

Interview Tips

If you have just started using direct payments this may be your first experience of interviewing potential employees. If so, here are a few tips to try and make the whole process a bit easier!

Before the Interview:

- **Shortlist your applicants** - If you have asked people to fill out application forms you can use these to shortlist your interviewees, otherwise you can use a telephone interview to decide which applicants you would like to interview in person
- **Invite successful applicants to an interview** - Decide on a date and venue to hold your interviews and provide each applicant with a timeslot. Give yourself enough time in between interviews to also write any additional notes or discuss the interview with any fellow interviewers.
- **Applicant checklist** - Have a copy of the person specification at hand throughout each interview which you can use to check candidates' levels of experience and skills against.
- **Prepare questions** - Prepare a list of questions to ask all candidates. Remember to ask candidates to provide examples that demonstrate the skills and experience you require. (Go to our Example Interview Questions below)
- **Get a second opinion** - If you have not held an interview before or feel it would help to have a second opinion, consider inviting another family member or friend to sit in on the interview with you.

During the Interview:

- **Set the tone** – Whilst you may not be used to interviewing it is important to maintain a reasonably professional manner throughout interviews. This does not mean that you can't be friendly, however you still want to ensure that all applicants are aware of the importance of the position they are applying for.
- **Knowledge is power!** – Make notes throughout the interview. Try to get as much information as possible which will allow you to make the most informed decision possible.

- **Be practical** - Find out when candidates would be available to start and any dates that they may not be able to do, for example holidays.
- **Ask for proof** – If interviewees have stated within their application form or over the phone that they have any specific qualifications or a full clean driver's licence etc, then remember to ask them to show proof of these during the interview.
- **Let them ask questions** - Remember to ask candidates whether they have any questions at the end of each interview.
- **Give yourself time** – It is best not to tell anyone that they have got the job during the interview, instead let all applicants know when they will be informed if they have been successful or not. This allows you time to really consider each candidate carefully and discuss your thoughts with any other interviewers.

After the Interview:

- **Make more notes!** - After the interview write down any other observations, thoughts or opinions it is important you do this as soon as possible so that you do not forget things.
- **Discuss** - If you have someone with you during the interview discuss your thoughts with them and listen to their opinions.
- **Make sure you have all the facts** - If you realise you have not got enough information about a candidate call them back to see if they would be happy to fill in any gaps.
- **Make a decision** – Use a combination of the candidates' application forms, skills and experience and their performances during the interview to decide on who is suitable for the role.
- **Wait for references** - Wait for references to come back before you offer someone the job.

IMPORTANT: if none of the applicants you interview seem right for the position you DO NOT have to employ any of them. Whilst you may be keen to sort out a PA for your child as soon as possible, it is important that you get someone able to fulfil the job requirements.

Example Interview Questions

- Why did you apply for the role of personal assistant?
- What do you understand the job of personal assistant involves?
- Why would you be good at this job?
- What previous experience do you have of this type of work?
- Are you able to prepare and cook simple meals?
- Punctuality and reliability are very important in this job. Do you have any commitments that might prevent you turning up to work?
- Do you have a clean/current driving licence?
- What days/ times are you available to work? Would you be available to provide cover at short notice or flexible hours if needed?
- Do you have any questions about any aspect of the job?

Always remember that if you have any other queries not identified within this document your support worker is always at hand to provide support and information.