



Careers Hub Short Guides

Writing good supporting information

Intro

Here are a few tips to think about when completing the supporting information section for vacancies currently available on the [NHS Jobs site](#).

What is supporting information?

When you apply for a job in the NHS one of the most important areas of the application is the Supporting Information section in between Referees and Monitoring Information. The reason that this section is so important is that it's where you can demonstrate why you're the right person for the job and that you meet the criteria for the job.

Recruiting managers will often make this their main focus when shortlisting candidates for interview so it's important that you make sure you've made your case for why they should take you on, but also avoid waffling or providing information that's not relevant.

A screenshot of the NHS application form. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with the following items: Personal Information, Qualifications, Employment History, Referees, Supporting Information (highlighted in red), Monitoring Information, Safeguarding, and Submit and Declarations. The main content area is titled 'Supporting Information' and includes instructions: 'In this section you need to demonstrate that you have read the published person specification and how you meet the essential and (where relevant) desirable criteria for this particular post, if this has not been fully covered in the previous sections.' It also states: 'Please include your reasons for applying and take the opportunity to highlight your particular talents and strengths, (what you feel you can personally offer - what is unique to you - what sets you apart from your peers).' and 'Please DO NOT include personal details or duplicate information already provided elsewhere in your application.' Below this is a text editor with a toolbar and a 'Max words: 1500' indicator. At the bottom, there are 'Additional Personal Information' options for 'Preferred employment type' with checkboxes for Full time, Part time, Job share, Secondment, and Flexible hours. There are also 'Save for later' and 'Save and continue' buttons.

What are employers looking for in your supporting information?

- **Enthusiasm** – show that you are confident in your abilities and that you see this job as a positive opportunity/challenge.
- **Evidence of clarity of thought** – ensure that the statement is structured, doesn't ramble or move back and forth between subjects. Sometimes it's good to think about the points you want to make and then think about the order you'll make them or how you might group them in sections.
- **Some awareness of what the job will entail** – try to show that you've read and understood the job description. Often you can do this by referring to skills, abilities, knowledge or experience you have that would benefit you in the tasks and objective of the new job.
- **Some knowledge about the organisation** – Most NHS organisations have extensive websites with lots of information about how they operate and what their [Values](#) are. Do some research and try to refer to it in your application where relevant.
- **A statement that will engage the employer and encourage them to want to know more** – this could be an interesting project you've supported a time when you've innovated.
- **Details about how you can contribute to the organisation** – this is really important as it enables you to show the passion you have for the role and why you want to work in this area, remember to focus on what *you can do for them*. Also talk about how you will contribute to the team or department and add value.
- **Highlight your interest in and attraction to the organisation** – this could be based on your knowledge of the organisation from personal contact, or from research you have done about the organisation and the work it is involved in.

What is a job description and person specification?

Every vacancy on the NHS Jobs site will have a job description and person specification that can be downloaded for your information, it's really important to ensure that you carefully read through all the information detailed in both documents.

The job description lays out the essential elements of the role, along with the purpose of the job and the duties and responsibilities that would be expected of you in this role.

Pharmacy Assistant	
Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
Able to effectively use a computer	E.C.D.L. or equivalent computing qualification
Ability to work on own initiative and as part to a team	A desire to develop within the department
Organised with attention to detail	Knowledge of pharmacy recording procedures
Ability to work under pressure and in difficult situations	
Good customer service skills	Experience of working with a wide range of people
Understanding of the Trust's values (respect, patient focus, improvement, compassion)	

The person specification describes what the employer needs from a candidate in terms of skills, abilities, knowledge and experience and lists the essential and desirable qualities and qualifications the employer ideally would like in a candidate.

Tips for effective statements to make a great application

- **The shortlisting process** – during shortlisting, applicants are selected for interview based on how well they meet, or come close to meeting all the qualities listed as 'essential requirements'. Therefore this is the perfect opportunity for you to show that you do have the skills and experience as stipulated within the person specification and provide clear examples within the supporting information section.
- **Align your 'supporting information' statement closely to the job specification and job description** – it is really important to ensure you cover all the points of the specification and job description within your supporting information, showing how they match your own skills and experience to date, demonstrating why you would be suitable for the position. You really need to convince the recruiter that you have the required skills, knowledge and experience and that they should be inviting you for an interview.
- **The job description lists the duties and responsibilities of the post** – This gives you an opportunity to give examples of the experience in these duties and responsibilities through previous job roles you have undertaken.

Matching the Person Specification when completing the supporting information

Within the supporting information section, you need to demonstrate that you have read the published person specification showing how you meet the essential and (where relevant) desirable criteria for this particular post.

Make sure to include your reasons for applying and take the opportunity to highlight your particular talents and strengths, as well as what you feel you can personally offer, what is unique to you and what sets you apart from your peers. Remember this is the perfect opportunity to sell yourself, making the recruiters want to know more!

Supporting Information

This example of supporting information has been colour coded to show how it meets the essential/desirable requirements stated in the person specification above.

Supporting Information Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory

In this section you need to demonstrate that you have read the published person specification and how you meet the essential and (where relevant) desirable criteria for this particular post, if this has not been fully covered in the previous sections.

Please include your reasons for applying and take the opportunity to highlight your particular talents and strengths, (what you feel you can personally offer - what is unique to you - what sets you apart from your peers).

Please DO NOT include personal details or duplicate information already provided elsewhere in your application.

Supporting information *

I would like to apply for the position of Pharmacy Assistant at the Greater Manchester NHS Trust. Having recently graduated from my pharmacy degree I would now like to begin my careers in the Division of Pharmacy at the trust where I believe I would make a welcome addition to the already strong and successful team.

I have had an interest in pharmacy from a young age having completed a work experience placement with a local pharmacist when I was 14. I continued to my interest in working in healthcare throughout my time at school, volunteering as a guide at my local hospital trust. During my time volunteering I gained insight into how important it is to provide excellent customer service in healthcare; you never know what a patient, visitor or member of staff has on their mind so it's important to provide support with compassion and respect.

Also while I was at school I acquired a part time job at my local Boots store where, although not directly involved in the pharmacy department, I was able to gain further insight into pharmaceutical procedures, record keeping and also develop my skills and ability to work with lots of people from a wide range of backgrounds. The store was in a busy part of Manchester and would have a large volume of customers, particularly on the weekends; I always coped well during these periods and made sure that I supported other members of my team when they were under pressure.

During my time at Boots I made a number of contributions to the Staff Suggestion Scheme which was taken on by the management and I was rewarded for the cost savings that the store made from the changes I recommended. For the past two years I have been in a supervisory role at the store while completing my degree although I now feel it is time to move to a different role.

In completing my degree I have studied many elements of pharmacy procedures and many of the exercises we undertook involved meticulous record keeping both in practical activities and on paper. I completed most assignments on the computer and now have an effective working knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point. I also completed an 'Introduction to modern IT course' with my local library which had an accredited qualification attached.

When I saw the vacancy for a this position I was very excited, GM NHS Trust is a place I've always wanted to work and I think that if successful I could make a great contribution to the pharmacy team while learning from the expertise my colleagues already have. I look forward to hearing from you.

Points to remember

- **Provide an example of each skill listed on the person specification** – try to ensure that all points are covered using an example of when you have used those skills
- **Keep it to the point** - you do need to be mindful not to make your application form too long winded, so state the facts
- **Where possible list your examples in the order they appear in the person specification** - as this will help the recruiter to recognise each skill when they are short listing
- **Relate your experience to the post you are applying for** - Try to keep it as concise as you can, matching your experience to the skills set out in the job description and person specification

Remember - Ensure you proof read everything several times and check the spelling before submission of your application, as this is the first example of your attention to detail and the pride you take in your work

You can find more guides like this one on our website gmcareershub.nhs.uk or you can email us at careers.hub@cmft.nhs.uk for more information about NHS Careers in Greater Manchester.