

Case Study

Citou Consulting

Influencing the way
People and Organisations
Think, Work, and Act

The Implementation of Batch Recruitment for Band 5 Nursing & Midwifery

To Improve the Volumes of Applicants Offered and Address Ethnic Disparities in Recruitment Success

The piece of work undertaken began as an identified issue of applicant and offer volumes in Nursing and Midwifery. The starting information at that time for Band 5 applicants was:

Applicants	Invited to Interview	% Invited to Interviewed	Unconditional Offer	% Application to Unconditional
3897	2471	63.4	480	12.3

A number of key issues were thought to be influencing this picture¹:

1. The excessively long period of time some managers were taking to shortlist which led to high non-attendance at interview.
2. Managers wanting the 'perfect' candidate and being unwilling to take someone who needed development.
3. The time taken by managers to return appointment paperwork after interview.
4. Candidates applying for multiple roles and, if invited to interview for several of these, only attending interview for one.

In addition, there was a substantial attrition of candidates after unconditional offer which meant that less than 10% of applicants eventually joined the Trust.

The aim of this piece of work was to look at why only 12.3% of candidates reached Unconditional Offer stage. A deep dive approach was taken, in order to gather this data.

The Recruitment team pulled applications, job descriptions and person specifications for 32 past recruitment campaigns. Candidates were then shortlisted by the HoN team for Nursing & Midwifery Workforce for

1. The particular role advertised, and
2. A RN role somewhere in the Trust.

The data produced from this exercise was then compared with the data from the original recruitment exercise. The results of this exercise are given below:

¹ Established via anecdotal evidence and by running and analysing the standard Volumes Report from the recruitment system.

	No Posts	No. of apps for the post	Blind shortlist for this post	Blind shortlist for the Trust	% Apps Suitable for the Trust	Actual shortlist for this post	Actual number of offers	No. of offers progressed
Acute Medicine	?	37	33	35	94.6	27	5	5
Community Adults	29	63	47	55	87.3	38	10	6
Medical Specialties	?	16	8	15	93.8	8	1	1
Critical Care	58	85	50	74	87.1	49	13	12
TOTAL	87+	201	138	179	89.1	122	29	24

As the above table shows, 179 out of 201 applicants (89.1%) were assessed as suitable for a RN role somewhere in the Trust. However, only 122 applicants were originally shortlisted leading to 29 offers of which 24 (11.9%) progressed beyond initial offer.

Of the 89.1% of applicants found to be potentially suitable for a role somewhere in the Trust, many were being rejected at shortlisting stage as they were not considered suitable for the specific role applied for or were not considered to be in the top 4-6 candidates for that role. Others were shortlisted but then not the chosen candidate for an individual role and were rejected after interview with no attempt to offer a role elsewhere in the Trust.

As a result of this work the following changes were made to most recruitment in Adult Nursing:

1. The recruitment system process was reviewed and 'Killer Questions' used to ensure that only candidates who were qualified and registered² were able to continue their application.
2. Shortlisting ceased, instead all applicants were automatically invited to book into a generic Assessment Centre at a date suitable for them (the centres were run on a 3-weekly basis).
3. The Assessment Centres were established on the principle of 'wrapping our arms around the candidate', ie with a focus on a more positive candidate experience and giving information about the Trust as a whole, including discussion of potential future career progression.
4. Applicants attending the Assessment Centre were given a generic interview and Situational Judgement Test. The interviews were conducted by panels who were recruiting for the Trust and not for an individual role and all candidates were assessed against a common standard.
5. A Values and Behaviours 10-minute online test developed with a Psychometric company which reported against the Trust Values and Behaviours framework was also trialled but was stopped as a result of insufficient HR resource being available for analysis and evaluation.
6. Individual clinical teams had 'stalls' at the Assessment day, enabling candidates to speak with specialists and find out more about their work and then have the opportunity to state their preference for specific areas they wished to work in and/or discuss the areas they were interested in from a career progression perspective.
7. Successful candidates were then placed according to the Assessment Centre results and their preferences where possible.

² Or had registration pending

8. A more flexible approach was taken with candidates, eg if a candidate wished to work in a particular specialism but wasn't considered ready they could be offered a role which would give them that additional experience in a 6-to-12-month period.

At the same time this change was happening, a piece of work was being undertaken with Nursing & Midwifery regarding Unconscious Bias, particularly in relation to Ethnicity. As part of the above piece of work we looked at how successful applicants of different Ethnicities were for Band 5 and 6 posts:

In the 12 months before the changes were made the Ethnicity data was as follows:

	Applied (% of total)	Invited to Interview (% of total)	Offer (% of total)	Success Rate from Application
Asian	15.10%	13.80%	12.80%	16.1%
Black	30.10%	27.60%	20.40%	12.9%
Mixed	3.70%	3.40%	3.30%	16.7%
Not stated	2.30%	2.30%	2.20%	18.7%
Other	3.70%	3.20%	2.80%	14.5%
White	45.20%	49.80%	58.50%	24.5%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	18.9%

Following the changes made to the assessment process, we looked again at the ethnicity of candidates for Band 5 roles over the first six months of the new approach³.

	Apply (% of total)	Invited to Interview (% of total)	Offer (% of total)	% Success Rate from Application	Ratio of White Offers to BAME Offers
Asian	11.51%	11.20%	13.92%	43.68%	0.76
Black	21.83%	22.57%	21.25%	35.15%	0.94
Mixed	5.69%	5.27%	4.03%	25.58%	1.29
Not stated	4.50%	5.60%	9.16%	73.53%	0.45
Other	2.38%	2.31%	2.20%	33.33%	0.99
White	54.10%	53.05%	49.45%	33.01%	1.00
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	36.11%	

As can be seen above, the percentages being invited to interview and getting to unconditional offer are much more in line with percentages applied, with a higher than expected success rate for Asian candidates.

In addition, the volumes of applicants recruited also improved with 30.3% of all applicants now getting through to unconditional offer compared with 12.3% before these changes were made.

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For more information about this Case Study please contact: enquiries@citou.com

³ Some Band 5 roles were still being filled via individual advertisement and are included