

# Limited Search Recruitment: Targeted Advertising Guidance

When sourcing applicants for permanent, fixed term and temporary backfill vacancies, agencies may use limited search recruitment methods only when vacancies or applicants meet one of the exceptional circumstances set out in Commissioner's Instruction 48, 49 or 50 (see Resources below).

Limited search recruitment may only be used where it is clearly justified and one of the circumstances applies. It should not replace advertising as the default recruitment method.

Limited search recruitment methods are:

- [applicant initiated approach](#)
- [referral](#)
- [use of a recruitment consultant](#)
- [targeted advertising](#).

If no circumstance applies, agencies advertise vacancies as soon as practicable.

Before starting limited search recruitment hiring managers:

- justify and record that at least one of the circumstances applies under the relevant Commissioner's Instruction
- determine the limited search recruitment method or methods to be used.

This guidance covers **targeted advertising**.

Agencies need to consider when targeted advertising may be a useful and justifiable recruitment approach. Human resources teams provide guidance to hiring managers on when this method may be used in their agency.

## When this method is useful

Targeted advertising may be useful:

- where a limited and known group of people may meet the suitability requirements for a position such as:
  - previous employees with known skills
  - employees at the same classification level
  - where a vacancy requires a genuine occupational qualification
- when a position is in a regional location where the local labour market is understood and those meeting the suitability requirements are known
- to fill a specialist position.

## Sourcing applicants

Advertising can be targeted to:

- a group of employees of the agency
- employees of other agencies
- selected groups of external candidates.

Examples of targeted advertising include:

- emails to fixed term contract employees in the agency who are at the same level
- advertisements in professional publications or listings on similar websites
- advertisements in regional newspapers.

For all fixed term positions and when backfilling temporary vacancies greater than 12 months, state “possibility of permanency in the future” in all targeted advertising.

## Assessing and selecting

- Before targeted advertising the hiring manager sets suitability requirements appropriate to the nature, level and tenure of the vacancy.
- Before commencing an assessment the hiring manager and applicants identify, declare and manage any [conflicts of interest](#).
- The hiring manager assesses the applicant against the suitability requirements of the position.

## Appointing and record keeping

- The agency advises all applicants of the outcome and, if they are eligible to lodge a [breach of standards claim](#), informs them of their right to lodge a claim.
- A suitable applicant can be appointed to the position:
  - after the breach of standard claim period ends if no claim is received
  - after the breach of standard is resolved if a claim is received.
- For a recruitment pool, an applicant can be appointed if at least one vacancy of the type to which the claim relates is kept vacant until the claim is resolved.
- The agency keeps records to ensure transparency and reduce perceptions of bias and nepotism. Records include:
  - circumstance and rationale for using the targeted advertising recruitment method
  - how applicants were assessed against the suitability criteria
  - evidence considered in assessing suitability (for example interview notes, capability based responses, referee information)
  - how conflicts of interest were identified, managed and declared
  - decision to recommend an applicant (for example how the recommended applicant met the suitability requirements).

## Avoiding bias and nepotism

Agencies need to establish policies and procedures to mitigate the risk of bias and nepotism when using targeted advertising.

Mitigation may include:

- having a strong rationale for why a broader search was not required
- choosing an appropriate advertising channel (for example local media, intranet)
- managing factors that may indicate an applicant was pre-selected such as:
  - only one applicant is assessed for the vacancy and is recommended
  - an applicant has a close personal, familial or prior/current working relationship with the hiring manager or other agency staff
  - making decisions based on existing or prior personal or working relationships
- having appropriate documentation to support audit, review and probity requirements.

## Resources

- [Commissioner's Instruction 48: Recruitment, Selection and Appointment to Permanent Vacancies](#)
- [Commissioner's Instruction 49: Recruitment, Selection and Appointment to Fixed Term Vacancies](#)
- [Commissioner's Instruction 50: Backfilling Temporary Vacancies](#)
- [Hiring Managers' Toolkit](#)