

I N T R O D U C T I O N

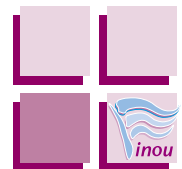
Assisting Unemployed People move from Social Welfare to Work is a practical Resource Guide designed to assist Partnerships and ADM Funded Community Groups in their work with unemployed people and employers. While the Guide comprises of three elements or modules which are stand alone documents, there are strong linkages between the modules. We hope Partnership and Community Group staff who work with unemployed people will find these documents useful in their everyday work.

The Resource Guide aims to assist Partnerships and Community Groups to promote the services they provide and the work they do with unemployed people. Many Partnership and Community group staff will be aware of much that is included here, but if the feedback from staff working with unemployed people is accurate, information which is readily identifiable as well as clear and concise should be a useful resource in furthering this important work. If you have any comments or suggestions we would greatly appreciate it if you could contact us. This module – Employers Guide to Recruiting

Unemployed People is designed to assist both Partnership and ADM funded Community Group staff that work with employers and staff who work in organisations within Partnership areas such as Centres for the Unemployed and local Resource Centres.

This Resource consists of:

- A detailed reference module entitled Employers Guide to Recruiting Unemployed People
- A Wallchart outlining the qualifying criteria and entitlements of the different incentives available to employers who recruit unemployed people
- Leaflets aimed at Employers outlining the qualifying criteria and financial incentives available to employers who recruit unemployed people



C O N T E N T S

Employers guide to recruiting unemployed people

1: Recruitment

- Job Description
- Person Specification
- Recruitment Advertising

2: Selection

- Application Form
- Shortlisting Candidates for Interview
- Notifying Applicants
- Interviews

3: Appointing the Successful Candidate

- Induction
- Probation

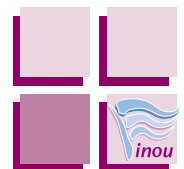
4: Recruitment and Selection Checklist

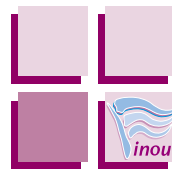
5: Samples

- Sample Job Description
- Sample Person Specification
- Sample Job Advertisement
- Sample Not Shortlisted for Interview Letter
- Sample Unsuccessful Letter following Interview

Wallchart and Leaflets:

The “Employers Incentives to Recruit Unemployed People” wallchart and Leaflets provide information on a range of incentives available to employers who recruit unemployed people.





The buoyant economic conditions that Ireland has experienced in the last five years has resulted in an unprecedented increase in the number of people at work. Many of these new jobs have been taken up by people who were previously unemployed. It is clear that unemployed people want to work. Research has shown that unemployed people who return to the workplace do so with a high degree of motivation and commitment to their jobs.

In spite of the current slow down in the economy, employers in many sectors continue to report difficulties in filling vacancies. Employers in certain sectors are increasingly relying on workers from outside Ireland to fill vacancies and a significant number of work permits have been issued in recent years.

The purpose of this Module is to assist Partnership and Community Group staff who work with employers to further assist employers to recruit unemployed people by:

- Promoting and encouraging good practice in recruitment and selection
- Promoting awareness and understanding of the range of financial incentives available to employers who recruit people who are unemployed

1. Recruitment

Fair and effective recruitment and selection procedures will help to ensure that an employer recruits the best possible candidate for the job. Fair recruitment practices should also help to ensure compliance with the Employment Equality Act which prohibits discrimination on a number of grounds. Whilst it is recognised that many employers will already have recruitment policies and practices, it is hoped that the following will assist any employer who may wish to develop existing policies or formulate new policies in this area.

▼ Job Description

Prior to advertising, it is advisable to draw up both a Job Description and a Person Specification for the position to be filled. The Job Description should detail the key responsibilities of the post or tasks to be undertaken. The Job Description should also indicate the overall purpose of the job. A carefully drawn up Job Description should help to ensure that there is clarity about what the job entails. The Job Description can be used for other purposes such as identifying training needs or job evaluation. A copy of the job description should be made available to all applicants for the post. A comprehensive Job Description should contain:

- The Job Title
- Overall purpose of the job and its relationship, if any, with other jobs.
- Main duties / responsibilities
- Resources, if any, available to job holder i.e. budget, staff, etc.
- An indication that additional tasks/duties may be added from time to time as appropriate
- Details of who the post holder is responsible to
- Details of whether the job qualifies for any of the employer incentive schemes

A sample Job Description is set out in pullout section 5 (Samples)

▼ Person Specification

The purpose of the Person Specification is to enable the employer to set clear criteria against which all the applicants for the post are to be assessed. The Person Specification should, therefore, outline the skills, experience, knowledge and personal attributes that are required to successfully undertake the responsibilities of the job.

When drawing up a Person Specification, the following should be considered:

- What type of work experience, if any, is needed
- Are there any special requirements eg. driving licence or knowledge of a foreign language
- What skills are needed to successfully undertake the duties eg. communication skills, organisational ability, writing skills, numerical skills
- What education qualifications, if any, are required - Note: this should be a necessary requirement for the post and not simply to be used as a basis for drawing up a shortlist of candidates
- Are any personal attributes required eg. leadership, creativity etc.
- Are there any particular job related requirements eg. willingness to travel

Employers will be aware that the the Employment Equality Act 1998 requires organisations not to discriminate in selection against individuals on the grounds of:

- Gender
- Age
- Marital or family status
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Race
- Religion
- Membership of the Traveller Community

Care should be taken in the drawing up of both the Job Description and Person Specification to ensure compliance with the law in this area.

A copy of the Job Description and Person Specification should be given to all potential applicants. Information about the company will also assist people who are unemployed, as they may have limited means or contacts to help them find out about the employer.

A sample Person Specification is set out in pullout section 5 (Samples)

▼ Recruitment advertising

Depending on the nature of the job, employers will invariably either publicly advertise the position or seek to fill the post by some other means. Advertising in a local/national newspaper continues to be the preferred recruitment method for many organisations. However, the use of internet based recruitment services is also becoming popular.

When drawing up a job advert, it is useful to include:

- A summary of what the job entails
- Details of the skills, experience or knowledge required to do the job
- The salary/wages
- An indication that further details by way of a Job Description/Person Specification are available on request
- The closing date for receipt of applications
- An indication that the company is an Equal Opportunities Employer

A sample job advertisement is set out in pullout section 5 (Samples)

Unemployed people may find some sources of recruitment advertising more accessible than others. Employers who wish to recruit unemployed people may wish to consider some of the following to complement newspaper advertising:

- Local Resource Centres for the Unemployed FÁS
- Local Partnership Company Local Employment Service
- Local Advertisements — alternative sources of advertising such as notices in local shop windows, Post Offices and other public places can be an effective way of attracting candidates who may be unemployed

2. Selection

Employers will generally decide on selection methods that are appropriate to the job on offer and their own administrative capabilities. However, fair and transparent selection methods will enhance the prospect of the right candidate getting the job.

The initial stages of the selection process can range from asking job seekers to submit a Curriculum Vitae (CV), to filling out an application form or simply asking the job seeker to call in or telephone the company.

□ CVs

The advantage of using CVs is that there is an onus on the job seeker to demonstrate how they meet the selection criteria. However, not all long-term unemployed people feel confident in applying for a job through a CV, for a variety of reasons. These could range from concern about their employment record, concern about the layout of their CV particularly if they received no assistance in drawing it up, or just a lack of familiarity in applying for a job in this way.

□ Application Forms

From the employer's perspective, Application Forms offer the advantage of standardising the type of information required from all the applicants.

If an application form is used as part of the selection procedure, care should be taken to ensure that the form does not contain questions which are actually discriminatory or which could give rise to an inference of discrimination. Space should also be provided for applicants to record their non-work related experience and activity.

□ Calling in person

Depending on the nature of the job, it may be appropriate to request job seekers to call in with a view to having a less formal type of interview.

□ Telephone Interviews

For telephone interviews to be effective appropriate preparation is needed both from the employer and the job seeker. It is good practice for the employer to explain to the job seeker that this method will be used and to make a preliminary call to arrange a suitable time for the telephone interview to take place.

□ Shortlisting Candidates for Interview

Shortlisting is the process by which the skills, experience and personal qualities of the applicants are matched against the selection criteria on the Person Specification with a view to drawing up an agreed list of candidates for interview. Ideally, shortlisting should be done by more than one person and the shortlisting panel should, in the main, comprise of the same people who will conduct the interviews. Care should be taken during the shortlisting process to ensure that all applicants are given equal consideration. Shortlisting decisions should also be formally recorded for future reference.

Research has shown that unemployed people face the greatest difficulty getting through the short-listing process. If called for interview their chances of getting the job begin to level out with those of other 'employed' job seekers. Often long-term unemployed people can experience auto-



matic rejection at the short-listing stage or are expected to show additional evidence of their suitability.

Many employers will notify all applicants of the outcome of their application for the job. However, there is strong evidence that a significant number of employers may not formally notify the not-shortlisted candidates. This practice can impact disproportionately on unemployed people who may be required to provide evidence of job seeking as a condition of receiving their benefits. Whilst it is recognised that there may be a cost implication for employers who have high volume recruitment, good practice and courtesy would dictate that all applicants for a position should be notified of the outcome.

A sample not shortlisted letter is set out in pullout section 5 (Samples)

Interviews

In order for the Interview Panel to operate effectively it is good practise to prepare in advance. Decisions on whether to have an interview panel, what format the interview should take, who should ask which questions, what the selection and marking criteria will be and where the interviews will take place—in the company's premises or elsewhere—should all be made well before the interview date.

● ***During the interview***

It is good practice to ensure that interviews are carried out by more than one person. Where more than one person is conducting the interview it is important that the interviewers agree on their roles in advance.

Most candidates, but especially those who have been out of work for some time, may feel quite nervous at the interview stage. Unemployed job seekers may have gaps in their employment record and it is hoped that employers would be sensitive in dealing with these issues. This in turn can play an important role in getting the best out of the interview and the job-seeker. Focusing exclusively on work experience may not be conducive to achieving a balanced interview. If the person has been active in other fields i.e. within their community or a particular sport etc. they may well have acquired transferable skills and knowledge. Employers should be prepared to ask such questions and keep in mind that the person themselves may not realise that experience gained outside paid employment may be just as useful and relevant as experience gained in the workplace.

Interview panel members should also be aware of the provisions of the Employment Equality Act and guard against pursuing a line of questioning that may result in them being in breach of the Act.

● ***After each interview***

After each candidate has been interviewed, the Panel should allocate time to reviewing the individual's performance. Even with an agreed procedure and assessment system, it can still be a difficult process to decide on which candidate to select. Sufficient time should be allocated to this aspect of the process in order to resolve the issue on the day.

It is advisable that all documentation in respect of the recruitment process be kept for at least 12 months.

3. Appointing the Successful Candidate

It may be appropriate to wait until the successful candidate has accepted the offer prior to sending letters of rejection to the other candidates. Normally, a job offer should be conditional on receipt of satisfactory references.

The reference check should cover:

- Employment dates (if applicable)
- Nature of duties
- Standards of performance
- Rate of pay
- Absenteeism record
- Reason for leaving (if applicable)
- The referee's willingness to re-employ the candidate
- Any other information which may be relevant to the advertised position

Employers need to be mindful of the fact that some unemployed people may have difficulty providing the names of referees from previous employers, particularly where they have been unemployed for a number of years.

A sample unsuccessful letter is set out in pullout section 5 (Samples)

Induction

An effective induction programme should enhance the possibility of the new employee settling into her/his new job and to ensure that they have all the necessary information to do the job effectively.

The induction should cover:

- Conditions of employment by reference to the contract of employment
- Rules and regulations
- Standards of the job
- Identification of Training Needs

Ideally, an employee should be briefed on rules, regulations, conditions and practice on the first day at work.

Probation

Probationary periods normally last between three and six months with a view to giving the employer time to ensure that the new employee is suitable for the post that she/he has been appointed to. It also provides an opportunity for the employee to determine if the position is suitable for them. It is good practice to incorporate a mid-term review of performance in the probationary period. Review sessions should examine the employee's progress on the job. If there is a shortcoming in this regard, it should be identified at this stage. Records should be kept of these reviews. This procedure will enable management to establish whether or not the employee is reaching the required standard during the probationary period.

In the event of the employer deciding that the new employees performance or conduct has not reached the required standard, the probationary period may be extended for a limited period. The employee should be offered all necessary assistance to achieve the desired standard.

4. Recruitment and Selection Checklist

- Compile a Job Description and Person Specification for the vacant post
- Determine the Conditions of Employment
- Advertise the vacancy
- Ensure that potential applicants are aware of how and where to apply
- Decide on the composition of the shortlisting and interview panel
- Invite shortlisted applicants for interview
- Notify not-shortlisted applicants
- Check references of the successful candidate
- Notify Unsuccessful Candidates
- Issue a contract of employment to new employee
- Draw up Induction and Probation procedures

Sample Job Description

Position: Book Keeper

Contract: Part-time, 25 hrs per week

Wages:

Reporting to: The Financial Controller

Purpose of the Job: To assist the Financial Controller in the maintenance of all company accounts and to contribute as appropriate to the financial management of the organisation.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Record all outgoing and incoming invoices
- Balance monthly bank reconciliation
- Ensure that receipts are kept for all monies spent
- Assist in the preparation of the audit
- Make Bank lodgements when cash/cheques come in
- Monitor Cheque Book usage and order and collect Cheque Books as needed
- Ensure that the Computerised Accounts are kept up-to-date
- Maintain the Petty Cash Book and balance it at the end of the month
- Pay creditors
- Undertake any other duties as may reasonably be required by the financial controller

A sample Person Specification is set out below:

<p>Position: Book Keeper</p> <p>The Person Specification outlines the skills, knowledge, experience and personal skills or attributes required to do the job. It plays an important role in the shortlisting and interview process.</p> <p>Criteria</p> <p>Job Related Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of Computerised Accounts<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of the principles of Bank Reconciliation <p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Experience of using accounts packages<input type="checkbox"/> Experience of working in an accounts/book-keeping environment<input type="checkbox"/> Experience of working to deadlines<input type="checkbox"/> Experience of dealing with creditors/debtors	<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Good communication skills - the job will involve extensive telephone contact with suppliers/customers etc<input type="checkbox"/> Good Organisational skills to ensure that deadlines are met and all paperwork completed<input type="checkbox"/> Must be numerate <p>Personal Skills/Attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility to deal with different demands/priorities<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to relate to people from different backgrounds<input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic
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A sample Job Advert is set out below:

<p style="text-align: center;">Book Keeper (part/time, 25 hours per week)</p> <p>Wages:</p> <p>Applications are invited for the above position. The Book-keeper will assist the Financial Controller in the maintenance of all accounts and will contribute to the overall financial management of the company. Applicants will need to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of computerised accounts systems and have some experience of working in an accounts environment.</p> <p>Further details by way of a full Job Description and Person Specification are available on request from: The Secretary, XY&Z Company etc. The closing date for receipt of CV's is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">XY&Z Company is an Equal Opportunities Employer</p>

A sample not shortlisted for Interview letter is set out below:

Dear

Re: Book Keeper Position

Thank you for your application for the above post.

We have read your CV and covering letter very carefully to see how your experience, knowledge and skills relate to the post. A number of applicants have more closely met the criteria set out in the Person Specification and I regret to inform you, that you have not been shortlisted for interview on this occasion.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in XY&Z Company and to wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Personnel Manager/Secretary

A sample Unsuccessful Letter following Interview is set out below:

Dear

Re: Book Keeper Position

Thank you for attending the recent interview for the above position.

I regret to inform you that you have not been successful on this occasion. I hope that you will not be too disappointed with this outcome. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in XY&Z Company and to wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Personnel Manager/Secretary