

Where can I get more information?

Acas Advisory Handbooks *Employing People: a handbook for small firms* and *The A to Z of work*; or the Acas Advisory booklets *Recruitment and Induction* and *Tackling discrimination and promoting equality* – to order, call Acas Publications on 08702 42 90 90 or order online at www.acas.org.uk.

Acas Code of Practice on Disciplinary and grievance procedures – available from the Stationery Office.

DTI *Factsheets for small firms* – are available at www.dti.org.uk/publications.

Acas runs charged training for small firms and has a national helpline – 08457 47 47 47 – which gives free advice on employment matters.

This information is intended to be a brief introduction to the subject. Legal information is provided for guidance only and should not be regarded as an authoritative statement of the law.

Acas can help with your employment relations needs

We inform

We answer your questions, give you the facts you need and talk through your options. You can then make informed decisions. Contact us to keep on top of what employment rights legislation means in practice – before it gets on top of you. Call our helpline 08457 47 47 47 or visit our website www.acas.org.uk.

We advise and guide

We give you practical know-how on setting up and keeping good relations in your organisation. Look at our publications on the website or ask our helpline to put you in touch with your local Acas adviser. Our Equality Direct helpline 08456 00 34 44 advises on equality issues, such as discrimination.

We train

From a two-hour session on the key points of new legislation or employing people to courses specially designed for people in your organisation, we offer training to suit you. Look on the website for what is coming up in your area and to book a place or talk to your local Acas office about our tailored services.

We work with you

We offer hands-on practical help and support to tackle issues in your business with you. This might be through one of our well-known problem-solving services. Or a programme we have worked out together to put your business firmly on track for effective employment relations. You will meet your Acas adviser and discuss exactly what is needed before giving any go-ahead.

Recruitment and selection

person
specification

job agencies

centres

references

interviews

colleges

local newspapers

What if I get it wrong?

It is very easy to get it wrong. Some extra time and care put into the recruitment and selection process will be well rewarded. If you get it right, it is less likely that you will be faced with problems such as: high labour turnover, absenteeism, low morale, ineffective management and supervision, disciplinary problems, dismissals and possible unfair dismissal complaints.

What are the legal requirements?

Individuals who consider they have been discriminated against in recruitment and selection on the grounds of their race, sex, disability, sexual orientation or religion or belief or refused employment on the grounds of membership or non-membership of a trade union, may make a claim to an employment tribunal. If the tribunal finds in the applicant's favour, it may award compensation or recommend some other course of action to reduce or stop the effect of any discrimination. It is a criminal offence to employ a person with no immigration authorisation to work in the UK.

Why is good recruitment and selection important?

Good practice in recruitment and selection can result in a more effective, better motivated workforce. Labour turnover and absence can be reduced and discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief avoided.

How do I get it right?

- ✓ Prepare a person specification. This should briefly describe the ideal person to fill the job. It is a profile of the personal skills and characteristics to look for in recruitment and selection. By writing a person specification, you can avoid inadvertent discrimination.
- ✓ Consider whether an existing employee could be trained to do the job.
- ✓ Consider whether the work could be done by part-timers, job-sharers or home-based workers.
- ✓ An effective equal opportunities policy and approach can help you ensure that no job applicant is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin or on the grounds of disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- ✓ Attract applicants by using the best recruitment method or methods to reach the target group at the least cost. The main methods are:
 - internal recruitment
 - local schools or colleges
 - Jobcentres
 - Jobfairs
 - commercial employment agencies
 - local newspapers
 - online recruitment.
- ✓ An application form can help you get the information you need and sift out unsuitable candidates. You can also use it as a basis for the interview. The form should only ask for information that is relevant to the job.
- ✓ Consider using a variety of methods to select the best candidate, such as:
 - an interview
 - selections tests
 - taking up references.
- ✓ When carrying out interviews, you should make sure that you:
 - are not interrupted by visitors or telephone calls
 - put the candidate at ease
 - give the candidate information about your organisation and the job
 - ask 'open ended' questions that cannot be answered by a 'yes' or a 'no'
 - tell the candidate when he or she can expect the result of the interview
 - do not ask questions which may be considered discriminatory
 - list beforehand the points you wish to raise and check that you cover them.
- ✓ Keep all notes including any rough jottings made during the interview.
 - Be prepared to give reasons for rejection to unsuccessful candidates who make a request. If you do not respond, an applicant can ask the Information Commissioner to carry out an assessment of the employer's information.
- ✓ If you don't carry out interviews yourself, ensure interviewers are aware of your recruitment policy and are appropriately trained.