

Recruitment Guidance

Note: This tool forms part of a suite of guidance documents, tools and templates developed by the IPS Grow consortium. Further information can be found at www.ipsgrow.org.uk. Please ensure you adapt this document fully to comply with local requirements. This tool was last updated June 2018.

This document seeks to provide high level guidance to IPS services looking to attract and recruit high quality IPS staff.

Roles in IPS

The two main roles core to IPS services include Employment Specialists and Team Leaders. This document provides information on how to hire to these two roles.

It is important to note that IPS Employment Specialists and Team Leaders are highly skilled non-technical roles so it is imperative to invest in a robust recruitment process to provide confidence in running a high standard service.

Refer to the *IPS Competency Framework* for the most important personal qualities, skills and knowledge required by those working in IPS services. Prior to designing the recruitment process, decide what level of competence and experience is required (e.g. in light of any existing team members), then ensure this is reflected in the advertised job description (refer to the *IPS Job Descriptions* for guidance) and in the assessment process. The skill mix within the team is also of high importance so consider what skill/trait gaps exist in the team and ensure these are prioritised throughout the recruitment process.

Where to advertise

Consider basic eligibility criteria and types of people who might be well suited for the role, and ensure advertising and branding is directed towards these groups. A role in IPS offers great creativity and autonomy and might appeal to:

- Existing recruitment workforce e.g. DWP Work Coaches, welfare-to-work advisers, private recruitment market
- Occupational Therapists
- Mental Health support workers
- Housing support workers
- Nursing Associates

As well as promoting vacant roles via your web and social media channels and encouraging existing staff to promote through their networks, the following agencies may also help to advertise the roles:

- NHS Jobs
- Third Sector Jobs
- Charity Job

- Total Jobs
- Jobs Go Public
- Indus Delta
- British Association of Supported Employment (BASE)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Association
- Trust website
- CCG website
- Local job sites

How to apply

Request candidates to apply with either a CV and Cover Letter or a bespoke application form that addresses the most important questions to support recruitment decisions at this initial stage. See Appendix 1 for an example application form format.

Develop a standardised set of criteria and scoring framework to assess these documents to ensure consistency. An objective scoring system is particularly important if multiple people are involved in the shortlisting process. An example application form scoresheet is included in Appendix 8.1.

How to assess

After CV shortlisting, it's recommended to hold telephone interviews to determine the most suitable candidates to progress to a face to face assessment. This process saves time over all and screens out those candidates who are not ready, capable or fitted to the role. Example questions to ask during the telephone interview are included in Appendix 2.

The next, and typically final, stage is a face to face assessment. During face to face assessments, it is recommended that you assess candidates in a range of contexts and at a minimum this should include a presentation and a competency or strengths based interview.

Assessment centres are one of the most effective methods for predicting a candidate's suitability for a job as they test candidates' skills and values through a variety of job-related tasks and can provide observable comparisons between candidates. Candidates also often prefer this method as they have more opportunities to showcase their strengths, meet a wider pool of existing staff (and possibly service users), and gain deeper insight into whether the job is right for them.

It's recommended to have at least three assessment centre places for each vacancy to ensure a competitive selection process and mitigate against potential drop outs. Note that assessment centres can be a valuable recruitment tool when hiring for one or two posts as well as for mass hiring.

Running assessment centres can be costly and should be kept proportionate to the role, however it is worth investing in a robust process to avoid making poor

recruitment decisions which can be more costly down the line. A few different ways to assess someone can suffice and not take a lot of time or energy to set up. This could include asking candidates to complete a written case study as they arrive, give a presentation to the panel as the first element of the interview, then follow up with the competency based interviews.

When designing assessment centre activities, consider what will enable genuine demonstration of values, skills and knowledge that you are recruiting for, and allow you to differentiate candidates on this basis (e.g. teamwork skills in a group task, verbal communication skills in a presentation, values alignment in an interview, etc). Ideally each key competency would be assessed via at least two assessment points during the process.

A half-day IPS assessment centre could include a combination of the following activities but this can be flexed depending on local priorities and number of vacancies being recruited for:

- Interview (essential)
 - Description: Individual interview with one or more assessors. *Competency based* interviews are traditionally used although *strengths based* interviews are becoming increasingly common. In brief, strengths are things we naturally do well and find energising, whereas competencies are typically things we have previous experience in. Both systems have merits and drawbacks and further guidance can be accessed via other resources for recruitment professionals.
 - Purpose: To ask in depth questions related to job responsibilities and person specification to understand candidates' skills and related experience. Also opportunity to discuss the details of the role, assess cultural fit, and for the candidate to ask questions of the interviewers. See Appendix 3 for example interview questions.
- Presentation (essential)
 - Description: Candidates prepare a short presentation in advance on a set topic and present on the day.
 - Purpose: To assess presentation skills (verbal and use of Powerpoint and other tools), ability to answer unprepared questions, level of preparedness, technical knowledge (depending on topic focus). See Appendix 4 for example presentation topics.
- Group exercise (desirable)
 - Description: Set group task ideally with 3-7 candidates per group (depending on the task) that includes instructions of a challenge that the group need to respond to. Task does not necessarily need to be related to IPS as the primary objective is to observe interactions within the group.
 - Purpose: To assess skills in teamwork, communication and listening, persuasion and negotiation, interpersonal style, conflict management, problem solving, motivation, professionalism. See Appendix 5 for example group exercises.

- Written case study (desirable)
 - Description: Individual exercise which gets candidate to provide a written (or typed) response to a case study example of a typical IPS case.
 - Purpose: To assess written communication, time management, technical knowledge of IPS approach, problem solving and decision making, customer service, professionalism, values and emotional intelligence. See Appendix 6 for example case study exercises.
- Role play (optional)
 - Description: Task to imitate an interaction between the candidate and a service user.
 - Purpose: to assess technical knowledge, composure under challenging situations, customer service, emotional intelligence, empathy.
- Situational Judgement Test (optional)
 - Description: Type of psychological aptitude test that asks a series of situation based questions requiring candidate to provide written or multiple-choice responses. Paper based or computerised versions can be purchased from specialist suppliers as either bespoke or off the shelf products.
 - Purpose: Assesses judgement required for solving problems in work-related situations. Could also be used prior to assessment centre as an early selection tool.

As with the CV/application form shortlisting, a set of criteria should be developed for each of the assessment centre exercises to objectively assess the candidates against the key attributes required for the job. Assessors will likely want to capture brief comments as well as numerical scores which will aid final recruitment decisions. A suggested scoring framework is provided in Appendix 7 and example scoresheets for each exercise in Appendix 8.

Assessor panel

It is valuable to include a range of people on the assessment panel for CV screening, telephone interviews and for the face to face assessments. It's recommended that the following people will be involved in the recruitment decisions:

- IPS regional trainer or consultant (if one is available)
- IPS service manager
- IPS team leader
- IPS senior employment specialist
- Community mental health team manager and/or clinical lead
- Service users

It is particularly important to involve people with lived experience within the hiring process. Opportunities to support include grading the presentation or written exercise or joining the panel of interview assessors.

Fair assessment

Unconscious bias is a frequent issue within recruitment decisions however, there are some simple ways to reduce the likelihood of this:

- Provide training for assessors to help them understand that everyone has unconscious biases and by being aware of these biases, we can start to challenge our automatic thoughts
- Providing training for assessors in how to run effective recruitment processes
- Remove personal information such as name, gender, age, and education institutions from CVs prior to shortlisting.
- Aim for a diverse assessor group including people with lived experience.
- Each candidate independently scored by two assessors whose scores are then averaged (and moderated if feasible). Each candidate is assessed by a range of people throughout the process.
- Assessors to avoid comparing a candidate to a predecessor or an 'ideal' they might have; instead focus on how they match up to the job and person description.
- Provide necessary information to assessors on any disabilities and reasonable adjustments requested by candidates.

Assessment centre logistics

Assessment centres can require greater logistical organisation and time commitment from the team compared to other more discreet recruitment exercises. Logistical requirements to consider include:

- Venue hire and liaison (if office premises don't have suitable rooms to host multiple group and individual assessments concurrently)
- Scheduling of exercises, candidate rotations and assigned assessors
- Assessor timetabling and coordination
- Scoresheet printing and compilation into master scoresheet to inform decisions
- On the day coordination to greet candidates, manage flow between exercises, general trouble shooting
- Candidate communications regarding assessment centre attendance and outcome of application at each stage

An assessment centre checklist is provided in Appendix 9.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Example IPS Application Form

Key questions that highlight candidates' suitability for the role, along with other personal information, education and work history that is desired. Suggested 500-word limit per question or 1-2 sides in total. Application form could be used in conjunction with a CV or could replace this altogether. Suggested questions include:

- Why are you interested in this position?
- What is your strongest personal quality that will enable you to succeed in this role?
- What are your relevant skills and experience that will enable you to succeed in this role?

Appendix 2: Telephone interview questions

- Why are you interested in the role? [Interviewer explain role and links to CMHT, and main focus is finding jobs and getting people into paid employment]
- Are you clear about the region, travel and salary?
- What experience do you have of working with people with mental health conditions?
- What do you think your main responsibilities will be in this role?
- What will you find hardest about this role?

Appendix 3: Example interview questions

Employment Specialist or Team Leader questions

- A significant part of this role will be generating referrals from clinical staff. Please give us an example of a time when you were personally responsible for building quality referral levels (ideally from clinical sources). How did you create the relationships? How did you know they were quality referrals?
- The role requires leading on the development of meaningful relationships with a broad range of stakeholders including referring clinical staff, trial evaluation team, other providers to name a few. Can you please share with us another example where you had to build multiple relationships in a complex delivery environment?
- This position requires communication with various stakeholders and levels. Can you provide an example of when you have used communication effectively with different levels in an organisation?
- Describe the work environment or culture in which you are most productive and happy.

- What has been the most difficult situation you have had to negotiate with a client/customer? What issues did you face? How did you achieve a satisfactory outcome?

Employment Specialist only questions

- Please provide an example of a time when you provided employment support to someone with a disability or health condition where the disability/health condition was unknown to you or you were very unfamiliar with this? How did you equip yourself to provide them with support? What was the outcome?
- We occasionally encounter some feedback which isn't as positive as we would like. Give me an example of a time you received criticism or less than positive feedback. What was the feedback and how did you respond?

Team Leader only questions

- Quality delivery is critical for this service. Please share a time when you found it challenging to or did not, meet quality expectations on a contract. What was your feedback? How did you make the necessary improvements? What would you do differently?
- Can you please tell me about a time when you increased team performance amongst your staff? Were there any challenges you needed to overcome? What tools did you use to support staff improvement?
- Please describe a time when you were leading a team and your work situation changed dramatically?
- The role requires managing a remote team across the region. In your experience, what are the key ingredients for ensuring a highly functioning and productive remote working team?

Appendix 4: Example presentation topics

Each candidate to prepare no more than a 10-minute presentation with accompanying slides on a question relevant to IPS delivery. Examples of suitable questions are:

Employment Specialist

- How would you achieve successful outcomes in an IPS service?
- How would you generate meaningful employment opportunities for your clients?
- How would you engage local partners and agencies to achieve job outcomes for your clients?

Team Leader

- How would you lead your team to achieve successful outcomes in this IPS service?
- How would you manage a growing team while maintaining a high quality service?
- How will you support the learning and development needs of your team?

Appendix 5: Example group exercise

Job relevant group exercise

An IPS related group activity may be used to assess candidates on their problem solving skills in a situation relevant to the job as well as their ability to work collaboratively in a team. The scenario could be modelled around any one of the common tasks or problems encountered by an IPS team. An example is provided below.

In groups of 3-5, candidates are given a scenario where they are tasked to design a strategy to increase referrals to their IPS service which has seen referral numbers diminish since significant staff turnover in the clinical team. The candidates have 10-15 minutes to brainstorm their strategy and mutually reach an action plan. They then have 5 minutes to present their top three actions to the assessor panel. Assessors will score individual candidates on the content of their contributions to the discussion and presentation, as well as the way in which they interact with others by listening, influencing, supporting, and helping to arrive at a solution within the given timeframe.

Non-job relevant group exercise

A non-employment related exercise could also be used if the recruiter was confident that the relevant sector knowledge was being tested elsewhere (e.g. in the Presentation exercise). For instance, a more informal exercise could put candidates at ease so that they may even forget they are being assessed. This allows the assessor to observe a more natural interpersonal style which may be more accurate to real life. An example is provided below.

Candidates are given a scenario where they are stranded on a deserted Island, to ensure their survival and safe rescue they need to prioritise the list of items in order of importance. They have 5 minutes to do so. Then, they are asked to form into a group (groups of a max of 6) and redo the task however to come with a group decision after discussion and putting their thinking forward.

The rules:

- They must not hold a vote of any kind
- They must come to a consensus
- They must use their communication, persuasion and selling skills to come up with the completed list (refer to items list)

Example item list:

Laptop	Sleeping Bag	Sunglasses	Sunscreen	Bottle of water
10m of rope	Camera	Umbrella	Scissors	Matches
Toothbrush	Beach Towel	Soap	First Aid Kit	Life Buoy

Assessors will score individual candidates on the way in which they interact with others by listening, influencing, supporting, and helping to arrive at a consensus within the given timeframe; however, they should not be scored on their choice of items.

Appendix 6: Example case study exercise

Each candidate has 20 minutes to create a new action plan for 'Dan' drawing on the information presented and from previous experience working with similar client groups.

Case study scenario:

Dan had been self-employed as a printer, but due to the poor economic climate his mental health deteriorated and he was forced to sign over his responsibilities to his business partner.

Dan has been unemployed for 3 months and was recently diagnosed with Clinical Depression. Dan is not claiming any benefits and is not receiving any treatment or support. He has refused anti-depressant medication from his doctor but he is on a waiting list for psychotherapy.

Dan is a 39-year old father of 3 and his wife works full-time to support the family. They have some growing debt issues.

Dan is often fatigued and is leaving his home less and less since he stopped working. Due to his low mood he stopped all exercise and feels he has put on weight. He also started smoking again.

Appendix 7: Example scoring framework

The below criteria could either be used per question or competency within an activity, or for separate sub-criteria of each question or competency (e.g. one score out of 3 for 'presentation skills', or a separate score out of 3 for tone and pace, audience engagement, use of visual prompts to aid delivery, etc. The example

scoresheets in Appendix 8 follow the latter approach to allow greater differentiation between candidates' scores.

- 0 = Does not meet criteria / Poor
- 1 = Somewhat meets criteria / Ok
- 2 = Meets criteria / Good
- 3 = Exceeds criteria / Excellent

Appendix 8.1: Template Application Form / CV & Cover Letter Scoresheet

IPS ES & TL recruitment: CV & Cover Letter / Application Form scoresheet			
Date			
Candidate name			
Assessor names			
Job role vacancy			
Eligibility Criteria	Yes / No	Notes	
Does candidate meet the minimum required academic qualifications? <i>(As per job specification)</i>			
Does candidate meet the minimum required years of relevant experience? <i>(As per job specification)</i>			
<i>Any other essential criteria from job specification to be added</i>			
* IF CANDIDATE MEETS ALL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA CONTINUE TO SCORING SECTION BELOW *			
Question / section	Scoring guidelines (what to look for)	Score (0-3)	Notes
Why are you interested in this position?	Candidate provides a clear and compelling reason(s) for their interest in the role		
	Candidate conveys passion and excitement for the opportunity		
	CV/letter/answer is tailored to this opportunity		

What is your strongest personal quality that will enable you to succeed in this role?	Outlines a personal quality that is core to successful IPS delivery (e.g. people-person, positivity, resilient, etc)		
	Explains what the quality means to them and why they think they have it		
	Explains why they think the quality is relevant to the role		
What are your relevant skills and experience that will enable you to succeed in this role?	Candidate provides details of relevant previous experience		
	Candidate explains at least 3 core skills of theirs that will be essential to the role (e.g. interpersonal skills, communication, initiative, etc) including examples of their experience using these skills		
Communication	Written communication is concise, structured and presented in a clear layout		
	Limited typo or grammar errors		
Total score			/30
Should this candidate progress to the next stage?			Yes / No / No strong feelings

Appendix 8.2: Template Telephone Interview Scoresheet

IPS ES & TL recruitment: Telephone Interview scoresheet			
Date			
Candidate name			
Assessor names			
Job role vacancy			
Question / competency	Scoring guidelines (what to look for)	Score (0-3)	Notes
Why are you interested in the role? <i>[Interviewer explains role and links to CMHT, and main focus is finding jobs and getting people into paid employment]</i>	Candidate provides a clear and compelling reason(s) for their interest in the role		
	Candidate conveys passion and excitement for the opportunity		
	Candidate outlines how their previous experience is relevant to this role		
Are you clear about the location, travel, working patterns and salary?	Candidate demonstrates they have clear expectations of the role with regards to location, travel, working patterns and salary		

What do you think your main responsibilities will be in this role?	Candidate demonstrates a reasonably good understanding of what their day to day responsibilities would be		
	Candidate has a clear understanding that their primary objective is finding jobs and getting people into paid employment (ES) / successfully managing a team of ES's to achieve individual and team job outcomes		
	Candidate references some of the principles of IPS		
What will you find hardest about this role?	Candidate's answer demonstrates a good understanding of the role in relation to their own strengths and weaknesses		
	Candidate demonstrates ability to be self-reflective		
	Candidate explains how they would work to address this through a specific personal development action		
Verbal communication	Candidate answered the phone with confidence and professionalism		

<i>(Assessor to score through their impression throughout the phone interview)</i>	The candidate had a clear and compelling communication style and phone manner		
Total score			/36
Should this candidate progress to the next stage?			Yes / No / No strong feelings

Appendix 8.3: Template Competency Based Interview Scoresheet

N.B. The below includes a sub-set of questions that could be asked in a 30-minute interview. Further example questions are provided in Appendix 3.

IPS ES & TL recruitment: Competency Interview scoresheet			
Date			
Candidate name			
Assessor names			
Job role vacancy			
Question / competency	Scoring guidelines (what to look for)	Score (0-3)	Notes
<p>This position requires communication with various stakeholders and levels.</p> <p>Can you provide an example of when you have communicated effectively with different levels of an organisation and how you did this?</p>	Explains how they adjusted their communication style according to the purpose and who they are communicating with		
	Explains the positive impact of their communication.		
	Demonstrates highly developed and creative engagement and marketing skills		
<p>The role requires building meaningful relationships with a broad range of stakeholders including referring clinical staff, employers, service users to name a few.</p>	Explains the importance of building up rapport and trust with people to have constructive relationships		

<p>Can you please share with us an example where you had to build multiple relationships?</p> <p>How will you translate this experience to this role?</p>	<p>Demonstrates strong customer focus and the importance of understanding the different needs and priorities of different people</p>		
	<p>Translates their experience to an IPS context e.g. importance of integrating within clinical team, spending most of their time out in the community, etc</p>		
<p>What has been the most difficult situation you have had to negotiate with a client/customer?</p> <p>What issues did you face?</p> <p>How did you achieve a satisfactory outcome?</p>	<p>Demonstrates strong customer/client focus and professionalism during the interaction</p>		
	<p>Demonstrates resilience during times of adversity</p>		
	<p>Demonstrates ability to think on their feet and problem solve a situation to reach a positive outcome</p>		
<p>We occasionally encounter some feedback which isn't as positive as we would like.</p> <p>Give me an example of a time you received criticism or less than positive feedback.</p> <p>What was the feedback and how did you respond?</p>	<p>Demonstrates a willingness to use failure/critical feedback as an opportunity for personal development</p>		
	<p>Demonstrates being thick-skinned and not taking rejection or negative experiences personally</p>		
	<p>Describes a specific action that they have taken since the event to address the feedback</p>		

Describe the work environment or culture in which you are most productive and happy.	Demonstrates an understanding of the working environment that plays to their strengths		
	Describes an environment which broadly aligns with the vacancy		
Total score			/ 42

Appendix 8.4: Template Presentation Scoresheet

IPS ES & TL recruitment: Presentation scoresheet			
Date			
Candidate name			
Assessor names			
Job role vacancy			
Competency / Knowledge area	Scoring guidelines (what to look for)	Score (0-3)	Notes
Content	The candidate covered the 8 IPS principles		
	The candidate demonstrated deep understanding of the strengths and challenges of IPS		
	There was a clear narrative and structure to the presentation		
	The candidate provided considered answers to questions		

Communication	The candidate presented with appropriate tone and pace		
	The candidate had a clear and compelling communication style which showed their passion for the job		
	The candidate engaged the audience well		
	The candidate made good use of visual prompts (e.g. slides) to aid delivery of their presentation		
Team Management <i>(for Team Leader candidates only)</i>	The candidate demonstrates positive leadership skills		
	The candidate explains their approach to target setting and review		
	The candidate explains their approach to supporting staff development		
	The candidate describes their management style that is suitable to this role		
Total score			/24 for ES or /36 for TL

Appendix 8.5: Template Group Activity Scoresheet

IPS ES & TL recruitment: Group Activity scoresheet			
Date			
Candidate name			
Assessor names			
Job role vacancy			
Competency	Scoring guidelines (what to look for)	Score (0-3)	Notes
To what extent has the candidate evidenced the following skills and qualities:	Team work		
	Appropriate verbal communication style		
	Active listening		
	Persuasion		
	Negotiation		
	Supportive of others		
	Time keeping and holding group to task		
	Professionalism		
To what extent did the candidate make valid and useful contributions to the task?	Presented new constructive ideas to the group and/or further developed others' ideas		
	Played an active role in fine-tuning the best ideas from the group		
Total score			/27 or /33

Appendix 8.6: Template Case Study Scoresheet

IPS ES & TL recruitment: Case Study scoresheet			
Date			
Candidate name			
Assessor names			
Job role vacancy			
Competency / Knowledge area	Scoring guidelines (what to look for)	Score (0-3)	Notes
Action plan (general)	The candidate's action plan is IPS focused		
	The candidate's action plan has a focus on supporting the service user to find employment		
Action plan (detailed): The plan includes clear actions and insightful explanation of the following:	Exploration of benefits support		
	Signposting or linking in with support services for people with mental health problems		
	Exploring job interests		
	Exploring employment networks		
	Developing a CV and other job seeking activities		
	Exploring childcare needs		
Communication	Written communication is concise, structured and presented in a clear layout		
	Limited typo or grammar errors		
Total score			/30

Appendix 8.7: Summary Scoresheet

IPS ES & TL recruitment: Summary scoresheet						
Candidate Number	1	2	3	4	5	...
Candidate Name						
Job role vacancy						
Assessor 1 scoring						
CV / Cover Letter / Application Form						
Telephone Interview						
Competency face to face Interview						
Presentation						
Group exercise						
Case study						
Total for assessor 1						
Assessor 2 scoring						
CV / Cover Letter / Application Form						
Telephone Interview						
Competency face to face Interview						
Presentation						
Group exercise						
Case study						
Total for assessor 2						
Average assessor score						
Overall (average) score?						
Job offer?						

Appendix 9: Assessment centre checklist

- Work out how many candidates you'll be assessing and therefore how many days are required to assess all candidates across a range of activities
- Design activities which will help assess candidates
- Secure sufficient numbers of assessors for all days as well as a coordinator to support the process run smoothly
- Book Assessment Centre space
- Schedule candidates into different assessment windows and manage communications
- Create candidate and assessor timetables for each day
- Create assessor packs including activity outlines and scoresheets
- Print assessment centre materials for each day
- Collate any other resources required for the day (e.g. name labels)
- Confirm attendance with candidates 3 days before each event and manage any changes, fill gaps as required
- Manage any reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities
- Setup assessment centre rooms as required
- Greet and brief candidates and assessors to ensure they understand what the day entails and what their responsibilities are
- Co-ordinate flow of the day and troubleshoot any issues that arise
- Collate all scores into a master spreadsheet
- Candidate washup to agree who should and shouldn't be made a job offer
- Phone or email follow up to confirm whether successful and to organise pre-employment checks and other employment paperwork
- Provide constructive feedback to candidates who request this