

Interviews

The next step after submitting a successful job application will be an interview.

Information about the interview will be sent with the invite, detailing the format and, often, who will be interviewing you.

When preparing for interview it is useful to connect your experience to the health or social care area you'll be working in. Use your own examples and reflection/learning rather than generic answers.

The STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method is a useful way to describe your experience and how it relates to the job you are interviewing for. Here's an example of how it could be used.

Using the STAR method

Question:

Can you describe a time when things did not go according to plan and how you dealt with it?

Situation:

When I was working in a children's rehabilitation setting earlier this year – I'm thinking of an example of working with a 4 year old and their parent

Task:

I was aiming to practice some speech sound games and approaches with the child and parent. Unfortunately, I was struggling to engage the child with the approaches I was using, the child was distracted and kept deferring to their parent.

Action:

I adjusted the games, and we moved position and location in the room, and we focussed first on play and then gentler introduction of sounds.

Result:

This changed the dynamic in the room and the child started to engage more.

Other skills and tips

- Consider how you might want to demonstrate your other skills such as teamwork, communication, self-development
- If you are interviewing virtually, by videocall, check your equipment and connection and remove distractions

Interview questions

There are different types of questions you may be asked

- Competency based
- Strengths based
- Technical
- Situation judgement
- Values based – what are your values and think about how these relate to the trust/employer's values – research beforehand
- Motivational – what are your strengths, how do you handle criticism

Do some research into the the latest policies affecting the NHS and healthcare including:

- Current policy i.e. NHS Long term plan and UK guidelines relevant to the clinical area.

English language

Employers will need to confirm that you have the necessary level of English language. They have different ways of doing this. Some may use a pre-interview test such as the Occupational English Test, others may assess this during the interview, and could do this using a clinical case study and dialogue with you.

Where English language or any other key skill is being assessed as part of the selection process, the nature and method of assessment will be communicated in the invite to interview.

During the interview

An interview will usually be two or more people asking questions and making notes on your answers. They will be assessing your answers against criteria that they have for each question. They often use a scoring system. The interview will be private and either by videocall or in person. Some posts may use other ways to assess your suitability such as presentations, or clinical discussions.

Ask for clarity about questions, checking your understanding about what is being asked in relation to language/technical language if you need to – it is better to do this and provide a better answer than provide an answer that is not relevant.

It is fine to ask for the question to be repeated, and to write the question down. You may be provided with the questions in advance for some interviews.

You can check that you have responded to the question asked.

Don't be afraid to sell yourself and your experience as an individual and professional – ensuring it is relevant and connecting it to the job.

Have questions to ask about the job and how you will fit into it - for example - What is the support you will provide me in coming from a different country?

Feedback

Afterwards spend time thinking/reflecting on questions you have been asked so you can learn from the experience.

It is not standard practice to offer feedback when you are not shortlisted for an interview. If you are not shortlisted it may be because of the number of applicants or due to competition. Reflect and amend your application, get feedback from peers.

If you have had an interview, employers will often provide feedback when requested. This may be written or verbal.

If a request for feedback is refused you can make a freedom of information request to see the interview notes if you think this will be helpful.

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