

Good Practice Example – Planning and Publicity

sportscotland: Appointment Round to Find New Members (2016-17)

Background

Early planning for this appointment round was initiated in July 2015 when the Scottish Government intimated its intention to run a Chair appointment round first and then to follow it with an appointment round to find two members. The chair appointment round was very successful and is also featured as a [case study on our website](#). In the event, the chair was appointed in February 2016 and the planning phase for the members round started thereafter. During planning it was decided that the round would be used to find up to four members. To provide continuity, the Public Appointments Adviser (PAA) who was a panel member on the Chair round remained allocated to this assignment. As it was designated as a round that merited medium level oversight, the PAA stayed on until the panel had completed all planning for the round. The PAA did not participate in any of the stages of assessment.

Planning

Pre-planning took place between July and October 2016 to give careful consideration to the board's needs and the views of the new chair and the appointing minister. The PAA noted that diversity was central to the selection panel's discussions reflecting the experience and commitment of the new board chair as well as the overall aims of sportscotland.

The panel defined four priority skill areas, with applicants needing to demonstrate at least one of these, and four general skills, inclusive of 'committed to promoting equality and diversity'. The priority criteria were clearly aligned to the needs of the board and are set out here for ease of reference:

- experience and knowledge of the contribution which sport can make at one or more of the different levels of the sporting system.
- knowledge of the links between business/commercial sectors and sport.
- communications and particularly the use of social media.
- knowledge of how an organisation can benefit from the use of digital technologies to make it more efficient and effective.

The [core skills framework](#) was used with bullet descriptors providing clarity for both applicants and the selection panel about what evidence was expected for each of the criteria for selection. The panel also added an extra column into the person specification to explain why each of the criteria were being sought and why the experience/skills were important to sportscotland and the board at this point in time. This was intended to help applicants to understand how each of the attributes sought would contribute to the work of the body.

The panel went to great lengths to make sure that applicants understood that 'high level' experience was not essential and stressed that they were particularly interested in applicants with a community or volunteering background. This was made clear in the publicity and in the pack.

The panel decided on assessment via a written application followed by an interview, which was to include completion of a practical exercise which simulated an aspect of board activity. Applicants had to evidence only two criteria for selection in their written application. Applicants were asked to evidence their nominated priority criterion and

they were also given the opportunity to provide brief evidence of any of the other priority criteria which they believed they were able to fully demonstrate within an overall word limit. All applicants were also asked to evidence the general skill relating to equality/diversity.

The PAA assisted with the compilation of the practical exercise which was based on the issues/considerations arising from a research paper and was designed to enable applicants to evidence the general criteria 'examining information and making decisions' and 'communicating and influencing effectively'.

Publicity

As well as via the usual routes, including the appointed for Scotland website, publicity was via networking by the board itself and the directorate. Unsuccessful applicants from the prior chair appointment round were also directly contacted and encouraged to apply along with others from recent appointment rounds.

Video clip interviews with current sportscotland board members were prepared for the body's own website and for circulation via Twitter, using hashtag #GetOnBoard, and other media channels. This same approach had been successfully used on a recent appointment round for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. This personal touch was intended to make a difference to people's motivation to apply for roles. Use of video profiles and social media was also intended to reach out to a younger audience as younger people are a currently underrepresented group on boards. The clips and the accompanying narrative also very importantly conveyed some clear and compelling messages about the open and inclusive culture of the body and the board. This has a proven impact on the willingness of people from currently underrepresented groups to apply for roles. The clips and accompanying narrative are still available to view on the sportscotland website:

<https://sportfirst.sportscotland.org.uk/articles/time-to-getonboard/>

Conclusion

The round was so successful that the Minister approached the Commissioner at its conclusion in order to make a case for five appointments to be made, rather than the original four, due to the quality of the candidates.

The enhanced processes used for planning and design of this competition, the early proactive contact with the minister, the use of the adapted competency framework and the arrangements for assessment all contributed to a successful outcome.

It's clear that the approach taken led to the attraction of younger people with the [Diversity Delivers](#) target for applications from this underrepresented group being exceeded. People from this group and women also progressed well through the appointments process.

More detailed information on any of the materials referred to in this brief report can be obtained from Ian Bruce, the Public Appointments Manager in the CESPLS office:
T: 0131 347 3897 E: i.bruce@ethicalstandards.org.uk

The chair of the selection panel, Derek Grieve, Head of the Active Scotland Division, is also happy to be contacted by fellow panel chairs for more information.

Find out who was appointed by following this link to the press release:

<http://www.appointed-for-scotland.org/media/28506/sport-scotland-final-news-rel.docx>