

Recruitment Advertising - Guidance

What not to write

Everyone who writes a recruitment advert has a responsibility to be aware of and abide by the Equalities Act 2010.

The act covers nine protected characteristics, which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics, so the act protects everyone against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation

When writing an advert you need to think carefully about how your language could be interpreted as discretionary, even if this is unintentional. For example:

- Age – you cannot specify that you require a ‘young’ or ‘old’ candidate. Saying that you require a ‘mature’ or ‘senior’ person is not acceptable. Specifying the number of years experience required i.e. ‘5 years experience’ could be deemed as indirect discrimination and should be avoided unless justifiable.
- Qualifications – Stating that a candidate must hold a specific qualification i.e. ‘must have GCSE Maths C or above’ could be deemed as discriminatory against those that took qualifications prior to the introduction of the GCSE qualification or those from another country where GCSE’s are not taken. When you are asking for a specific qualification, always include ‘or equivalent’.
- Job Titles – Ensure that you are not being gender specific with titles i.e. ‘Dinner Lady’ and ‘Handy Man’ you should be advertising for a ‘Lunchtime Supervisory Assistant’ or a Site Assistant.
- Gender – When requesting a specific gender to fill a current post, can you legally justify your needs? I.e. ‘We require a Female P.E teacher’ what duties will this teacher be carrying out that requires them to be female? Is this a genuine occupational requirement? If advertising for ‘A Male Caretaker’ because ‘they will need to be strong to do DIY tasks’ this is discriminatory.
- Measurable words – When putting your person spec together consider your criteria carefully. If you are requesting candidate must be ‘energetic’ and have a ‘good sense of humour’. How can you measure energy and humour? Consider each point and how you could measure it from the candidates application form and during the interview process.