying with the law. Employers are responsible for ensuring that all recruitment is carried out fairly and without discrimination, and failure to comply with the law can leave you open to costly tribunal claims.

#### GETTING STARTED

Firstly, you'll need to advertise you have a vacancy, even if you have a pile of CVs; your ideal candidate may not have been in to see you yet. Before you advertise, think about the vacancy. Do you want to replace the position exactly as it was filled before, or do you want to change the hours? Do you need different skills from the post holder going forward? Do you need to split the role as the job has grown?

Once you've defined what you need, you should write or review the job description. A good job description is useful for all jobs. It can help with induction and training, enable prospective applicants to assess themselves for the job, and provide a benchmark for judging achievements. It refers to the *post* not the person.

The job description should detail:

- the main *purpose* of the job, described in one sentence, if possible;
- the main *tasks* of the job – use active words like calculating, managing, repairing, instead of vague terms such as “dealing with” or “in charge of”;
- the *scope* of the job, where the main tasks can be expanded on and the importance of the job highlighted by giving information such as the number of staff the post is responsible for supervising, the degree of

precision required, and any budgets (detailed in figures) the post holder is responsible for.

The next step is to prepare or review the person specification. This details the profile of the ideal person your nursery is looking for to fill the job. It refers to the *person* not the post. It's really important that the skills, knowledge, competencies and qualifications required are a realistic requirement of the job.

The drafting or checking of a person specification also ensures that employment legislation is being complied with and avoids any possible claims for unfair discrimination from any particular group. Things to think about include:

- What skills, knowledge and aptitudes are related to the job?
- What type(s) of experience is necessary?
- What competencies are necessary?
- Are there specific qualifications or training that a successful applicant should have?

#### BEWARE!

Even at this stage of the process, a potential applicant can bring a claim if they feel the process is discriminatory. It's against the law to treat someone less favourably than someone else because of a personal characteristic. There are nine protected characteristics in law:

- Age
- Being/becoming a transsexual person
- Being married/in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant/having a child
- Disability
- Race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion/belief or lack of religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Discrimination *does not* have to be deliberate or intentional. Things to be aware of are:

- Using 'gender bias terms', e.g. “handyman”.
- Age-inappropriate statements, e.g. “would

suit a young person” (rejecting older workers) or “require someone with 10 years' recent experience” (rejecting women returning from maternity/career breaks).

■ Stating requirements that may discriminate against disability, e.g. “must have a driving licence”. (Of course there will be jobs where this is a clear requirement, but for others, could the employee use public transport?)

■ Stating only one qualification will be accepted. There are a wide variety of educational, vocational and professional qualifications (together with their foreign equivalents. It is acceptable to list the qualification you are aware of and state “or equivalent” and always try to reflect the minimum basic educational qualification that is really necessary.

There are always exceptions to the law. An employer can discriminate in recruitment, transfer, training or dismissal if they're able to prove that a 'genuine occupational requirement' (GOR) or 'genuine occupational qualification' (GOQ) in terms of race or sex exists.

This limited defence applies where the nature of the role makes it unsuitable for individuals with particular characteristics. If you think this may apply to a situation you're recruiting for, please seek advice.

#### findoutmore

Vicky Stanton is  
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