

# Guide to interviews

**Here are some items to consider ahead of an interview at Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.**

1. How you meet the job advert and role profile
2. What the recruiting manager is looking for
3. Research our Trust (values, culture, strategies)
4. Is a presentation/assessment required?

## **1. Utilising the job advert and role profile**

Understand the role profile, e.g. the required skills and responsibilities and prepare specific examples from experience that demonstrate your ability to meet this criteria and suitability for the role. If you do not have a direct example, think of an instance that will allow you to demonstrate transferable skills.

**Transferable skills** are a core set of skills and abilities which can be applied to a wide range of different jobs and industries. Explain how they are relevant and helpful across all areas of life.

## **2. Contact the hiring manager**

Making contact with the recruiting manager during the recruitment process gives you a greater insight and understanding of what they hope the candidate will bring to the role, what the role entails and it can aid you in anticipating potential interview questions.

### **Questions to consider asking:**

What is the history of the position?

What do you hope the successful candidate achieves?

What are your expectations?

What is the typical career path for someone hired to this role?

## **3. Do your research**

Thoroughly research the Trust to understand our values, vision, strategies and current projects.

Take a look at our website and social media platforms to see how we champion our values and celebrate our achievements as a team.

Think about how you will demonstrate and uphold the Trust's values and evidence when you have displayed these in previous / current employment or situations.

## 4. Presentation / assessment

Interviewers can request presentations for several reasons to assess:

- Communication skills
- Subject knowledge
- Organisational skills
- Problem-solving capabilities
- Creativity and innovation
- Engagement and professionalism

If asked to prepare a presentation, here are some tips to ensure it is effective and engaging:

- Clarify the objective of the presentation.
- Research using up-to-date and reliable resources.
- Conclude by summarising key points.
- Use visual aids, such as graphs, charts and images to limit the amount of text and keep the audience engaged.
- Practice and time yourself to ensure you do not exceed the allotted time.
- Try to make eye contact with your audience.  
Cue cards are fine to use but try not to just read off them.
- Anticipate any potential questions at the end of the interview and prepare responses.

## Interview questions

Here are some topics / points to consider when preparing for potential question themes:

- Our Trust values
- Patient care and safety
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Problem-solving and decision making (leadership styles)
- Change and improvement
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Evidence of self-awareness
- Managing resources and budgets (if applicable to role)

Using the **STAR** method to structure your answer provides a simple framework to deliver an organised and detailed answer.

**Situation** – Context of example and situation you dealt with

**Task** – Your responsibility and task in that situation

**Action** – What steps did you take to achieve this

**Result** – What was the outcome/result and what did you accomplish.

Explain what you learnt and if there is anything you would do differently. How did you implement change / make a positive impact?

## **The interview**

- Make sure you arrive / dial in (if virtual) on time.
- Dress appropriately in a professional manner.
- Be clear and concise with your answers.
- Relax and take your time. If you need a question repeated or rephrased, just ask the interviewer.
- Be confident in your preparation, skills and knowledge.
- Think about your body language and try to display genuine enthusiasm for the role and organisation. Make eye contact with all panel members, not just the individual asking the question.
- Each panel member will be independently making notes of your answer and scoring you against criteria. Irrespective of who is on the interview panel, explain your answers in a way as if they do not know anything about you or the role you are being interviewed for. Explain the basics and showcase your in-depth knowledge.

## The interview

Explain the topic in the question asked and provide a relevant example to deliver an advanced and detailed answer to maximise your score.

Top tip: To allow yourself time to think about a question being asked, you can delay by:

1. Having a sip of water.
2. Thanking the panel for the question.
3. Write the question down and use it as a prompt when answering so you do not go off topic.
4. Explain you would like to take a moment to reflect and think of a relevant example.

**Note:** Remember not to take too long.

If you do not know the answer or do not have experience in the question asked, it is fine to admit that.

You can instead demonstrate your willingness to learn and suggest what you would do in the situation instead. Do you have any transferable skills that will help?

## Question example and how to maximise points:

“Tell us what the value of compassion means to you?”

How you could breakdown the question:

1. Define compassion.
2. Explain why compassion is important and how can it impact staff and patients
3. Provide a personal example. Use the STAR method to structure the example.
4. Relate your example to the new role and how you will continue to uphold the value.
5. Showcase how your personal and professional values align to the organisation's and NHS values.

Breaking down the answer provides a comprehensive and structured response to demonstrate understanding and ability to uphold the value.

## After the interview

It is good practice to prepare insightful and thoughtful questions to ask the panel.

Having prepared questions shows your interest in the role and gives you an opportunity to ask questions.

Interviews are two-way conversations, so you are also deciding if this position and organisation is something you suit and want.

Examples of questions to ask the panel:

- What is your favourite thing about working in this department?
- Are there progression opportunities available in the department?
- Can you tell me more about the team I will be working with?

A final, important point to remember: **everyone in that room wants you to succeed.**



## **Feedback**

After your interview, spend time reflecting on the questions asked and the answers you provided. This will help you learn from the experience.

Be sure to ask for feedback when you are notified of the interview outcome. This will allow you to:

- Understand what you did well, identify areas for improvement and identify any gaps in skills / knowledge and plan for training to address this.
- Demonstrate your commitment to personal and professional development.
- Maintain a relationship for future opportunities if you were not successful on this occasion.

**We wish you the very best of luck with your interview.**