



INTERVIEWING A CANDIDATE WITH AUTISM

People with autism can make very productive employees. They can have highly specialised skills and will thrive in the correct work place.

Autism impacts on an individual's ability to communicate and interact with others, and therefore the process of a job interview is an unsuitable method of assessing an individual with autism's ability to do a job. A better approach is to allow the candidate opportunity to demonstrate their skills rather than relying on their verbal description of them within an interview. However if you do have to undertake the job interview process here is some advice about how to make interview more accessible for individuals with ASD:

Prior to interview

- Give the candidate clear instructions on how to confirm their attendance.
- Enclose directions to the place of interview, with easily visible information about date and time of interview.
- Provide information about what to expect from the interview, including:
 - How many people will be in the interview?
 - How long the interview will last?
 - When the successful candidate will be informed?
- If possible, provide the list of interview questions to help the candidate prepare.
- Allow the candidate to bring pre written material such as a CV to reference in the interview, and advise them of this beforehand.
- If possible, allow the candidate to bring an advocate to help them express themselves in the interview.

During the Job Interview

- Remember that autism affects a person's social and verbal skills and their lack of skill at interview may not be a true indicator of their ability to do the job well.
- Remember that the interviewee's body language might not match conventional social norms, appearing aloof does not necessarily mean that they are disinterested or unmotivated.
- Remember that many people with autism have unusual eye contact, do not make incorrect assumptions about this.

- Avoid social chit chat at the beginning and end of interview.
- At the start of the interview, explain the process, number of questions and your expectations of the candidate.
- Avoid questions that are too general, use specific questions.
- Ask questions that directly relate to the job.
- Avoid hypothetical questions such as 'what would you do if...', instead base questions on the individuals experiences 'describe how you...'
- Do not use figurative language, idiom or metaphor.
- Allow the candidate extra time to process your questions before answering.
- Give single questions, avoid linked or 2 stage questions being asked together.
- Provide the questions in written format to help keep the individual on track.
- Be prepared to prompt the interviewee to provide more information.
- Allocate indicate timings for responses, e.g. we expect you to spent around 3 minutes answering this question.
- Be prepared to politely advise the interviewee that they have spoken enough.
- Avoid sarcasm and figurative language.

Following Interview

At the end of the interview:

- Avoid excessive social chit chat.
- The timescale in which the successful candidate will be notified.
- The process for unsuccessful candidates.
- The process for applying for vacancies in the future.

Notifying a successful candidate

- Be clear about the conditions on which the employment offer relies.
- Set and communicate a start date.
- Provide an enhanced orientation programme (see advice for managers sheet).

Notifying an Unsuccessful candidate

- Be clear and precise in telling the individual that they have not been successful.
- Give clear feedback, which includes how they could do things differently.
- Make sure to feedback the positives and encourage individual to continue applying for work.

Further information and resources related to autism can be found at:

www.ASDinfoWales.co.uk