



Inclusive Recruitment

A practical guide for all staff

Inclusive recruitment means designing every stage of hiring, from how we write a role to how we make the final decision, so that talented people from all backgrounds have a fair and equal chance. This guide gives every member of staff practical, everyday actions to make our hiring fairer and stronger.

Why it matters

- Wider talent pool: inclusive processes reach candidates who might otherwise self-select out.
- Better decisions: diverse teams bring broader perspectives and reduce blind spots.
- Fairness and compliance: consistent, structured hiring reduces bias and legal risk.
- Reputation: candidates judge our culture by how we treat them during hiring.

Writing the job description

Do

- Focus on essential skills and outcomes, not a long wish-list of “nice-to-haves.”
- Use clear, plain language and explain any acronyms.
- State flexible-working options and any reasonable adjustments available.
- Include a short, welcoming statement encouraging applications from all backgrounds.

Avoid

- Gendered or coded words (e.g. “rockstar,” “aggressive,” “young and energetic”).
- Unnecessary degree or experience requirements that screen out capable people.
- Jargon or internal shorthand that outsiders won’t understand.

Sourcing and outreach

- Advertise across varied channels, not just your personal network.
- Partner with organisations that reach under-represented groups.
- Make sure the application route is simple and mobile-friendly.
- Offer to provide the advert or form in alternative formats on request.

Shortlisting fairly

Practice	Why it helps
Use the same criteria for every candidate	Keeps decisions consistent and defensible
Anonymise applications where possible	Reduces bias from names, photos, or addresses
Score against a rubric before discussing	Stops one strong opinion swaying the panel
Involve more than one reviewer	Balances individual blind spots

Inclusive interviewing

Before

- Share interview format, topics, and timing in advance so candidates can prepare.
- Ask about and arrange any adjustments (extra time, accessible location, materials).
- Use a structured set of questions asked of every candidate.

During

- Build a brief, warm rapport so people can show their best.
- Focus on evidence and examples, not “culture fit” or gut feeling.
- Allow thinking time; don’t penalise nerves or different communication styles.

After

- Score independently first, then discuss as a panel.
- Record the reasons for decisions against the agreed criteria.

Making the decision

- Compare candidates against the role criteria, not against each other's personalities.
- Challenge reasoning that relies on "we've always hired people like this."
- Check the shortlist and outcome for unintended patterns of exclusion.

Common bias traps to watch for

Bias	What it looks like
Affinity bias	Favouring people similar to ourselves
Halo effect	One strong trait colouring the whole judgement
Confirmation bias	Seeking evidence that fits a first impression
Similarity to incumbent	Hiring a copy of the last person in the role

Quick checklist

- The job description is clear, essential, and welcoming.
- Advert placed across diverse channels.
- Adjustments offered and arranged.
- Structured questions and a scoring rubric in place.
- More than one reviewer at the shortlist and interview.
- Decisions recorded against agreed criteria.

Questions about inclusive recruitment? Contact your People / HR team for support, templates, and training. www.neuroempower.org