

Values Based Recruitment Programme Equality Analysis

Background and Programme Outline

HEE recently launched [Framework 15](#); a [15 year strategy](#) where values are integral to developing the future workforce. As a long term strategy, it will still be relevant for all healthcare professionals who will be working in the NHS for years to come. As technology improves and the population changes, the way in which we train our future workforce may change. However, the one thing we do know is that **the values we require from people in the NHS will remain the same**. It is therefore important that all students on NHS funded training programmes and employees are recruited for values to support and enhance a culture that delivers excellent patient care and experience.

Values Based Recruitment (VBR) is an approach which attracts and selects students, trainees or employees on the basis that their individual values and behaviours align with the values of the [NHS Constitution](#). It is about enhancing existing recruitment processes to ensure that we recruit the right workforce for the NHS, not only with the right skills and in the right numbers, but with the right values to support effective team working and excellent patient care and experience.

The [NHS Constitution](#) establishes the principles and values of the NHS in England, and sets out rights to which patients, public and staff are entitled. These values are; working together for patients; respect and dignity; everyone counts; commitment to quality of care; compassion; and improving lives. Health Education England (HEE) has a statutory duty to promote the NHS Constitution. A key aim of HEE's work on VBR is to promote and support the embedding of the values of the NHS Constitution in healthcare, education and training.

There has been an increasing focus on the values agenda across the NHS, in part due to the report of [Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry \(Francis, 2013\)](#) which highlighted the vital role of the workforce in providing high quality and safe healthcare. In particular, the report emphasised the importance of staff values and behaviours on the level of care and patient experience. HEE's Mandate requires HEE to contribute to the values agenda by developing and supporting VBR whereby HEE will;

“oversee delivery of a national values based recruitment framework and associated tools and resources by October 2014 and ensure that selection into all new NHS funded training posts incorporates testing of values based recruitment by March 2015”

[\(Delivering high quality, effective, compassionate care: Developing the right people with the right skills with the right values, page 25\)](#)

HEE is committed to being an evidence based organisation and the VBR programme has sought to build on the evidence for recruiting for values to ensure successful implementation of VBR across the system and HEE undertook a literature review on the current evidence on VBR methodology and reviews of existing VBR being used by both higher education institutions (HEIs) and NHS trusts. Together with this evidence and engagement with stakeholders, a national VBR framework has been developed due to launch in October 2014. This framework includes a set of

national core requirements which mandates HEI's to (and encourages NHS employing organisations to) recruit every candidate using a structured interview, which includes an assessment of values, on an individual, face to face basis. The core requirements also mandate that patients and public must be included at some point in the recruitment process for assessment of values and that values must be embedded in curricula, induction and training. The framework also includes a set of resources and guidance to support organisations to recruit for values in this way.

Patient and public involvement in the recruitment process can be conducted in a range of ways; in planning, developing, assessing, induction and training. A sample of the ways we expect organisations to include patients and the public in the values based recruitment process can be seen in the national VBR framework [here](#).

The outcome of the programme will ensure that all students/trainees are recruited to NHS funded training programmes for the values of the NHS Constitution. NHS employers will also be encouraged and supported to do with same with new recruits. This programme aims to positively affect patients, trainees, employees and recruiters.

What evidence has been considered?

An extensive literature review was conducted to determine best practice recruitment methods which could apply to values assessment. As part of this literature review, there are some sources from within the selection literature which specifically relate to the wider equality and diversity agenda, although do not evidence specific protected groups individually. This literature has been used to develop the framework and its resources and guidance documents. Two of these sources have been summarised briefly below:

- Ployhart and Holtz (2008) who highlight a series of selection strategies which are hypothesised to minimise sub-group differences, many of these relate to the importance of assessing beyond cognitive attributes (which VBR by its very nature is promoting). They also emphasises the importance of factors such as undertaking a job analysis and attending to the applicants' perspective in the design of measures. Outputs of this VBR programme therefore relate to best practice based on job relevant criteria rather than that of any of the protected characteristics.
(Ployhart, R.E., & Holtz B.C. (2008). The diversity-validity dilemma: strategies for reducing racioethnic and sex subgroup differences and adverse impact in selection. Personnel Psychology, 61, 153 – 172)
- Hough and Oswald (2000) promote the value of taking a structured approach (particularly to interviewing) in terms of minimising adverse impact on protected groups.
(Hough L. M., & Oswald F. L. (2000). Personnel selection: Looking toward the future—Remembering the past. Annual Review of Psychology, 51, 631–664.)

The guidance documents included in the framework also include specific practical information about how to make a fair assessment and reasonable adjustments for protected groups.

The literature review also established 16 evaluation criteria which have been used to critic existing examples of potential good practice and by which the framework encourages

organisations to take into consideration when developing and evaluating new VBR methods. The full list of criteria can be seen in Appendix 1 and one of these criteria is 'Fairness, promotes diversity and widening access'.

The values recruited for, in this programme, are those of the NHS Constitution which are values developed with patients and the public and are ones which are considered accessible to all and appropriate for all groups. Engagement with patients and the public has shown that these are the expectations that they have of NHS staff/trainees providing healthcare to them.

What will or did you change in order to ensure equality is integral to the programme?

The VBR programme provides core requirements, resources and guidance for recruiting managers which will support the way in which they recruit. In this sense, it has a direct effect on recruiting managers. The framework and resources are provided to recruiting managers to use as best practice methodologies in conjunction with employment law and organisational HR and equality and diversity policies. i.e. resources may need to be adjusted by organisations, in line with local HR/E&D policies, to ensure resources are accessible and usable for all.

The VBR programme will also have an indirect effect on the way in which students and employees are recruited into the NHS and also ultimately on the care and experience of NHS patients. As above, the values recruited for in this programme are those of the NHS Constitution and are ones which have been tested and are considered accessible to all and appropriate for all groups.

What positive impacts have been identified and which groups will they affect?

Specific positive impacts on race and disability

This VBR programme promotes individual structured, face to face interviews to assess values which, in comparison to group or unstructured interviews, presents a positive impact on candidates with a disability for example or where English is their second language. An individual face to face structured interview does not only allow 1 on 1 time, it allows the recruiter to make reasonable adjustments for that person.

For all protected groups

Currently, there is much variation in standards of recruitment practice and the outcomes of this programme are set to change practice in a standardised way which promotes best practice methodology. This best practice methodology of recruiting is based on job relevant criteria rather than that of any of the protected characteristics and therefore has a positive impact on all protected groups (including race, gender, disability, age, sexuality, religion or carers).

As the mandated individual, face to face interviews are also required to be structured, it will ensure that fair and unbiased assessments are made about a person. The means by which to conduct fair and unbiased assessment have been reiterated in another output of the VBR

programme which is a values based interview training course which is hoped to be undertaken by every NHS Trust and HEI in England.

VBR itself, as mentioned in the evidence, is a non cognitive test. Cognitive tests have been shown to elicit large differences between different subgroups and demographics (Ployhart and Holtz 2008) compared to non-cognitive tests, such as values, therefore VBR has a positive impact for protected groups.

The values recruited for are those of the NHS Constitution of which are values developed with patients and the public and are ones which have been tested and are considered accessible to all and appropriate for all groups. Engagement with patients and the public has shown that these are the expectations wanted from NHS staff providing healthcare to them.

What negative impacts have been identified and which groups will they affect?

Negative impacts on all protected groups, specifically race and disability

Many organisations, particularly in the HEI sector, use group interviews to assess values which may not have fair and equitable accessibility for candidates being recruited (for example for those with disabilities or where English is their second language). This is because the environment is competitive and a recent baseline survey of HEIs has shown on average only 2-3 minutes of talk time per candidate, if time attributed equally per candidate. This VBR programme promotes individual structured, face to face interviews to assess values which will result in a positive change for many protected groups such as disabilities or where or where English is the person's second language. An individual face to face structured interview does not only allow this 1 on 1 time, it allows the recruiter to make reasonable adjustments for that person to give them a fair opportunity at interview. As the interview is structured, it will ensure that fair and unbiased assessments are made about a person.

The Equality Duty

The equality duty has three aims it requires public bodies to have due regard to. These are detailed below with an explanation of how the VBR programme has taken these into consideration.

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination

This VBR programme aims to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act as it promotes individual structured, face to face interviews to assess values. Many organisations, particularly in the HEI sector, use group interviews to assess values which may not have fair and equitable accessibility for candidates (for example with disabilities) being recruited. This is because the environment is competitive and a recent baseline survey of HEIs has shown on average only 2-3 minutes of talk time per candidate, if time attributed equally per candidate. An individual face to face structured interview does not only allow this 1 on 1 time, it allows the recruiter to make reasonable adjustments for that person. As the interview is structured, it will ensure that fair and unbiased assessments are made about a person.

The means by which to conduct fair and unbiased assessment is reiterated in another output of the VBR programme which is a values based interview training course which is hoped to be undertaken by every NHS Trust and HEI in England.

2. Advance equality of opportunity

The VBR programme will advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it due to the following:

- The VBR programme promotes and mandates best practice recruitment methodology based on job relevant criteria rather than that of any of the protected characteristics which ensures that there is an equal opportunity for all those who fit the required criteria.
- VBR will, through the framework, be requested to be conducted with respect to employment law and local HR and equality and diversity policies and therefore will take all protected groups into consideration and make reasonable adjustments where required.
- VBR is a non-cognitive assessment which has been shown not to discriminate between subgroups like cognitive assessments have therefore positively promotes equality of opportunity.

3. Foster good relations

The VBR programme aims to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it because it aims to recruit people using the values outlined in the NHS Constitution. These values will foster positive relations, especially under the values of 'working together for patients' and 'everyone counts'.

Additional information or evidence required

A VBR stakeholder advisory group was set up which has ensured engagement and input from key stakeholders across the system in the development of the VBR programme and its outputs. A list of the membership for this group can be found [here](#).

Local and national engagement with patients, trainees, employers, HEIs and employing organisations has determined which values and behaviours should be seen from NHS staff and trainees and also the way in which they feel VBR should be conducted.

This engagement has been vital in the development of the framework and future work needs to be conducted to ensure feedback is collected from recruiting managers, those being recruited and patients following the launch of the framework to determine whether VBR has achieved its objectives. This will form part of the longitudinal study, commissioned by the Department of Health, to look into the longer term benefits of VBR.

Overall Conclusions

Equality and diversity has been an important part of the values based recruitment programme. The equality and diversity assessment, due to be published within the next month, has shown VBR can be seen to positively affect potential equality issues relating to the protected groups (including race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and carers) due to the following:

- VBR promotes evidence-based, best practice recruitment methodology on the basis of job analysis and 'job fit' rather than any of the protected characteristics.
- VBR is a non-cognitive assessment which evidence has shown, unlike cognitive assessments, does not discriminate between subgroups.
- The VBR programme promotes individual, face to face, structured interviews to assess values, which can positively affect those who may struggle in a competitive group environment and allows the recruiter to make reasonable adjustments where required.
- Accompanying the VBR Framework is a set of guidance resources and also values based interview training which aims to ensure fair and unbiased assessments are made about a person.
- It is a prerequisite that the VBR framework and core requirements are conducted with respect to employment law and local HR and equality and diversity policies to ensure any impact on protected groups is taken into consideration and action taken.
- The values recruited for are those of the NHS Constitution which are values developed with patients and the public and are ones which are considered accessible to all and appropriate for all groups. Engagement with patients and the public has shown that these are the expectations wanted from NHS staff providing healthcare to them.
- The VBR programme have reviewed the resources included in the framework using 16 evidence based evaluation criteria; one of which is 'fairness and widening participation'. Use of these evaluation criteria will also be encouraged in local assessment of VBR methodologies which will support a standardisation of recruitment processes with respect to equality and diversity.

Future work will be conducted to follow up on the evaluation of VBR methods including, in particular, stakeholder views from the recruiting managers, those being recruited and patients from the protected groups. This will be conducted as both local organisation evaluations of VBR methods and as part of the longitudinal study, commissioned by the Department of Health, to look into the longer term benefits of VBR.

To note: This equality and diversity assessment is intended to be a live document which will continually be reviewed and updated in light of new evidence.

Appendix 1: Evaluation Criteria for Selection Methods

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Description	How can this be evidenced?
Accuracy and effectiveness	1. Evidence of reliability	<i>A selection method is reliable if it is consistent in how it assesses candidates under varying conditions. For example, it should not make a difference if a candidate sits the test in the morning or afternoon.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychometric evaluation by experts
	2. Evidence of validity	<i>The selection tool measures what it claims to measure, it should be relevant, precise and accurate.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychometric evaluation by experts
	3. Arrangements for on-going validation, evaluation and development are in place	<i>Best practice selection is an iterative process, starting with a job analysis to define the selection criteria. After selection has taken place, the predictive validity of various selection tools can be evaluated. Results from validity studies are then used to review the original selection criteria and choice/design of selection methods. Information here can be used to make continual improvements and help to develop the process to optimise selection decisions.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate data is collected • Validation data is analysed by experts in selection
	4. Susceptibility to coaching	<i>The extent to which access to coaching taken to improve a candidate's test-taking skills and provide an advantage to a candidate's standing in the selection process.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison group research studies
	5. Fairness, promotes diversity/ widening access	<i>This is based on three principles; 1) valid selection criteria; 2) accurate and standardised administration by trained staff; 3) monitored outcomes and meets equalities impact assessments.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation questions posed to candidates. • Analysis of sub-group differences
	6. Legality	<i>The extent to which the design of a selection process and the decisions generated is legally defensible. Selection processes that are perceived as unfair are more likely to result in legal case initiation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR experts in employment law
Cost and efficiency	7. Scalability for high volume recruitment	<i>The extent to which a selection process can be scaled up or down and remains efficient and effective for different volumes of applicants.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data modelling with interpretation of costs of implementation and validity of selection methods
	8. Efficiency	<i>The costs involved and the time taken in developing and implementing the selection tool(s).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of costs by recruiters and managers

Practicalities and implementation	9. Utility	<i>The costs involved and the time taken to develop more accurate adequate procedures need to be balanced with the potential benefits (e.g. improved performance)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical analysis of the predictive validity a selection tool adds to the accuracy of selection decision-making, compared to the costs to design and implement the tool (using established utility calculation methods)
	10. Generality of use	<i>The degree to which a selection tool used in one context can be transferred/tailored for use in another context or role</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgement by recruiters
	11. Practicality (ease of administration/ efficiency)	<i>The procedures should be acceptable within the organisation and capable of being implemented effectively. Those responsible for administering the procedures may need to be trained.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgement by recruiters and administrators
	12. Expertise required for analysis & interpretation of information generated by the tool	<i>Some selection tools (for example personality tests) require an appropriately trained individual to administer, score and provide feedback. Similarly, assessors in selection centres must also be appropriately trained in how to evaluate a candidate in a work sample test for example.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For psychometric tools there are specific licensure guidelines (e.g. from the British Psychological Society)
	13. Ease of interpretation	<i>The degree to which the information generated by the selection tool provides clear and appropriate information relating to a candidate's competence and aptitude for the role.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgement by recruiters and stakeholders
Stakeholder acceptance and feedback	14. Positive employee/trainee/student perceptions	<i>The extent to which employees/trainees/ students react positively to the selection process and each selection method within that process. Positive perceptions will result in the candidate being more attracted to joining the organisation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation questionnaires of candidate perceptions
	15. Generates appropriate feedback	<i>When using selection tools, for example personality assessments, it is good practice to ensure that candidates receive appropriate and useful feedback.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation questionnaires of candidate perceptions • Recruiter's judgements
	16. Educational impact/value	<i>The extent to which candidates obtain useful information to inform their future education, learning and development.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of candidate and employer perceptions