

NDS Quality information pack

An NDS Quality Team Initiative

Recruitment and selection



National Disability Services

Queensland

A message from the NDS Queensland Quality Team

The National Disability Services (NDS) Queensland Quality Team is part of NDS's Industry Development and Support activities. It was set up to support disability organisations to implement the new Disability Sector Quality System. The purpose of this information pack written by the NDS Quality Team is to stimulate discussion and debate amongst stakeholders of disability services in the context of implementing the Disability Sector Quality System — it is not intended as a definitive reference on the topic.

For example, this material may be used as a basis for stakeholder workshops or staff meeting discussions. It may also be adapted freely to meet the needs of any intended audience. It is requested, however, that NDS Queensland be acknowledged as the source of the material and that any modifications do not change the intent or compromise the integrity of the original document.

Information packs are also available covering the following topics:

- reviewing and developing policies and procedures
- induction
- training and development
- networking, mentoring and peer support
- person-centred planning.

These can be downloaded from the NDS Quality website: www.ndsqldquality.net or you can contact NDS Queensland directly:

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The information pack

This information pack is one in a series designed to help organisations review aspects of management as part of implementing a quality framework. The pack includes a series of information sheets, related questions and a facilitator's session plan that can be used by groups to review current practice and identify improvements. The information sheets are intended to stimulate discussion — they do not go into detail about the topic. There are numerous books, resources, courses, Internet sites and experts that can provide detailed information; some of these are listed in the resources section at the end of the pack. Accessing more detailed expertise will become more important as you move further into review or begin making improvements to practice.

For the facilitator it will be important to familiarise and tailor the workshop to the group and the organisation. The organisation's policies, procedures and any other resources for each topic will be needed to supplement the information in this pack. Similarly if the organisation is using the disability service standards as part of this review each participant will need copies of the standards.

About the topic

Recruitment and selection is an expensive task — especially if it goes wrong. In compromising the recruitment/selection process organisations face increased risk of poor performance, poor service quality, increased complaints, absenteeism, workers' compensation, other legal costs and an impact on colleagues and co-workers.

When an organisation is faced with a vacancy the pressure to replace the previous incumbent quickly is a very real temptation. A recruitment and selection process can happen quickly, however the level of consideration that has been put into the policies and procedures will affect the quality.

Regularly spending time to review the way recruitment and selection occurs in the organisation can save time, money and a lot of frustration for the future.

The contents

This resource will help you to review the way your organisation recruits and selects staff and help determine if there are any changes or improvements that you can make. The pack contains information covering:

- benefits of improving recruitment and selection and some assumptions to challenge
- obligations
- what is good recruitment and selection — what does it look like
- recruitment and selection in focus (discussion questions)
- sample workshop design and facilitator notes
- other resources.

The information in this pack can also be used to consider how best to recruit and select volunteers — these processes are often the same as, or a simplified version of, those used for paid staff. If you do use it in relation to volunteers please substitute 'volunteers' when reading the word 'staff'.

Benefits of improving recruitment and selection and some assumptions to challenge

Information sheet



This sheet lists some of the benefits of improving recruitment and selection along with some of the assumptions that can be made when making decisions about recruitment and selection. Participants will probably be able to think of more of these.

Benefits

Some of the benefits of improving recruitment and selection include:

- ensuring the best person for each job is employed
- fair and transparent decision making provides for a good experience for all candidates (successful and unsuccessful)
- helping to screen out unsuitable applicants for roles (i.e. the organisation can determine whether the applicants are suitable for the job and the applicants can judge if they want to be employed by the service)
- playing a key role in reducing the risk of service users' exposure to abuse/neglect
- improving service user, staff and management relationships
- involving service users in the process results in them feeling included in decisions that impact on their lives
- lower staff turnover (and associated costs)
- reduced risk of industrial issues
- reduced risk of common law claims
- provides evidence of meeting the disability service standards.

Some assumptions to challenge

Some common assumptions people have about recruitment and selection are that:

- vacancies need to be filled immediately to ensure continuity of service
- disability organisations have difficulty finding staff and therefore should be grateful for any applicants
- the industry doesn't pay enough so we shouldn't expect applicants of a high standard
- organisations don't have time to conduct the recruitment and selection process thoroughly
- the service user is always the best person to decide on new staff



- it is too difficult to include service users in the recruitment and selection process
- once we have our recruitment and selection processes in place, we never need to review them.



This information sheet is not meant to be a definitive list of the legislative or organisational obligations relating to recruitment and selection. It is meant to highlight that organisations must address certain responsibilities. If there are queries or concerns you can get more information directly from the legislation, disability service standard or the relevant governing body — it is important to be fully and accurately informed.

The disability service standards

The following disability service standards are particularly relevant to this topic:

- *Standard 10: Staff recruitment, employment and development*
- *Standard 8: Service management*

Having an approach to recruitment and selection and implementing this in a consistent and transparent manner will help to demonstrate that your organisation meets these standards.

Other legislation

One of the key pieces of legislation covering recruitment and selection is the discrimination legislation. It affects what an organisation can ask during recruitment and consider in the selection decision — you must have a consistent and transparent recruitment and selection process to meet your obligations.

Workplace health and safety legislation should also be considered during recruitment and selection. In particular, organisations are obligated to ensure each staff member has the knowledge, information and skills to fulfil their role safely at all times. Making a compromise on these aspects in selection will only increase the training and support obligations of the organisation once the new staff member is in the workplace.



Please note: The actual employment contract made between the organisation and the staff member is important. Expertise in industrial relations is vital to ensuring this contract is appropriate and robust for the tenure of the staff member.



Reducing exposure to risk

Having a robust recruitment and selection process and not compromising on the staff member's skills and knowledge will reduce the risk of:

- substantial management time required to address under-skilled staff members
- substantial management time required to address performance or team issues
- workers' compensation costs
- potential legal costs of grievances, complaints or industrial issues.

What is good recruitment and selection — what does it look like?



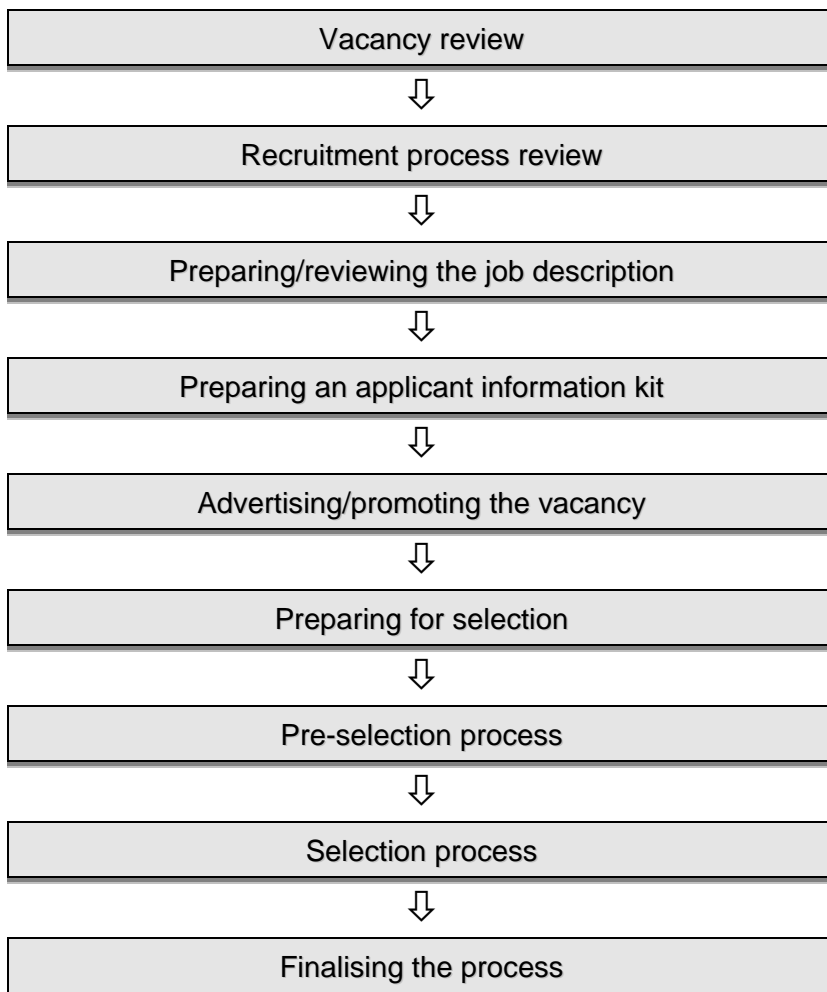
What is recruitment and selection?

Recruitment is the process of advertising the availability of a job vacancy and inviting appropriate people to apply.

Selection is the process of assessing job applicants and making a decision on the most appropriate person to whom to make a job offer.

The overall aim of recruitment and selection is to get the right person in the right job. Poor recruitment and/or selection can prove costly. Well-documented recruitment and selection policies and procedures not only represent good human resource practice but a significant cost benefit to the organisation.

The basic flow of recruitment and selection is:





Vacancy review

The purpose of this review is to check the original intent of the position and the resources and identify if any changes are needed. Often organisations focus immediately on finding a replacement when a position becomes vacant rather than reflecting on the success or otherwise of the position.

Key questions to consider during this stage are:

- Does this position need to be filled?
- Does the role need to be changed?
- Should the position be full-time, part-time, permanent or casual?
- Can the position be filled internally?

Recruitment process review

It is useful to review the recruitment and selection process and make a recruitment plan as part of each recruitment process. Depending on the role this may be a short or lengthy process. Questions to consider are:

- What are the recruitment and selection procedures documented as part of our human resource policy and procedures?
- When were these last reviewed with input from our stakeholders?
- Is the process transparent and effective?
- Does the process comply with relevant legislation (disability services, anti-discrimination, privacy, freedom of information, superannuation) and industrial award requirements?
- Does the process meet the disability service standards?
- How effective have previous recruitment activities been in terms of cost, response rate and outcome?
- What would be the most cost-effective advertising/promotion strategy?
- Have existing networks been considered?
- What strategies are being using to include service users and their families/carers (if applicable) in the recruitment and selection process?

Preparing/reviewing the job description

The job description is the key document that will guide the recruitment, the induction, the performance development and the training and development of the staff member. It is important to review the job description and make sure it is current. Key questions are:

- Is the existing job description competency based (aligned with the National Community Services and Health Training Package)?
- Is the existing job description aligned with the relevant award level classifications?
- Does the job need to be redesigned?
- Do the duties listed accurately reflect the needs of the job?



Preparing an applicant information kit

This is the information that the candidates will be given to help them determine whether they will apply for the role and what information they will give as part of that application. Questions to consider include:

- Do our selection criteria accurately reflect job requirements (including level of autonomy, responsibility and problem solving required)?
- Is there a clear distinction between essential and desirable criteria?
- Do our selection criteria allow for reasonable adjustment for people with disabilities to apply?
- Have we made relevant, accurate information about the job available to potential applicants at every stage of the process?
- Have we provided enough information to allow applicants to self-select?
- What image will the information give the applicant?

Advertising/promoting the vacancy

This is about creating a pool of quality applicants. This means not necessarily creating a large pool, rather a pool of well-matched applicants who could all fulfil the role requirements that is large enough to give the selection panel a number of quality candidates to compare. To achieve this it is important to think about who these individuals are and how best to find them. This may be through advertising through the paper, Internet, word-of-mouth, recruitment agency etc. To help make a decision ask:

- What is our advertising budget?
- Have we made full use of our networks?
- Do we track the value of various sources of job applicants and research new sources?
- Do we ensure confidentiality at all stages of the recruitment and selection process?
- Have we ensured our advertisement is free of discriminatory language and promotes a positive image of people with disabilities?

Preparing for selection

Selection is about choosing the best person for the role. This is the stage where the recruitment process often goes wrong. A compromise made at this point (e.g. 'best of an ok bunch') has ramifications at a later date. Make sure you have enough people involved for a good decision, but not too many people that the process stalls. Questions to consider are:

- Have we chosen a panel, including three people from relevant stakeholder groups (service-users, management committee, service staff-line manager, families and advocates)?



- Do we have a process for training/briefing the selection panel to ensure:
 - they have the skills and confidence required of their job
 - selection is in relation to specific job requirements rather than personal characteristics.

Pre-selection process

Preparation is important in managing the quality of the selection decision. Make sure all participants understand their role and have the information to make a good decision. Key questions to ask:

- Have we ensured the panel has all the relevant information, allowing enough time for thorough review of the material?
- Has the panel met to finalise briefing and short-listing of applicants?
- Has the panel agreed on interview questions, work sampling and/or other methods of testing suitability for the job?
- Is the panel clear on job requirements and the interview schedule?
- Have we decided on an assessment process e.g. weighting, rating?
- Does our process, venue and timing support the applicant's best performance?

Selection process

This is about reviewing all of the information collected through the interview, referee checks, work sampling or testing, and relating it to the job requirements. The outcome of this analysis is the recruitment decision and subsequent offer to the new staff member. During the selection process the panel should consider:

- Have we reviewed all resumes?
- Have we conducted interviews thoroughly and consistently?
- Have references been checked with responses documented consistently?
- Have the outcomes from work sampling (if applicable) been reviewed and discussed in relation to the selection criteria and job requirements?
- Were relevant problem-solving scenarios provided?
- Have we conducted aptitude testing (if applicable)?
- Have we conducted pre-employment checks (as applicable)?
- Have we validated our assessment decision through reference to multiple information sources?
- Have we clearly documented both process and outcome?



Finalising the process

How a new staff member is taken through the offer of employment influences their perceptions about the organisation and their role. Make sure their experience is aligned to the vision, mission and values of the organisation. It is important also while the process is still fresh in the minds of the people involved to reflect on what happened and provide any feedback on the procedures for future recruitment. Key questions the panel should consider are:

- Have we followed up the verbal offer with written confirmation?
- Have we followed up unsuccessful applicants with written documentation?
- Do we wish to ask unsuccessful applicants if we can keep their applications for use at a later date?
- What was successful/unsuccessful about the recruitment process?
- What improvements could be made?

The aim of these questions is to help you focus thinking about how recruitment and selection processes work in your organisation and what might need to change. To get the most out of these questions locate a copy of your recruitment and selection policy/procedure (if one exists) and read the information sheet *'What is good recruitment and selection — what does it look like?'*

How it happens now...

- Describe how recruitment and selection happens here.

- What works really well about the way it happens here?

How it relates to what we said we were going to do...

- How does this relate to what is written in our policy and procedure documents or if none exist what we want to achieve?

- How does this reinforce our vision, mission and values?

- In what ways does this not reinforce our vision, mission and values?

How can we better align 'how it happens now' to 'what we want to achieve'...

- What could we do to improve the way it works here?

- What could we do to better align the way it happens here with our vision, mission and values?


Sample workshop outline — recruitment and selection


Information for facilitators


This section of the information pack provides a sample workshop that can be used to explore and plan for improving recruitment and selection practices within your organisation. For more information on how to conduct the workshop refer to the *Tips for facilitators* information sheet.

In preparation for the workshop ensure all participants have access to at least the *Recruitment and selection in focus* discussion questions and the information sheet *What is good recruitment and selection — What does it look like?*

You may wish to include recruitment and selection of volunteers in your review. With a few alterations this session can include both staff and volunteers or you can run a separate workshop with volunteers as the focus.

| Time | Suggested questions & prompts | Actions |  |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>Welcome and introductions</p> <p>Introductions</p> <p>Ask participants to introduce themselves and share a word or phrase to describe the best recruitment process they have experienced.</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>To review the effectiveness of our current recruitment and selection processes.</p> <p>Alignment question</p> <p>In this workshop/meeting/in-service, we are seeking some alignment (everyone being on the same page), not necessarily agreement on all points.</p> <p><i>Note: To assist with this, ask: 'How can we be more aligned as a group?'</i></p> | <p>Write up the response and refer to it as needed to keep group on track.</p> | |
| | <p>Overview of the session</p> <p>During this session I will be asking some questions to stimulate thoughts on the effectiveness of our recruitment and selection processes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What do our current recruitment and selection policies and procedures look like? ▪ What are our values and attitudes towards recruitment and selection practice? ▪ How can we add value to our recruitment and selection practices? <p>If we don't get through all the questions, or if this session raises more questions than it answers, that's OK too.</p> | | |
| | <p>What do our current recruitment and selection</p> | | |

| Time | Suggested questions & prompts | Actions |  |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>(R&S) policies and procedures look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group brainstorm flow of R&S practice on left side of whiteboard. ▪ Identify relevant policies and procedures in place in the middle column. ▪ Identify gaps/areas of development needed in right hand column. <p>Ideally, have copy of your organisation's R&S policy and procedure on hand.</p> | <p>Group discussion with facilitator recording the steps.</p> | |
| | <p>What are our values and attitudes towards recruitment and selection processes?</p> <p>Group discussion around assumptions to challenge from the information pack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ that vacancies need to be filled immediately to ensure continuity of service ▪ that disability organisations have difficulty finding staff, therefore, we should be grateful for any applicants ▪ that the industry doesn't pay enough so we shouldn't expect applicants of a high standard ▪ that organisations don't have time to conduct the recruitment and selection process thoroughly ▪ that the service user is always the best person to decide on new staff ▪ that it is too difficult to include service users in the recruitment and selection process ▪ that once we have our recruitment and selection processes in place, we never need to review them. | <p>Group discussion.</p> <p>Ensure the issue of how to include service users is addressed thoroughly and make notes on the whiteboard next to relevant parts of the table developed in the last exercise.</p> | |
| | <p>How can we add value to our current recruitment and selection process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the implications of the previous discussion for our recruitment and selection process? ▪ What needs to be done? ▪ What resources will we need? ▪ Who will do it? ▪ By when? ▪ When will we review our recruitment & selection processes again? ▪ How do we ensure this review workshop is well documented as evidence for our self-assessment and external audit? | | |

| Time | Suggested questions & prompts | Actions |  |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Conclusion | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overview of workshop process and outcomes ▪ Is there anything you wish to change or add to the action plan? ▪ Who needs to get feedback from this session and how and when will this occur? | | |
| | Thanks and acknowledgements | | |

The following tips aim to help facilitators conduct the workshop provided in this information pack.



Important note: The session plan has been written assuming that people from the same workplace (or organisation) are working together on the issue and how it pertains to their organisation. The session plan will need to be altered if this is not the case.

Preparation

- Provide pre-reading information with enough time for the participants to digest it and have a chance to ask questions before the session begins. The pre-reading information will include the information sheets from this information package, the disability service standards and any policy/procedural information that is relevant to the topic.
- Gather information about the room, food, timing and travel requirements of the participants prior to organising the session and venue.
- Familiarise yourself with the session materials and if necessary adapt them to the group's characteristics and experiences for example: break into smaller groups for discussions or activities; think about the time you have for each activity and mark these on your workshop plan in the time column; allow time for extra activities if needed; or use two facilitators if working with a large group).
- Consider covering the associated costs for participants with disabilities e.g. transport, childcare, attendant carers etc.

During the session

- Take care to validate all contributions.
- Be flexible with timing and frequency of breaks. Aim for a break every hour. Allow more time for breaks if the interactions during these breaks are flowing freely (relationship building is the best outcome and worth sacrificing time spent on workshop content).
- Don't start by knowing the answers — participants will pick this up. The intention is to explore the possibilities, not confirm solutions you have already identified.
- When you are recording discussions make sure you label the information as you collect it to make the collation after the session easier.
- Keep an eye on all participants and their level of interaction; follow up with any individuals who may not be fully participating to see if there is any assistance that could be provided to increase their level of involvement.

After the session

- Always thank and acknowledge all participants (including staff) and those who helped organise the session.
- Make sure feedback is provided within two weeks of the workshop (be realistic when you give a timeframe at the end of the workshop).

Tips on conducting the sample workshop

Introductions

- The introduction part of the workshop can be altered to suit the group and the facilitator. The activity listed in the session plan is designed to warm people up to the topic, be a non-threatening sharing activity and to make sure everyone is aware of who is in the room. If people do not know each other you may wish to spend more time on this to ensure all participants are comfortable.
- You may agree on some ground rules for the session. If so these should be recorded and remain in sight of the group throughout the session.

Alignment activity

- This activity is about creating a good atmosphere for the group to work with each other on the session tasks. It is worth spending as much time as is required on this activity before progressing. The outcome will have a huge impact on whether the group will achieve the purpose of the session.
- The alignment discussion is designed to identify individual perspectives and how this will affect the work of the group. The more strongly aligned, the easier it will be to attack the workshop topic.
- One of the keys to successful group work is having an environment where there can be debate, questioning, curiosity, enquiry, disagreement and agreement around the topic at hand without personal agendas preventing all the issues being discussed.
- If people do raise significant concerns about whether they can work together you will need to facilitate a discussion to explore this. If this takes up the entire session the outcome will still be worthwhile.

Overview of the session

- Check with the participants about whether this meets their expectations and spend time clarifying and agreeing on how you will be spending the rest of the session.

What business are we in?

- This activity is designed to provide the context for the discussion. If there is disagreement on the vision, mission and values stop the session and discuss this issue. Agreeing on the vision, mission and values is vital for any of the work outlined in the session plan.

The next few activities (reflection and discussion)

- These require people to have read the pre-reading. If this has not happened you may need to give people time to individually read the information.

Where to from here

- This activity is the planning part of the session. Your role as a facilitator will be to ensure this is recorded and test out the feasibility of the plan. The plan needs to be owned, resourced and be reasonably practical to achieve.
- This write-up is able to be used as evidence of review of practice for the service audits; ensure the documentation is appropriate.

Other resources

Resource information

The information contained in this pack will not provide enough detail for more in-depth work on improving recruitment and selection practices. The following list of resources is not exhaustive, however it is a useful place to start.

- *Other organisations:* Many organisations display their recruitment and selection policies and procedures on their websites. To find a sample of these, search the internet using the keywords 'recruitment and selection' on your preferred search engine (e.g. www.google.com.au or www.yahoo.com.au)
- *DSQ People Management Toolkit:* Issued in hardcopy to all services and has been made available on the internet in more detail <http://www.disability.qld.gov.au/workforceplanning/toolkit/index.cfm> (or follow the links: Community involvement > Workforce planning > people management toolkit)
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission:* This web site provides best practice information for employers: www.hreoc.gov.au — to find information relating to recruitment and selection follow these links from the home page: Information for employers > Best practice guidelines > Guidelines for recruitment and selection
- *CCH Human Resource Management:* CCH Australia Ltd this is a subscription service which is free of charge - www.cch.com.au
- *Australian Human Resources Institute:* www.ahri.com.au
- *Australian Standards:* this website publishes a range of standards and guides to assist managers in a whole range of processes: www.standards.com.au/catalogue/script/search.asp



Please note: These resources were current at the time of publication, however some website addresses or page links may change without our knowledge.