Guidance for obtaining references when applying for a job

Did you know that if you apply for a job with the NHS you will have to provide us with work related references that cover 3 years?

Why do we need references?

We use your interview and your references as a way of learning more about you and assessing your suitability for the job.

Do you know what references you need to provide?

If you are employed by the NHS in a Nursing role or other clinical role such as Dietitian, Therapist etc we can only accept professional references.

If you are currently working we will always want a reference from your line manager.

If you work for an agency or work intermittently this could be a reference from the company’s Human Resources Department.

If you have been employed outside of the UK in the last 3 years we will ask you to provide the name and email addresses for your employers while you were not in the UK.

If you are not working right now but have worked during the last 3 years we will ask you to give us the name and email address of your last line manager or the Human Resources Department who can confirm the role that you were doing and the dates of your employment.

We will also ask you to provide us with the contact details for someone who can give you a character/personal reference.

We can’t accept references from family, friends or neighbours.

What is a character reference?

A character reference, also known as a personal reference, is a recommendation provided by someone who knows you outside of work.

A personal/character reference gives us more information about you, your personality, your people skills and abilities.
Where do I get references from?

If you are currently working or have been in work at any time during the last 3 years you will need to approach your current and previous line managers to make them aware they will be contacted for a reference for you.

If you are not currently working or have gaps in your employment we will ask you to provide us with the contact details for people who have known you for at least 3 years who can vouch for you and tell us what you are like.

When you are thinking about who could provide you with a reference think about any groups, activities or volunteering opportunities that you may be involved with socially where a group leader or volunteer coordinator could comment on your suitability for the job.

If you have been or are currently studying with a college, your tutor could potentially provide you with a reference if they have known you for 3 or more years and you have maintained regular contact with them.

If you regularly attend a place of worship and the faith leader knows you well, they could provide you with a reference.

Are you involved with your local neighbourhood watch? If so, you could approach your neighbourhood police liaison to provide you with a reference.

If you have a social worker or probation officer, they could also be approached to provide references.

If you are involved with the Parents and Teachers Association with your local school, teachers and headmasters could also be approached for references.

I've only just left school – who can give me a reference?

If you are aged 18 or under we will ask you to provide the email address for your most recent head teacher/principal and we will ask them to provide a reference for you.

Does your application form have your referees listed?

It is really important that you make sure your application form has been fully completed with your referee contact details. If you have not recently updated your profile on NHS Jobs, now is a good time to do this.

Have you remembered to include email addresses for each of your referees?
Does your referee know we will be asking them to provide you with a reference?

You should always make sure you have spoken to your referee and asked their permission before giving out their contact details.

If I can’t get any references will I still be able to start my job?

We will help you wherever we can with obtaining references, however if it not possible to obtain any references for you it is unlikely that we will be able to give you a start date.

The team will discuss with you ways in which you could obtain references enabling you to apply for any future vacancies within the Trust. Examples of this could be through voluntary work or work experience placements.