

This is a 4-part guide to employing a member of staff for the first time. Each part will focus on a part of your journey in employing for the first time and guide you through the process from identifying your need for a member of staff, to welcoming them into your business and giving you some tips and useful information along the way.

## **Part 1 – Identifying you need an employee.**

Up until now you have run your business on your own. You have done such a great job and your business has grown to the point where you decide it is time you need some help. After all, you cannot juggle all the balls!

As exciting as that may be – and it is - employing for the first time can be daunting. You are not quite sure what you need to do and what your legal responsibilities are.

I am currently helping several businesses take their first steps to employing staff; helping them and giving them the confidence to get it right and ensuring they have the right HR support for their business growth.

Here are the things you should consider before recruiting:

### **What is the job?**

Before you start any recruitment process, think about what you want the person to do. What exactly is the job you are offering? What do you need help doing?

### **Recruiting the right person**

When you have determined what tasks you need completed, you then need to write a job description and a person specification.

The job description describes the general tasks and responsibilities of the job.

The person specification describes the qualifications, skills, experience, knowledge and other attributes which your new employee must possess to perform the job.

This is an important document that will be used during the recruitment process (and after), it will inform your new employee what the role is and what is expected of them and will be used in performance management. It is vital to get this right.

### **Take out suitable insurance cover**

You need employers' liability insurance as soon as you become an employer. Your policy must cover you for at least £5 million and come from an authorised insurer. This insurance will help you pay compensation if your employee is injured or becomes ill because of the work they do for you. Your certificate must be displayed in your workplace.

### **Notify HMRC**

You must register with HMRC as an employer. You can do this up to 4 weeks before you pay your new staff member.

## Part 2 – The recruitment process

You are ready to advertise and select your new member of staff.

Important: remember it is against the law to treat someone less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic: race, religion, gender, disability, marriage, pregnancy, sex or age. This applies throughout the recruitment process as well as in employment.

### Writing the advert

Your advert must be very clear as to what the role is. Your advert should include a brief description of the nature of the business; the job title and a summary of responsibilities. If there are any special requirements (including out-of-hours working or travel) these should be included. You can include pay (or a band of pay) and a little about your business and what it does. You should conclude with the closing date and details on how to apply, and to whom. Are you sending out application forms for completion or do you wish candidates to submit their CVs?

### Advertising the role

The best place to advertise the job will depend upon the role, how specialist it is and your available budget. There are many free places to advertise and you can also use the power of social media. Alternatively, due to the specialism of the person you are seeking you may wish to advertise in a professional magazine or website.

### Selecting candidates

Selection involves shortlisting candidates and then deciding upon and carrying out a suitable assessment process. This can be an interview or an interview combined with some form of test. Ensure your interview questions are in line with the job description to find out about the candidate's suitability for the role. You may wish to ask someone to interview with you.

Finally, it is important to ensure candidates have a positive recruitment experience. Not just the successful candidates but also those not successful. This will affect their view of your business. Let them know they were not chosen this time and if you can, offer some feedback.

## Part 3 – Making the offer

Before employing someone, employers have a responsibility to check that applicants have the right to work in the UK and are suitable for the work.

At this point, any offer of employment should be 'conditional': this means it is subject to successful pre-employment checks. These are :-

- **Employment references** – you may wish to obtain references, with at least one being from the current or most recent employer.
- **Right to work in the UK** – make sure they have the right to work in the UK. Use the 'Obtain – Check – Copy' process.

- 'Obtain' an original acceptable document, for example a passport.
- 'Check' the document – check for any inconsistencies, photographs, expiry dates, restrictions, different names and generally ensure the document is real.
- 'Copy' - make a copy of the documents for your records.

More information on the 'Obtain – Check – Copy' process, plus a list of acceptable documents is available on the Gov.uk website <https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work>

- **Specific checks** – to guard against risk, specific checks may be required, for example, if you work with vulnerable people, children, in security, in the police or in the financial services sector.
- **Health checks** - Employers may wish to ask successful candidates to undertake a medical examination (or to complete a medical questionnaire only in limited circumstances) and do observe good practice if a health condition is revealed to you.
- **Qualification or certificate checks** – proof of any qualification that is essential for the candidate to carry out the role or was required within the person specification.

## Part 3 – Documentation

Offers of employment should always be made in writing. But it is important to be aware that a verbal offer of employment made in an interview or after the interview is as legally binding as a letter to the candidate.

### Issuing an employment contract

You have two months to provide your new employee with a written statement, setting out their start date, job role, hours of work, place of work, rights to holiday, pay, time off, notice period etc. Be careful to ensure you are using the correct type of contract. For more information please see my article on Understanding Contracts of employment <https://www.hillhr.co.uk/2016/06/13/understanding-terms-employment/> and my blog on important tips when issuing contracts of employment <https://www.hillhr.co.uk/2017/07/26/contracts-employment-5-important-tips/>

### Probationary Periods

I am often asked by clients whether they should include a probationary period for new starters. The purpose of a probationary period is to allow you and your new member of staff to assess suitability for the role. There is no law defining the length of the probationary period, but it should be no longer than 3 to 6 months.

### Ensuring you are paying the right rates

Unless you are going to pay over the minimum amount, ensure you are aware of the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wages (NLW) rates. Here is some useful information <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>.

Be careful where your employee's hours are variable that they do not fall below the NMW or NLW and ensure you are considering all the hours worked.

## **Auto-enrolment pension requirements**

By 2018, employers will have to provide a workplace pension for eligible staff between 22 years old and the state pension age who earn at least £10,000 per annum. Check your staging date with the Pensions Regulator. There is some useful information available on the Gov.uk website <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-pensions-employers>.

## **Part 4 – The Induction: welcoming your new member of staff to your business.**

### **Welcome your new employee to the company**

Plan and organise an induction programme to make your new employee feel welcome. This can ensure they will fit into your business smoothly and quickly. This may include a tour around the premises and an explanation of how their role fits in. You may wish to provide a welcome pack.

### **Obtain important information**

You need to obtain some key information such as personal details, bank details (for pay) and next of kin (in case of emergency). You may wish to consider using a new starter form to ensure you have captured all the information.

### **Be clear about your expectations**

Even with one member of staff, your company needs to be clear on how it is going to deal with issues such as discipline, grievances and managing absence. You may wish to consider a social media and internet and email policy too to protect your business.

These are 2 useful pdfs on recruiting and starting new staff which can be found on the ACAS website <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/b/c/Recruiting-staff.pdf> and <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/3/0/Starting-staff-induction.pdf>

This is a whistle-stop introduction to employing for the first time and only briefly touches on the process.

If you are employing for the first time and would like some help or just want to chat through your thoughts and ideas, please contact me on 07483 253984 or email [claire.hill@hillhr.co.uk](mailto:claire.hill@hillhr.co.uk)