



PENNINE ACUTE HOSPITALS NHS TRUST

OVERSEAS RECRUITMENT OF MIDDLE GRADE (SPECIALTY DOCTOR GRADE) ANAESTHETISTS

SUMMARY

Since 2008, the Diagnostics Division of Pennine Acute had experienced a high turnover of middle grade anaesthetists. Unfortunately, all efforts to recruit UK or EU nationals to the vacancies were unsuccessful. Adverts were placed almost continually in the BMJ and NHS Jobs and whilst this did lead to some appointments, due to high turnover rates the number of vacancies remained constant. Therefore Hays Recruitment Agency support was enlisted to undertake an overseas recruitment project in India.

At the time of the project, through the UK points-based immigration system (which was phased in between 2008-2010), it was possible for Trusts who wished to appoint candidates who were subject to immigration controls,

to apply annually for a specific number of pre-allocated Certificates of Sponsorship for use throughout a 12 month period. The number of Certificates applied for was an estimate based on previous year's recruitment and turnover. However, as from April 2011, bulk allocations of Certificates of Sponsorship to Trusts/employers, will no longer be made. The Trust will have to apply for an individual Certificate of Sponsorship on each and every occasion it wishes to appoint an overseas candidate. It is understood that the number of Certificates available is limited and will be allocated on a 'first come, first served basis'. Trusts recruiting from overseas will need to ensure robust recruitment procedures are in place and great care taken when completing documentation; a failure to do could result in further requests being declined.

KEY OUTCOMES

Feedback from the Department of Anaesthesia has been very positive. Each of the doctors have settled in well (one has since brought his family to the UK) and are working to a high standard; not all have needed the full 3 month supernumerary period and have joined on-call rotas working independently sooner than originally anticipated.



PURPOSE

- Fill a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 8 Middle Grade (Specialty Doctor Grade) Anaesthetic posts with quality candidates who have:-
 - Full GMC registration or are eligible to apply for this
 - PLAB or are eligible for exemption from this
 - Willingness to relocate to the UK on a long term/permanent basis.
- Interview candidates face to face to allow for in depth questioning and assessment of clinical knowledge and skills
- View candidates' documentation first hand, including passport, original certificates of qualification etc to confirm authenticity and take copies to facilitate further recruitment checks in the UK.

KEY STAGES

Interview Process

A team comprising three consultant anaesthetists (Dr Anil Gupta, Dr Bhaskar Saha and Dr Seema Varshney) and a human resources representative (Mrs Cath Hignett), travelled to Mumbai, India. Mr Simon Allen, from Hays Recruitment Agency also joined the team to facilitate the project.

The team resided at the Taj Lands End Hotel where interviews were also held as it had excellent facilities including IT (photocopying, computer and telephone) clerical assistance, rooms and waiting areas.

A total of 11 doctors were interviewed over two days. 7 were appointable and were made conditional offers subject to Royal College approval, GMC registration and all other recruitment checks.

The interview process, including the interview format and questions, terms and conditions to be offered, and a scoring system, were agreed in

advance and adhered to. Notes were kept and all candidates were asked to produce original documentation, photocopies of which were taken and brought back to the UK for further processing.

Once all interviews had been completed, all candidates were scored and ranked and invited back to be advised of the outcome and to receive feedback. All successful candidates were issued with a Trust application form and other documents (CRB, health screening form etc) to complete and return to Medical Staffing in the UK to progress their application. Unsuccessful candidates were informed personally or by telephone.

Post Interview/Return to the UK

Candidates' details were passed to Medical Staffing to complete the recruitment process, including CRBs, Certificates of Sponsorship to allow entry to the UK and permission to work. Conditional offers of appointment were confirmed by letter in accordance with Specialty Doctors Terms and Conditions of Service for 12 sessions per week.

Arrival of Appointees

Upon arrival, the doctors were met at Manchester Airport by either Dr Gupta or Dr Varshney and taken to pre-booked hospital accommodation at either the Rochdale or North Manchester sites. A small 'welcome pack' of basics was provided for each doctor as invariably, they arrived in the evening. Accommodation charges would be taken from first salary.

For each appointee, the first two days or so were assigned to completing final recruitment checks such as attending Occupational Health, appearing before the GMC for identity checks, setting up a bank account and generally having some time to familiarise themselves with the local area.

Hospital transport (taxi) was used to assist the appointees on their first couple of days for journeys to Manchester (for GMC checks) and Occupational Health appointments.

Induction

It was anticipated that a 3 month supernumerary/orientation period would need to be completed by each doctor prior to being able to work independently and participate in the on-call rota. A detailed induction programme – including attendance at the Trust 2 day induction as well as a locally designed induction – was developed by the Consultant Anaesthetists; this was to ensure that the appointees would receive the necessary support and orientation to the NHS and Pennine Acute systems including policies, protocols, equipment and documentation.



RESOURCES

The charges levied by Hays were:

- Project Management charges—including flights, transfers, hotel accommodation (interview rooms and facilities), visas for delegates, Hays agent present to facilitate
- Recruitment charges
 - o First 2 candidates – 18% of first year's salary
 - o Second 2 candidates – 16% of first year's salary
 - o Third 2 candidates – 15% of first year's salary

It should be borne in mind that the doctors appointed do have considerable experience which has been taken into account (as per terms and conditions for Hospital Medical Staff) when determining the appropriate point of scale on which they were placed and so starting salaries have reflected this and consequently, the percentage charges.

Further recruitment costs have been incurred such as CRB checks, Certificates of Sponsorship and these amounted to approximately £200 per candidate.

No travel or relocation expenses have been incurred. It was made clear to the candidates at interview that expenses for travel or relocation would not be paid, other than standard travel from point of entry to the UK (which was not necessary as each doctor was met personally at Manchester Airport).

Accommodation costs would be charged a month in arrears to allow the doctors time to earn a month's salary.

KEY CHALLENGES**Protraction of Recruitment Process**

The process was anticipated to take approximately 3 months with appointees in post by September 2009. However the shortest period for the

first appointee to arrive was 4 months, whilst the longest period was 15 months.

The reasons for variance are:

- Recruitment checks varied depending on each doctor's individual situation e.g. GMC registration, PLAB qualification, having to sit IELTS test in India (these are held every 2 months) and if support from the Royal College of Anaesthetists was required
- Additional security and health checks required in India prior to being given permission to leave the country. These appeared to vary from doctor to doctor.
- To a lesser degree, the individual doctor's eagerness to join may have affected the time scales as well as personal circumstances in India.
- Communicating with the doctors in India; whilst communication was predominantly by email, occasionally it was necessary to send hard copy documents by post which was a lengthy process.

During this time, regular contact was maintained with the Hays Recruitment Agency to deal with any issues that arose for the appointees, for example providing letters of confirmation of appointment. Hays provided a weekly

update mapping each appointee's progress in the recruitment process.

Withdrawal of a candidate

7 candidates were offered a post however one candidate failed to meet RCA standards so their offer was withdrawn. As the aim of the project was to hire a minimum of 6 people, it still achieved its objective.

High Costs of Agency Fees

Overall high costs in agency fees, although the alternative would be to continue paying high agency rates for locums who were not prepared to commit long term to an appointment with the Trust.

Coordination of Interviews

Timetabling of interviews should have been better co-ordinated. Hays were asked to timetable interviews for 2 days, Monday and Tuesday. Whilst a full day of interviews took place on the Monday (7 candidates), no suitable candidates were available for Tuesday and the remaining 4 candidates were seen on Wednesday

Sourcing of Interviewees

Some potential candidates were put forward for consideration despite not meeting the basic criteria which had been outlined previously.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- Recruitment Options Report

**CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

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