

# **Interview Guidance for Managers and Panel Members**

This Interview Guidance for Managers and Panel Members walks you through the whole process from the initial sifting of applications, to interview preparation and moving on to what to do during an interview. This guide also includes guidance on preparing your interview questions using the Camden interview question bank and developing your interviewing techniques. Finally, once you've completed your candidate interviews, what happens next? Here we cover how to fairly assess and score the candidates, making offers and Camden's commitment to storing of personal data.

## **Before the Interview:**

- Identify successfully panellists; book slots in diaries
- Book the necessary room(s)
- Arrange appropriate waiting area for early arrivals
- Arrange who will meet and greet
- Decide on the interview questions (we suggest 4/5 Behavioural Questions & the Motivation and Fit) and your approach (take it in turns asking questions vs. one interviewer asks all the questions and the other writes).
- Complete the Interview Pack with your questions and indicators.
- Print off the interview pack (1 per interviewer)
- Set up the room with chairs and water and any materials required for assessments

## **The Interview Panel**

One early decision you will need to make is who to include on your selection panel and who will Chair the panel. The panel should be a small but representative group of relevant stakeholders who know the job and its requirements well.

The gender balance of the panel should be carefully considered in line with equality principles and the panel should contain both men and women (except in exceptional circumstance only when this can be justified).

Wherever possible panel members should have knowledge of equality legislation and good practice and it is recommended that at least one of the panel members have attended the relevant Camden interview training courses.

## **Question Design**

It is important to spend time as a panel understanding the job role and what you want from it. What are the most important aspects of the role for it to be successful?

Design your questions appropriately. Getting the best person for the role is down to YOU – and how well you plan.

Technical aspects can still be tested within the Camden Way questions - Our values should be present in how we carry out even the technical aspects of our roles.

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Therefore, a person can talk about the technical aspects of their work as well as demonstrating The Camden Way in the same answer. But, if more rigorous assessment against technical aspects is needed, consider an additional assessment – eg. in-tray exercise or presentation.

Chair can ask all questions if so desired or the workload can be shared... the latter being the preferred way.

Allow 15 minute break between interviews to finish notes, stretch legs, drink water etc..

Key considerations:

- Must be relevant to the job profile selection criteria and the Camden Way – know your role inside out!
- You can tailor the standard questions to better fit your service/roles
- One question per Camden Way, plus one technical
- All candidates asked the same core questions
- Chair to control questioning?  
Allow approximately 5-7 minutes per question

## Safeguarding roles – Warner Competences

The interview is the best way to assess these additional 'Warner style' competencies required for any role with a safeguarding aspect:

- Motivation to Work with children and young people, or vulnerable adults
- Emotional awareness and ability to self reflect
- Working within professional boundaries and self-awareness
- Ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults

These are not in addition to the Camden Way. They are the Camden Way for safeguarding roles.

In addition the interview is the best place to ask about any gaps in candidates' CVs.

## During the interview

- Introduce yourself, your role, explain the current team, etc. (Build rapport)
- Explain the format of the day
- Explain "You are asked to give specific examples during the interview. It is OK to take some time to think of your answer. We will be taking notes to remind us what you have said, but we are listening even if we lose eye contact".
- Read out the Camden Way Value and the definition (if provided)
- Ask the headline question (bold) and await their answer.

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- You should Observe and Record as much of what the candidate says as possible, word for word in the “Candidate’s Response” box. We suggest you aim to capture around 70%
- Ask any appropriate probing question based on their answer to help you gather more relevant information
- The candidate has the right to see the interview pack & your notes, so ensure they’re evidence based & accurate (legible writing, no doodles & no personal or offensive remarks).

## Questions and Probing

The STAR model is a useful tool for structuring your interview questions effectively. STAR is an acronym that stands for (S)ituation or (T)ask, (A)ction, (R)esults.

When questioning a candidate, ask yourself:

- Do I understand what the objective, goal or problem was in this candidate’s example?
- What was the candidate’s individual role in that situation? What did they personally do to try to achieve the objective?
- What was the benefit of acting in that way?
- What was the end result? What did they learn?

Remember:

- If the candidate is talking in plural (e.g. “we” did X), probe to uncover what their personal contribution was
- Even if you know your candidate, it is important that you act as if you don’t. Do not use any of your existing knowledge to fill in any ‘blanks’. It is up to the candidate to explain their answer fully, and your role as a good interviewer is to help them to that by probing if/when necessary. Remember that you should only go on the evidence you acquire during the selection process, rather than any prior knowledge you might have about candidates.
- Ensure you are clear about what the candidate did, how they did it, and why they did it.
- Clarify the outcome – how it all ended.

## O.R.C.E

So that all assessors adopt a consistent approach to the assessment of the interviews it is critical that a systematic approach is taken. This handout focuses on the key steps in behavioural evaluation and can be remembered using the acronym ORCE: Observe, Record, Classify, Evaluate

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Just like a pyramid, each stage of this process is only as solid as the foundation below it. As such, all assessment judgements must ultimately be based on observed behaviour and must have evidence to support them.

Use verbatim quotes wherever possible but ensure you factually record everything that happens throughout the exercise (70%). Do not make any judgments about the candidate's performance at this stage; stay neutral. Factual, objective recording should not reflect your personal judgments about what happened. For example, do not be tempted to record "Good example of teamwork abilities" rather than the detail of the candidate's example.

Only once the interview has finished should you begin to assess the quality of a candidate's evidence. Classifying and evaluating is made easier if you are fully familiar with the selection criteria, so it is worth investing some effort into doing this prior to the interview.

## **Body Language**

Paul Ekman – study of facial expressions found that they are a universal language, so be alert to the expressions you might be showing! Think about how you are coming across to candidates.

Do build rapport, shake hands at the start (if you/candidate doesn't have any cultural issues with that). Do nod and smile (but not over the top). Do paraphrase their answer when asking your probing question "you spoke about how you did XYZ, I was interested in hearing more about Y".

Think about how you as a panel are sat around the table, is it daunting? Is there a distracting crane going passed the window/people feet goes passed the door

Silences: what do we think of silences? It's a necessary evil. We all know it's a bit awkward, but this is the candidate's one opportunity to perform and may need 10/20 seconds to think through an answer (e.g. using the STAR model). So give them the time to think it through.

Think about leg shaking, pen tapping, looking out the window etc. and tell your co-panel members if they are doing something distracting

## **Ending the Interview**

- Thank them and explain that is the end of the interview
- Ask the candidates if they have any questions
- Explain the next steps in the process (timeframes and that feedback will be available at a later date if they would like it)
- Thank the candidate for their time.

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## After the interview:

- Collate all notes
- Use the scoring sheet provided to Classify and Evaluate the evidence, and produce a score
- Write up detailed feedback (strengths and development areas)
- Compare scores as a pair and discuss
- Inform Resourcing of your decision
- Send all candidate notes pages in PDF format to your resourcing Advisor who will in turn store document appropriately for given duration in line with Camden's GDPR commitments.
- Once you have sent interview notes to your RA you must dispose of hard copies in the secured waste and delete all digital versions on your computer including emails
- Unsuccessful candidate notes will be stored securely for 6 months
- Successful candidate notes will be stored in the employee file for the duration of employment plus agreed retention period in line with Camden's GDPR commitments

## Giving Feedback

Be Honest, Constructive, Balanced and Timely

Giving constructive feedback is for the development of the recipient (e.g. what they missed, could've included, or STAR model if unstructured)

Feedback Sandwich – good, bad, good

- Ask for the person's point of view (often it will match your viewpoint) and check for understanding and buy-in.
- Offer alternatives, if you offer negative feedback do not simply criticise, suggest what the person could have done better. Or better still; get them to think of alternatives.

Good quality feedback is particularly important for our internal candidates, successful and unsuccessful. It's important for us to develop our staff, to encourage them to develop their careers here, and where they have not been successful, to ensure they have useful meaningful feedback that:

1. helps them grow and develop and go for the next opportunity that comes along
2. does not lead them to distrust our selection process, or the basis on which we make decisions.

If someone receives poor quality feedback twice, or three times, and cannot understand why the successful person was successful and not them, maybe look at ways in which they are different to the successful people.

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## Data Protection

Candidates can request to see ALL and ANY notes pertaining to them (including scrap pieces of paper which you make notes on). Doesn't matter if they are successful or unsuccessful. It is legally 6 months. Don't write anything inappropriate or personal. Only record evidence they present.

Try not to scribble any notes out. Single line through is better so that candidates can see what has been crossed out.

Any changes in scores should have accompanying notes and countersigned by other panel members

## Key Messages

All candidates should have the opportunity to explain to you how they meet your job criteria. You need to create the right conditions and the right questions to allow each candidate an equal opportunity to demonstrate how they meet your criteria.

Each recruitment and selection campaign (or organisational change selection exercise) is an opportunity to create trust in the robustness of our recruitment process and decisions.

Selection decisions are based on the evidence presented during the interview, after discussion and challenge between panel members during the wash-up session. Panel members need to have taken copious (approx. 70%), objective (verbatim) notes to base selection decisions upon and to give feedback if required.

Feedback can be requested by unsuccessful and successful candidates. All feedback is for the development of the candidate and should be evidence based, detailed and constructive.

People can request their notes up to 6 months after a selection decision has been made. The resourcing team store ALL candidate application forms and interview notes (successful and unsuccessful)

All candidates must bring ID to be checked (just a visual check if ID matches the person in front of you) on the day of the interview – this could be by the meet and greet person or one of the panellists, before the start of the interview

## Links to useful interview documents:

- [Shortlisting form](#)
- [Interview Question Bank](#)
- [Interview Template](#)
- Example of [Warner Interview Questions](#)
- [The Camden Way](#)

# **Interview Guidance for Managers and Panel Members**

## **Interview training for hiring managers and panel members**

If you would like to attend one of our training courses which goes through the content of this guide in greater detail then please click your My eLearning icon (pictured below) on your desktop.



Click on Leadership and Management and finally select “Interview training for hiring managers and panel members”, choose a date and we will see you there!