

NHS WALES JOB EVALUATION - GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Discriminatory Words and Phrases in Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

There are lots of ways your person specification can appear discriminatory through language, and you may not even realise it.

The following lists of examples are commonly found in job descriptions (JD) and person specifications (PS).

DISCRIMINATORY	ACTION REQUIRED
Flexible	Change to 'Flexible approach to work' or 'Flexible approach to meet the needs of the service'
Car owner essential	Change to 'Ability to travel between sites in a timely manner'
XX years' experience	Remove number of years. Can add "significant" or "substantial" experience if it is genuinely necessary
Physically fit	Must say exact requirements, e.g., 'Needs to reach and bend to pick items from the floor and from shelves'
Mature	Change to 'Mature outlook'
Energetic	Remove
Youthful	Remove
School-leaver	Remove
He	Change to they
She	Change to they
Good Health Record	Remove
Good attendance	Remove
Good personal hygiene	Remove
Good eyesight	Remove
Common sense	Remove
Honest/Trustworthy	Remove
Sense of Humour	Remove
Smart, Tidy Appearance, Punctual, Reliable, Good Time Keeping, Pleasant Disposition & Polite	Now ok to leave in (WEF Jan 2015)
Zero Hour Contracts	Remove

There may also be criteria in the PS, which, whilst not discriminatory, is not suitable. The manager needs to be able to test whether candidates meet the essential and desirable criteria and be subjective/factual.

You may want to consider if some qualifications are now relevant or up to date for example rather than using Prince 2 it might be better to say demonstratable evidence of project management skills and for out-of-date qualifications such as ECDL/RSA Advanced/Working knowledge of Microsoft packages including, Excel, SharePoint, Teams, Forms, Outlook, and PowerPoint.

The criteria should flow directly from the duties, be specific to the role, and be measurable so as to judge and select candidates objectively and manage future performance. It is extremely important that 'essential' and 'desirable' criteria is not overstated and is genuinely required for the role.

If it's not required in the JD don't put it in the PS e.g., 'Ability to analyse complex facts' but there is nothing about analyses in the JD.

Managers should not simply use a previous version and 'top and tail' – it should be completely revised to ensure that all requirements are absolutely required.

These are examples only. The recruitment team will exercise their judgement when checking adverts and if you have any queries, please seek advice.