



ADVERTISING JOBS

A Network SA Staff Management Resource for SA Children's Services February 2010 (revised)

Note: The information in this article has been written for South Australian child care and Out of School Hours Care services.

The staff in your children's service are your greatest investment in providing quality care and running a successful business. On a day to day basis they are responsible for maintaining and improving standards for the children's quality of care, learning and development, safety and security, for teamwork, for relationships with families, and for effective and efficient use of resources.

Finding staff for your service can be difficult, particularly when there is a shortage of qualified people. That is why it is worth spending time and effort on choosing the right person for the job.

Before you advertise

Network SA's *When a Vacancy Occurs* resource, available free from www.networksa.org.au identifies steps you should take before advertising for staff.

Do you have to advertise all vacant positions?

The answer to this question will be found in your own policies and procedures, or in the case of Out of School Hours Care services operated by DECS School Governing Councils, in the DECS Administrative Instructions and Guidelines (AIGs). Even if your service does not have to follow a policy which states that any vacant positions must be advertised, it is useful to advertise vacant positions. Advertising can attract a wider range of applicants and increase your chances of success in finding the right person for the job.

Some organisations with existing employees suited to a vacant position choose to promote from within and / or advertise positions internally, to encourage and reward existing staff. You should check if your recruitment policies allow this before you speak with your employees about it.

Who prepares the advertisement?

Most often the director would prepare the first draft of an advertisement. This draft would then be finalised in consultation with the other members of the selection panel, or by the service owner. If your service is part of a larger organisation there are likely to be specific written guidelines for your information. If your service does not have a recruitment policy which outlines procedures for advertising vacancies, this is an opportunity to write procedures for future reference.

Before publishing, make sure that you get other people to check for any errors in spelling or punctuation and to review the actual content of the advertisement. Simple errors can make your service look unprofessional, which is the last impression you want to create.

What should it contain?

A good advertisement helps applicants decide if they are suited for the job and attracts the kind of people you are searching for. Keep in mind the requirements of Equal Opportunity and Disability Discrimination legislation in your State and nationally.

You need to achieve a balance between keeping your advertisement short and simple and ensuring that you have the essential aspects covered. If you intend to advertise in a metropolitan newspaper, be aware

of high costs. Internet advertising may be more cost effective.

If you are placing a larger advertisement (see example centre right) you have the opportunity to be more specific about your requirements and make the position sound more attractive e.g. 'we are seeking a person with high energy levels and innovative ideas'. This is particularly important if you are seeking qualified staff or a Director. There is a national shortage of qualified staff, so you are competing for employees in a field where there are likely to be few applicants.

If you have a website, make sure you include the address in your advertisement so that potential applicants can research your service and what it could offer as a workplace.

Consider including:

- service name and location
- job title / role
- award classification (level) / pay scale
- contract length, if applicable
- probationary period, if applicable
- hours of work (part time, full time etc) and hours per week
- any additional benefits – conditions, hours and permanency may all be attractive
- essential requirements
- closing date for applications
- format of applications (e.g. written application that must address the selection criteria in the job description; brief resume; application form)
- contact details for queries or copy of job description e.g. email address / website link
- requirement for referees (usually at least two professional referees)
- address for written applications
- that only short-listed applicants will be notified (if applicable)

Equal employment opportunity and discrimination in the workplace

Unlawful discrimination happens when someone is treated unfairly or less favourably at work because of a personal characteristic or attribute that is expressly mentioned as a ground of discrimination by the law (see below for attributes covered).

Unlawful discrimination and harassment can take place at all points of the employment relationship including the pre-employment or recruitment stage.

Job advertisements should specify the skills and abilities required and any special conditions that relate directly to the job. For example, criminal history screening is an essential requirement in children's services because it supports services to establish child safe environments in which adults do not present a threat to the health and well being of children.

(Example)

Children's Services Assistant required for Heavenly OSHC., Ourtown. Must have Cert. III Children's Services Required 3pm - 5.30pm Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Additional work may be negotiated. Email hoshc@place.on.net for details. Applications close 4th August.

Our Town Child Care Centre

Director (L6)

Must have with strong interpersonal and supervisory skills, extensive knowledge of current child care practices and compliance requirements, and financial management skills. Good knowledge of Early Years Learning Framework and QA essential.

This is a full time leadership position in a highly valued 70 place centre (www.ourtownccc.com.au).

Our Town is a sought after location. Visit Our Town District Council's website www.ourtown.co.au and picture yourself enjoying a great lifestyle. Assistance with moving expenses may be negotiated.

Job description and person specifications available from ourcentre@ourtown.com.au

Written applications addressing the selection criteria and providing contact details of 3 professional referees should be addressed to the Chairperson, Our Town CCC, by email to ourcentre@ourtown.com.au or by post to 42 Scenic Drive, Our Town SA 5555.

Closing date: 24/08/10.

If you have personal knowledge of people who may be suitable, you could draw their attention to the vacancy and encourage them to consider applying.

However, it is important that they understand that they will be competing with other applicants and going through the same merit-based selection process.

If you are a member of the selection panel it is essential that other members of the panel are advised if you have a vested interest in an applicant.

Your advertisement should avoid referring to *irrelevant* personal characteristics and avoid language that could directly or indirectly discriminate unfairly or unreasonably. It is illegal to unreasonably treat one person less favourably than another on the grounds of their:

- Race
- Colour
- Sex
- Sexual preference
- Age
- Disability
- Medical record
- Impairment
- Marital status
- Pregnancy or potential pregnancy
- Identity of spouse
- Criminal record
- Trade union activity
- Political opinion
- Religion
- Nationality
- Social origin
- Religious dress
- Caring responsibilities
- Breastfeeding
- Family responsibilities

The South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission's website, www.eoc.sa.gov.au, is an excellent resource for clear guidelines and up to date information regarding discrimination legislation. **Always check before advertising.**

Where to advertise

There are a number of choices:

Newspapers and online (local, state, rural, or national). Generally this is the preferred and most widely used method. Bear in mind that a display advertisement (one in a box) in a metropolitan newspaper is very expensive. Try not to be too 'wordy' but give as much information as you can. Logos in advertisements are attractive but they add to the cost of the advertisement. Don't forget you will be able to give more details to potential applicants in job and person descriptions, so you could advise interested applicants that these are available. If you make the job and person specifications available online or by email, you will not need to spend money on duplicating them and sending them by post. You will need to contact the newspaper or website where you want to advertise for information about how to place an advertisement.

Advantages: May attract a large and diverse group of applicants, potentially may attract applicants from outside the immediate area or state.

Disadvantages: Can be very expensive, which is particularly distressing if you don't attract any candidates. If you do attract a large number of applications it can be time consuming to cull them and there is a risk you could miss a 'good' application when short listing because there are so many to read. This is less likely to be an issue when you are seeking contact staff to work with the children but may be an issue when advertising for administrative staff.

Magazines, newsletters, websites or e-lists (e.g. Uni or TAFE newsletters or websites, school newsletters, children's services sector / agency websites) This may be a free service, or if there is a charge it will be low, giving you the option to include more specific information about your needs and preferences such as essential and desirable skills).

Advantages: Can attract applicants who may not have been actively looking for a change in position or workplace, saves money.

Disadvantages: May bring in a very narrow field; publications may be infrequent.

Informal and formal networks: e.g. sending a flyer by fax or email to other centres or organisations which through their networking gain knowledge of possible interested candidates.

(Continued on page 4)

Advantages: Can be time saving and cost saving and applicants may be more likely to meet the criteria.

Disadvantages: Can narrow the field and you cannot be sure that the flyer is made known to potential candidates.

Recruitment agencies: Agencies can screen applicants for you, short list to your specifications and also advise about possible wage assistance and subsidies that you might not be otherwise aware of.

Advantage: Can be time saving.

Disadvantages: The field is very limited and the agency may not fully understand your requirements or your workplace. It may be difficult to recruit employees that will identify with your service's culture and not the agencies' interpretation. It is also expensive.

Internal advertisements / expressions of interest from current employees

- (Review of prior applications or expressions of interest from current employees – (whether full time, part time, casual, relief, contract).
- Notice boards located within the service or notices put up at other sites located away from the vacancy location, but still a part of the overall service.
- Within employee newsletters, memos or publications
- Direct approach – (from the pool of relief workers already employed by the service)
- Through your own succession planning system if you have one in place.

Advantages of these internal methods are that the applicants may already be well known to the employer and staff, the successful applicant may already know the workplace, they can save time, and they are cost effective. However, check your recruitment policies and procedures to ensure that internal advertising is acceptable or allowed in your organisation.

Disadvantages are that the number and field of applicants will be limited, there may be issues arising if applicants' expectations are raised and they don't get the job and the centre may have to back fill if the successful applicant vacates a position within the service.

Network SA Website

Contact Network SA for details - inexpensive and sector specific.

Receiving and storing applications

Before you place your advertisement, make all necessary arrangements for receipt and storage of applications to maintain confidentiality and to ensure security of the information.

During advertising period

Before you shortlist or interview any candidates you should review your selection criteria, write interview questions, and review or establish processes for short listing, interviewing, referee checks, orientation and probation. Consider also the interview environment – check privacy, furniture, lighting, noise, temperature and signage.

Next in this series is Network SA's *Interviews* resource, available free from www.networksa.org.au/free

Network SA has undertaken all reasonable measures to ensure that the information above is accurate and specifically disclaims any liability, loss or risk, personal or otherwise, which is incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly of the use and application of any of the contents.

Published by Network SA Resource, Advisory & Management Services Inc.,

Building 2, The Parks Community Centre, 2 - 46 Cowan Street, Angle Park SA

Mailing address: PO Box 2440, Regency Park SA 5942

Phone: 8445 8128 (toll free for country callers 1800 673 714); Fax: 8268 8065.

Email: info@networksa.org.au; Website: www.networksa.org.au

© 2009, 2010, 2011