

Inclusive recruitment showcase

Pilot implementation of NHSE's inclusive recruitment checklist – experience from a community trust

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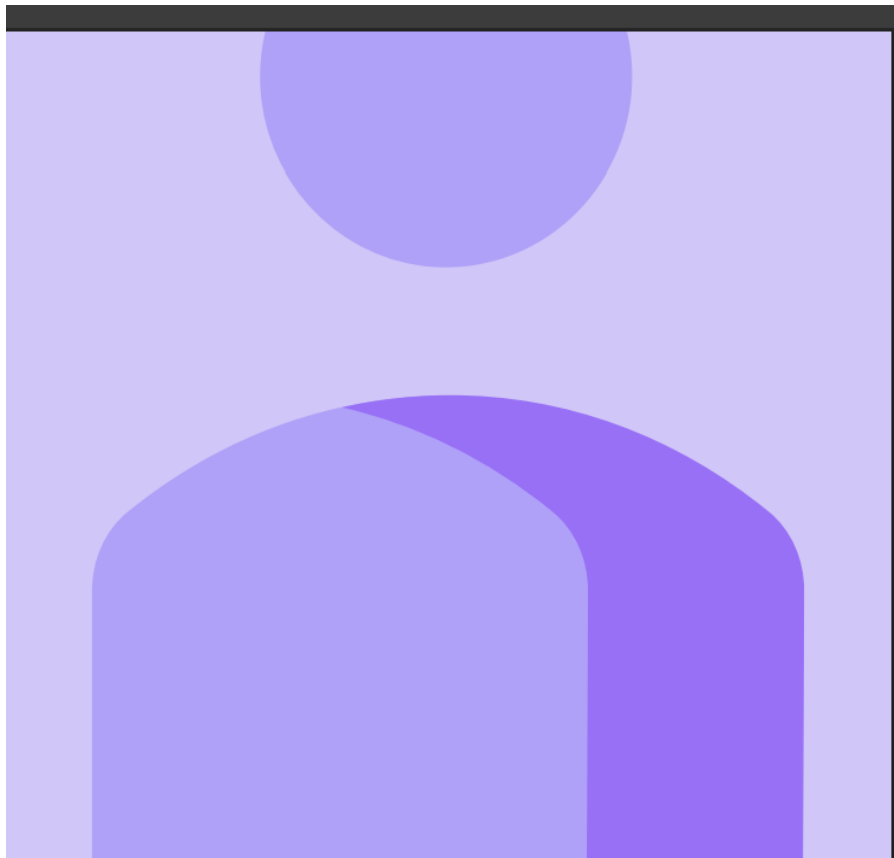
#RHORoadshows





Introduction

- NHS trusts to increase diversity & inclusivity of their workforce, robust evidence base demonstrating benefits, inc: improved quality of care for patients; a more sustainable workforce supply; and increased efficiency of services.
- Discrimination and other forms of unfair treatment evident despite efforts. Covid-19 directly impacted equality
- **Comparing between NHS trusts, higher satisfaction with inpatient care is statistically significantly assoc with more staff reporting equal opportunities for progression & with fewer staff experiencing discrimination**



Research report November 2021

Attracting, supporting and retaining a diverse NHS workforce

Nina Hemmings, Helen Buckingham, Camille Oung, William Palmer

Commissioned and supported by



More than **1 in 8** NHS staff (13%) reported experiencing **discrimination** at work in 2020

The proportion of NHS staff experiencing discrimination at work from their colleagues varies, from 7% among administration and ancillary staff to **11%** among **ambulance staff**

Comparing between NHS trusts, **higher satisfaction with inpatient care** is statistically significantly associated with more staff reporting equal opportunities for progression and with fewer staff experiencing discrimination¹

Men account for 12% of the nursing and health visitor workforce but **62%** of **medical consultants**

Male nurses with nine years' continuous service are **twice** as likely to have **progressed** up two pay bands (41%) than female nurses (20%)

While posts vary, the **typical NHS pay band** of an equality, diversity and inclusion lead is **Band 7** (starting salary £40,057), equivalent to an advanced speech and language therapist or communications manager

Nearly half (47%) of Black and minority ethnic NHS staff have **worked in Covid-19** roles compared with less than a third (31%) of all staff²

Only **2 in 5** deaf health care professionals report having had their **reasonable adjustments met** during the Covid-19 pandemic³


Candidates with **Bangladeshi ethnicity** are, on average, **half** as likely to be appointed from an NHS shortlist than a White British person

Those from the **least affluent** socioeconomic backgrounds are **half as likely** to study undergraduate physiotherapy than children's nursing and the average across all allied health courses, which are broadly representative on that measure


The **NHS** in England employs some **1.5 million** people, with the wider human health and social care sectors accounting for **3.6 million** people

Nuffield Research suggests at least 3 conditions necessary to address these challenges but currently there is scope for the NHS to improve on them: https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/1636121852_nhs-workforce-diversity-web.pdf

Sufficient information & data to enable a more nuanced understanding of the challenges that staff experience, including within & across specific groups



Clarity on 'what works' to address specific challenges, particularly in NHS settings



Resources, skills and clear responsibilities within and across organisations to both implement and evaluate their interventions

Workforce 'Snowy white peaks' (& 10 yrs on)

- >1/4 NHS staff BME England
- 'Peer-reviewed research, grey literature & staff surveys consistently show that the NHS treats such staff less favourably than white staff in recruitment, career progression, bullying, discipline, referrals to professional regulators and the response when BME staff raise concerns.' REF Roger Kline <https://bmjleader.bmj.com/content/9/2/178.full>
- Diversity in more senior/skilled roles
- Barriers & enablers
- Talent management?

Recruitment

- Central London Community Health (CLCH) largest community trust in England. Pharmacy teams employed by CLCH work in a no. of services including virtual wards, primary & community care.
- Active recruitment cycle in '23 ahead of ARRS contracts end Mar '24
- A draft inclusive recruitment checklist was developed by CPHO office at NHSE in '22 to enable more inclusive recruitment process, addressing heuristics & language which may inadvertently deter capable candidates from applying for roles **but this had not been used in practice.**

Recruitment Checklist

Studies have shown that diversity in a team improves performance, with evidence showing 53% more productivity in the most diverse companies versus the least. | Other benefits show diverse teams to be more creative, solve problems faster and make higher quality decisions.^{1,2} Fairer recruitment and progression have a significant impact on happiness, which University of Oxford researchers have shown is a major contributor to productivity and effectiveness.³

Traditional recruitment techniques are susceptible to influence from biases, with behavioural science identifying that job descriptions dissuade applicants from some demographics from applying. The checklist below is designed to support teams to recruit teams based on talent and skills.

The recruitment checklist consists of following sections, the checklist should be considered alongside your organisation's policies, procedures, and training:

Job Description and Person Specification	2
Advertisement	4
Shortlisting	7
Interview	7
References and further resources	10
Appendix 1: Examples of gendered wording	11

- 1) McKinsey, 2012, <https://www.mckinsey.com/organisations/our-insights/is-there-a-payoff-from-top-team-diversity>
- 2) Sparber C, 'Racial Diversity and Aggregate Productivity' in: Florida and Gates, 'Technology and Tolerance: The Importance of Diversity to High-Tech Growth', *Research in Urban Policy*, 9: 199-219, December 2003.
- 3) Bellet, Clement, De Neve, Jan-Emmanuel, George, and Ward, Does Employee Happiness have an Impact on Productivity? (14TH October 2019) Said Business School, DOI:[HTTP://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.347074](http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.347074)

What happened

Aim: To pilot the inclusive recruitment checklist for 'real world' applicability

Objective: pilot use of the NHSE recruitment checklist across any stages of CLCH pharmacy recruitment (to make it more inclusive) over a 3 month period

Method

- The checklist was trialled in an NHS community trust over a 3-month period (Jun- Aug '23) within the Pharmacy department. It was referred to and used during any stage of recruitment process (review of job description/advert, shortlisting and interview) to amend any wording or approaches for recruitment.
- Qualitative feedback sought (senior pharmacists) involved in any stage of recruitment during the trial period. Whole senior pharmacy team were also surveyed at the end, including some newer senior staff and those who hadn't used the checklist to gauge their opinions and feedback

Results

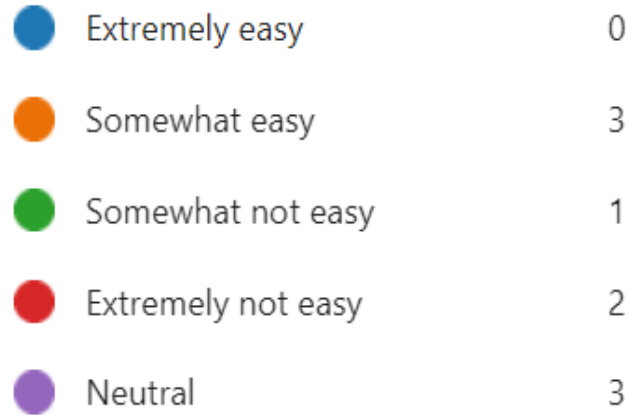
Perceived as extra work/unwieldy, the checklist was generally not onerous in practice but was felt could be streamlined. It raised awareness and was used by staff across care settings. Wording changes relatively easy to update & suggested text helpful. There were concerns about potential downstream implications of recruiting borderline staff if essential criteria relaxed.

- 9/12 respondents - 44.4% (4/9) used the checklist
- Ease of use of checklist: 33.3% (3/9) = somewhat easy, 11.1% (1) and 22.2% (2) respectively finding it somewhat not easy and extremely not easy, 33.3% (3) were neutral
- 66.6% (6/9) felt checklist had changed their outlook on recruitment
- Given choice 66.7% (6/9) felt would use the checklist (at all/again)
- How practice impacted: increased awareness -gendered wording/specific words to avoid. More likely to push for greater contract options (flexi/secondment) regardless of wholetime equivalent when advertising.

Survey feedback	
Respondents	9 respondents of 12 seniors surveyed
Used the checklist	44.4% (4/9)
Ease of use of checklist	33.3% (3/9) found it somewhat easy, with 11.1% (1) and 22.2% (2) respectively finding it somewhat not easy and extremely not easy to use and 33.3% (3) were neutral
Outlook on recruitment	66.6% (6/9) felt that the checklist had changed outlook
Would use the checklist (at all or again)	66.7% (6/9) felt they would use
How it had impacted practice	increased awareness of gendered wording, awareness of specific words to avoid, being mindful of language and prompting use of a gender decoder tool. More likely to push for greater contract options such as flexi/part time/bank/secondment regardless of wholetime equivalent when looking to advertise for roles.
Other qualitative feedback	‘a useful reference’, ‘insightful and useful’, ‘a good reference to ensure all bases covered during recruitment’, ‘structured and easy to follow – provides examples which are helpful’ ‘helpful – would like to use outside of pharmacy please’ ‘gave me a different perspective on approaching interviews’ ‘useful - should adopt more widely’ could be more streamlined & use bullet points, not user friendly’ ‘better uptake if built into Trac jobs platform?’

Results continued

- Ease of use



. Given a choice, would you use it again for recruitment in future?

[More Details](#)



- Use of checklist in future



Objective achieved; pilot themes/suggestions were fed back to NHSE. **The NHS long-term workforce plan was also published during the pilot.**

Checklist could be streamlined but can be applied at any recruitment stage; whilst piloted within the pharmacy team, has broad applicability to other disciplines offering an opportunity to review current practice enabling greater inclusivity.

DISCUSSION

Raised awareness, used by staff across care settings. However, were concerns about potential downstream implications of recruiting borderline/underperforming staff if essential v desirable criteria are relaxed

As many of our interview panels were multidisciplinary, the checklist raised wider awareness and encouraged independent scoring for final candidate selection

Further discussion

- Feedback also used alongside local 'after action review' meeting on recruitment processes, seeking to optimally recruit and retain staff at CLCH.
- Local champion is useful to drive/sustain usage, embedding it as part of 'usual' practice and wider change management.
- Good practice inc unconscious bias training
- May have greater uptake if it is built into the trac jobs process.
- Standardise JDs – central pool of recruitment docs
- Scale and spread - wider
- Iterations to checklist made

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer's Inclusive Pharmacy Practice Recruitment Checklist

Recruitment Checklist

Who is this recruitment checklist for and how should it be used?

This recruitment checklist has been produced by the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer's (CPhO) Inclusive Pharmacy Practice (IPP) Delivery Group, as part of the [IPP Delivery Plan](#) work. It is intended as an additional guide for use by Pharmacy Advisory Group (PAG) members in their position as recruiting managers, when following NHS England's Inclusive Recruitment process (see The Hub for details). It applies to all roles in which PAG members are involved with particular emphasis on pharmacy professional roles. The checklist is designed to follow the flow of recruitment and the process begins at drafting or reviewing the job description and person specification and continues through to interviewing candidates. It is important to remember the checklist should be considered alongside your organisational policies, procedures, and training.

The recruitment checklist consists of the following sections:

Job Description and Person Specification	2
Advertisement	3
Shortlisting	5
Preparing for the Interview	6
Assessing the Interview	7
References and Further Resources:	8
Appendix 1: Examples of Gendered Wording	9

Why is the recruitment checklist needed?

Research has shown that diversity in a team improves performance, with evidence demonstrating 53% more productivity in the most diverse companies versus the least. Diverse teams are more creative, solve problems faster and make higher quality decisions.^{1,2} Fairer recruitment and career progression have a significant impact on happiness, which University of Oxford researchers have shown is a major contributor to productivity and effectiveness.³

Traditional recruitment techniques are susceptible to influence from biases, with behavioural science identifying that job descriptions dissuade applicants belonging to certain demographics from applying.⁴ The checklist below is designed to support managers to recruit teams based on talent and skills.

If you have any feedback regarding this recruitment checklist, there is a link to a feedback form found in the footer and [here](#).

WORKFORCE

Exclusive: 'Unjust' NHS ethnic pay gap to be reviewed

By Nick Kituno | 6 August 2025



9 Comments

- > NHS Race and Health Observatory commissions review into ethnicity pay gaps in the NHS
- > Project will last 18 months and is due to be completed in December 2026
- > Review is "long overdue", says RHO chief executive



Upcoming ...

Published: 07 August 2025

PRESS RELEASE

University of Surrey to lead landmark review into NHS Ethnicity Pay Gap

The University of Surrey has been commissioned by the NHS Race and Health Observatory to lead a major independent review into ethnicity pay gaps across the NHS in England.

Useful links

Inclusive recruitment checklist. Note - a log in is required (free account) for the nhs futures platform but users also will need to request to join the 'inclusive pharmacy practice' workspace

- <https://future.nhs.uk/NationalInclusivePharmacy/groupHome>
- <https://nhsrho.org/news/observatory-commissions-review-into-nhs-ethnicity-pay-gap/>
- <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/news/university-surrey-lead-landmark-review-nhs-ethnicity-pay-gap>
- <https://www.hsj.co.uk/workforce/exclusive-unjust-nhs-ethnic-pay-gap-to-be-reviewed/7039782.article>

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ?



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