

North Staffs Mind

Making an Application and the Recruitment Process

Please take the time to read these guidance notes carefully as they will enable you to complete your application.

General

It is our intention to appoint the most suitable candidate for every vacancy in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy. To do this fairly we need all applicants to provide relevant information about themselves, in a format which is consistent across the board. For this reason we use a standard application form for all recruitment processes and will not accept CVs.

Please remember that we are not able to consider previous applications or personal knowledge of you. This means that if you already work for North Staffs Mind, either on a paid or voluntary basis, we will not take account of your personal file or refer to your manager unless you have asked them to provide a reference for you.

The information you provide about yourself should be based on the criteria listed in the enclosed person specification and related to the job description. We will only use information provided on the form in deciding whether or not you will be shortlisted for an interview and it will also be used as a basis for the interview itself.

Your application form is therefore very important and the following advice is designed to help you complete it as effectively as possible.

The covering letter or advertisement states the date by which you should return your completed application. Remember to take a copy for your records. Please note that late applications will not be accepted.

Job Description & Person Specification

A full job description for the post is enclosed. Every vacancy is based on a job description which lists the main duties of the post. The person specification describes the skills, experience and abilities which are necessary for the postholder to undertake the tasks outlined in the job description. These selection criteria are based on the job description and are monitored to ensure we only require skills, abilities or experience which are absolutely necessary to enable the postholder to undertake all the job tasks. Please look at this carefully so that you know what the job involves and the range of expertise required. Think about why you are interested in the job.

Completing the Application Form

1. Please complete all sections of both parts of the application form which consists of:
 - a. Application Part 1
 - i. Section A – Personal information, education and employment history etc
 - b. Application Part 2
 - i. Section B – Referees and criminal convictions information
 - ii. Section C – Equal opportunities monitoring form.

Both forms and all sections must be completed for an application to be accepted. Application Part 2 will be detached and will not be seen by the selection panel.

2. You may find it helpful to do a rough draft first to avoid mistakes, repetitions etc.
3. Ensure the information you provide is well organised and relevant.
4. The most important section of the form is that headed “Post for which application is made”. This should be used to tell us how you think you meet each of the selection criteria listed on the person specification. Draw particular attention to experience, skills, achievements and knowledge gained in past employment (including community/ voluntary work, work in the home or leisure interests) or other activities relevant to the job.
5. Give examples of the work you have been involved in and write in a positive way (eg. I was responsible for ..., I organised ...). Always remember to specify your own responsibilities rather than those of your section or department.
6. It would be useful to the selection panel if you used headings for each criterion listed and demonstrate how you feel you meet each requirement. If it is not apparent from your application that you meet the requirements, you are unlikely to be shortlisted.

The most important thing is to tell us – selection panels will not guess or make assumptions. You must complete the application form in full so that we receive the same type of information from all applicants and so that you directly address the selection criteria.

References

On the application form you are asked to provide names and addresses of two referees. One of these should be your most recent employer. The second should preferably be someone who knows you in a work capacity, whether that work is paid/voluntary/education.

References will not be taken up until a conditional offer of appointment has been made.

Shortlisting and interviews

In order to ensure that the shortlisting process is a fair and objective one personal details are removed from your application once it is received. After the closing date all the applications received are considered carefully by the Selection Panel and marked against the criteria on the person specification. Each applicant's skills and experience are matched to the job and those applicants who best meet our requirements are called for interview.

The Interview Panel is usually made up of three people from the organisation (most likely to be immediate managers, Chief Executive and/or trustees and service users). A series of interview questions relating to the person specification will have been drawn up in advance. All candidates will be asked the same set of questions. The questions are intended to allow you to expand on your application and to demonstrate to the Interview Panel how far you meet the requirements of the post. You will have an opportunity to ask questions of the Panel at the end of the interview.

The Interview Panel has to keep a record of the assessment of each candidate and you should therefore not be worried about them taking notes during the interview.

Equal Opportunities monitoring

North Staffs Mind is committed to equal opportunities in its recruitment process. We wish to be an inclusive employer and think that having a diverse workforce is in the organisation's best interests. In order to find out how well we are doing we need to collect monitoring data on race, age, sexuality and religion and disability. If particular groups are found to be under-represented in our workforce we can then take steps to address this.

The information that you provide us with in your application will be regarded as confidential. It will be held securely by the Chief Executive for monitoring and reporting processes. Composite, anonymous data will be reported to funders of services where necessary and North Staffs Mind's trustees for equality monitoring purposes only. All information will be retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

We hope that you will be successful in your application. However if you are not please do not be discouraged from applying to North Staffs Mind in the future. Your skills and experience might be what we need for our next vacancy.

We are happy to provide feedback to unsuccessful applications and would encourage you to take us up on this offer as it may give you useful insight into ways you could improve your interview performance for the future.