



Preparing to become a NED

The Interview Process

The Seacole Group is the national network for NEDs from Black, Asian and other minoritised communities serving on boards in the NHS and wider health system. Their mission is to strengthen representation, voice and effectiveness of NEDs from Black, Asian, and minoritized communities on Boards. We provide resources to help aspirant NEDs and Chairs achieve their ambition of joining a Board in the NHS or wider health system. If you haven't already, read our [Preparing to be a NED – top 12 tips](#).

This guidance focuses on the interview. Congratulations for making it to this stage. **Be clear about the selection process.** Is it just an interview? Who is on the panel? Can you contact them beforehand to gain insight? Will there be a stakeholder panel? Do you need to do a presentation? How long for? FIND OUT!

Do your research

Read the organisational strategy. It should be published on the Trust's website, but many Trusts are pretty poor at that. So you'll probably have to search for it in the Board papers, which are regularly published. Look for the bits that are relevant to the role, understand the top priorities and focus areas and what are the organisational values.

Don't try and memorise it, just make a few notes that you can use to jog your memory ahead of the interview — or even take a one-pager into the interview.

Read the latest CQC report. Remember this is from one particular lens but will give you a view on what the external regulator thinks of the Trust. It is pretty powerful if in your interview you have an example of something that you've done that would contribute to the areas that require work according to the CQC, but don't go overboard and mention it in every answer. Organisational challenges are much wider than a CQC view.

Use social media to find out a bit about the culture of the organisation. What posts/tweets have the corporate comms account made on LinkedIn or Twitter. Does

the Chief Executive or the senior person associated with the role Tweet? Do they seem human or is it all corporate-speak?

The Process

What is a stakeholder panel?

Stakeholder panels are very popular with more senior roles in the NHS. They are an opportunity for more people to interact with you as part of the selection process and in turn, for you to get to meet a few more people in the Trust who may be your peers or your direct reports.

Preparing your answers

Use the STARE method - The STARE method lets you create a simple and easy-to-follow story that brings out the difficult situation and resolution. Here's a breakdown of what each of the four parts of the technique mean:

- **Situation** - Set the scene of the story by giving a context and the background of the situation. If you're asked about teamwork, your response should include the project details, who you were collaborating with, when you undertook the project and your location at that time.
- **Task** - Describe your exact role or responsibility in the situation. Make sure that the hiring manager knows what you were specifically assigned to do, rather than what everyone did.
- **Action** - This step is probably the most important part of the story. Here, you explain how you handled the difficult situation or conquered the problem. Say whether you did it alone or together as a team. What you're trying to communicate is your assessment of the situation and your response to the problem as well as how you got the team involved. Share as many details as possible so the interviewer can follow you. As you do so, avoid acronyms and company-specific jargon.
- **Result** - Close the story by stating the positive outcome of your actions and what lessons you learned. If possible, quantify the results and show the effects of your actions. Examples may include a 10% increase in sales, getting repeat business or saving your team five hours of work in a week.
- **Evaluation** – What did you learn? If you did it again, what would you do differently?

Presentations

Your presentation should be well rehearsed, with the same effort as you've spent on your interview questions in terms of content and delivery, but you have a bit more time to play with. Have a set of pre-prepared questions on the back of what you've said and go to each member of the panel in turn, trying really hard to properly listen to the answers. For example?

“Ramla, how does that sound to you?”

“Andrew, knowing what you know, how would that offer need to be reshaped in your view?”

“What would be the biggest barrier to that being adopted Fatima?”

Make sure you've given everyone in the panel a chance to speak — some of them may even ask you some interview-type questions which you'll have to roll with. Finish by summarising the conversation, ideally with a few key actions arising out of the discussion.

Practice and hone

Nerves on the day may cause you to waffle and go off tangent. Go over your answers and refine as you go

Sources: Andy Callow (Nottingham University Hospital Trust)