Application forms – best practice

The application form should match the level of the role. Use the job description and person specification to work out what information is required on the application form.

What should they ask?

The application form should ask people to demonstrate how they meet the requirements of the job. This ensures that employers are focussed on the job, rather than the protected characteristics of individuals which can lead to discrimination.

- Disabled candidates should be offered the opportunity of any reasonable adjustments to the application process to enable them to apply for the role.

- Only information that is relevant for the job should be requested on the application form. This should focus on:
    - **information about the applicant** – name, contact details, current employment status
    - **skills and knowledge** – qualifications and education, skills relevant to the role
    - **experience** – previous work experience and explanations of gaps
    - **values** – personal qualities, attributes, values and behaviours relevant to the role.

- Avoid asking questions on an application form about any of the following:
    - age, race, gender, religion, belief, sexual orientation, disability
    - marital status
    - children and childcare arrangements
    - health record.

Other information

- Use a separate monitoring form to gather personal information about candidates which may be useful for monitoring purposes. This should be sent with the application form but kept in a sealed envelope and not seen by the shortlisting or interviewing panels.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/valuesandbehaviours

- Allow people to give information on experiences from outside of paid work. These can help people whose protected characteristics have influenced their work history, to show they have gained skills in other ways.

- Where an organisation has a clear set of organisational values, get the candidate to give examples of how they share the values of the organisation under the qualities section of the application form.

Example application forms

ACAS have two example application forms on their website for employers which comply with the best practice guidance above
http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1392

Further guidance

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
www.cipd.co.uk

ACAS
www.acas.org.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission
www.equalityhumanrights.com