

Job Application, Interview and Onboarding Guidance

Welcome to Zest's job application guidance notes. We are committed to ensuring a fair and inclusive recruitment process for all candidates. As a **Disability Committed Employer**, we encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds and will provide reasonable adjustments where necessary.

Additionally, we are committed to upholding the principles of **GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)** and will ensure that your personal data is handled securely throughout the recruitment process.

We recognise the advances in technology, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI). However, we ask that if you choose to use AI, it is solely to review and refine your own content, rather than to generate or write your application. Your responses should accurately reflect your own experience, skills, and qualifications.

Benefits of Working for Zest

- Company pension scheme
- Real Living Wage Foundation employer
- Disability Confident Employer
- Paid sick leave (subject to terms and conditions)
- Flexible working
- Westfield Health scheme (paid for by the company, pro rata)
- Employee recognition and rewards
- Generous annual leave entitlement
- Accessible and approachable leadership team
- Supported workplace: mental wellbeing-trained staff, buddies, and programmes
- Peer support
- Opportunities to progress within the company
- Ongoing learning for personal and professional development

Application Process

1.1 Submitting Your Application

Our preference is that you email a copy of your application to hr@zestcommunity.co.uk. Alternatively, you may post or hand-deliver a copy to **Zest, 18 Uppertorpe, Sheffield, S6 3NA**. Only applications received by the closing date and time will be considered.

Please ensure all sections of the application form are completed accurately.

1.2 Alternative Formats

If you require the application form in an alternative format, please contact our HR department. Formats available include downloadable, printed, large print, or online versions. You may handwrite a printed version if preferred. If you wish to copy and create your own version, it must follow the same format. Should you have specific needs, please let us know, and we will do our utmost to accommodate them.

1.3 Filling Out the Application

The job application form works best in **Google Chrome**. If you experience issues in any web browser, consider switching to a different one. Please ensure your browser is up to date (e.g. Windows 11 with the latest Chrome extension).

The form is available in various formats, including downloadable, printable (for handwritten completion), and large print on request.

If you're using a mobile or Android device, you may be able to sign the form electronically on your phone.

If you experience any issues with the signature, please do not let that prevent you from applying. You may submit the form without a signature if necessary — we can request one later if you are shortlisted for interview.

1.4 Writing a Suitability Statement

Your suitability statement should address each point in the person specification, using examples from both paid and unpaid experience. Where possible:

- Use a minimum font size of 11 (preferred: size 12)
- Limit the statement to a maximum of two pages
- Provide clear examples to demonstrate how your skills and experience meet the role's requirements
- Highlight relevant qualifications and training
- Include voluntary work, education, and personal experiences where applicable

2. Interview Process

2.1 Preparing for the Interview

Shortlisted candidates will be contacted with interview details, including any necessary assessments. Interviews are usually conducted in person but may occasionally take place via Microsoft Teams.

If you require reasonable adjustments, such as an accessible venue or additional support, please let us know in advance.

2.2 What to Expect in the Interview

- Competency-based questions assessing your skills, experience in relation to the job description, person specification and in alignment with Zest's values.
- Discussion of your suitability statement and the examples you provided.
- An opportunity for you to ask questions about the role and organisation

3. Onboarding Process

3.1 Pre-Employment Checks

References will only be requested after a job offer has been accepted.

Where required, a **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** check will be conducted in line with legal and safeguarding requirements. Some roles are subject to an **enhanced DBS check**, for example, if the role involves working with children or vulnerable adults.

You must disclose all convictions, cautions, warnings, reprimands, binding over or other orders, pending prosecutions, or criminal investigations not protected by the **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended 2013)**.

You will be required to provide proof of your right to work in the UK. Additionally, you may be asked for evidence of qualifications or a driving licence if these are essential for the role.

Any information disclosed will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and considered only in relation to your application. Failure to disclose relevant information could result in withdrawal of the offer, dismissal, or disciplinary action.

3.2 Induction

Successful candidates will receive a structured induction, including an introduction to Zest's values, policies, meeting different teams, and a tour of the facilities.

You will be assigned a mentor or key contact to support your transition into the role.

Training and development opportunities will be discussed as part of your ongoing career progression.

Successful candidates who join the company will be subject to a probationary period, as agreed in their signed contract of employment.

4. Data Protection (GDPR Compliance)

Personal data collected during the recruitment process will be used solely for that purpose and stored securely.

Your data will not be shared with third parties without your consent, unless required by law.

Unsuccessful applications will be retained for a specified period in accordance with our data retention policy and then securely deleted.

Zest, located at **18 Upperthorpe, Sheffield, S6 3NA**, is the Data Controller for the personal data you provide. We process your data under the legal bases of **legitimate interests**, **contractual necessity**, and **legal obligation**, where applicable.

Your data will be retained for **six months** after the job closing date unless you give explicit consent for it to be retained longer for future opportunities. You can withdraw consent at any time by contacting **hr@zestcommunity.co.uk**.

Data may be shared with third-party service providers involved in the recruitment process. All data-sharing complies with UK GDPR, with appropriate safeguards in place.

You have the right to access, rectify, erase, restrict or object to the processing of your data, and the right to data portability. For concerns, you may contact **hr@zestcommunity.co.uk** or lodge a complaint with the **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**.

5. Disability Confident Commitment

Zest is a **Disability Confident Employer**, we are committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions are not disadvantaged through our recruitment process.

As part of the **Disability Confident scheme**, we guarantee an interview to all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the vacancy. **You must tick the relevant box** on page 3 of our application form to be considered under the guaranteed interview scheme. Please see the screenshot below for guidance.

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Zest acknowledges the advancements in technology, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI). If you choose to use AI, it should be solely for the purpose of reviewing or refining content you have written yourself. Your application must accurately reflect your own experience, skills, and qualifications, and should not be generated by AI.



Zest is committed to supporting disabled applicants. If you have a disability and meet the minimum criteria for this role, you will be guaranteed an interview. If you would like to be considered under this scheme, please tick the box ☒

Zest_application_for employment (Revised April 2025)

To be considered, you must meet the **essential criteria** outlined in the person specification and job description. Please ensure that your **suitability statement** clearly demonstrates how you meet each point in the person specification.

UK definition of a disability:

Under the Equality Act 2010, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A long-term effect is one that has lasted, or is expected to last, for at least 12 months, or the rest of the person's life.

Zest is committed to making **reasonable adjustments**, including providing alternative formats of the application, accessible interview venues, and additional support where needed.

If you need further assistance, please contact human resources, the contact details are at the end of this document.

6. Our Commitment to Inclusive Recruitment

We are an inclusive employer, committed to recruitment practices that are fair, accessible, and welcoming. We encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds and lived experiences. Our inclusive approach includes:

- **Speakers of other languages** – Skills in languages such as Arabic and Somali are especially valuable in serving our local community.
- **Disabled applicants** – We guarantee interviews to disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria. We are working towards Level 2 Disability Confident status.
- **Neurodivergent applicants** – We recognise traditional interview methods may not reflect everyone's strengths. We guarantee interviews to neurodivergent applicants meeting the essential criteria.
- **Deaf and hard of hearing applicants** – We offer communication support and adjustments during the recruitment process.

- **LGBTQ+ gender-diverse applicants** – We foster an inclusive environment and support individuals of all gender identities.
- **Armed Forces community** – We support the Armed Forces Covenant and guarantee interviews to eligible applicants who meet the criteria.

This list is not exhaustive — we welcome all forms of diversity and will consider adjustments to support you throughout the application process.

By joining Zest, you are expected to uphold and actively contribute to our values of **equality, diversity, and inclusion**. You will also play a key role in promoting our **safeguarding culture**.

7. Salary / Rate of pay

If the salary advertised on a sliding scale, you should expect to start at the lower end. However, we recognise that some applicants may already be earning a similar salary and are seeking progression. In such cases, we may consider a higher starting rate where evidence of current remuneration, such as recent payslips, is provided. Any request for a higher starting salary will be assessed based on the relevance and level of your experience, skills, and alignment with the requirements of the role.

8. Other Hints and Tips

- **Sheffield Prospects** has careers advisers who can assist with writing your suitability statement. Feel free to contact them to find out more or to make an appointment by telephoning 0114 279 9760. Please note that we have no connection with them and accept no responsibility for the information, advice or guidance you receive.
- **Search online** for guides and videos on how to write an effective suitability statement.
- **Ask a friend** to check your application — it can be easier for others to spot mistakes or unclear sections.
- **Allow plenty of time** before the deadline, in case of technical issues or internet outages.

If you have any queries, suggestions, or complaints, please contact our HR department at hr@zestcommunity.co.uk or call **0114 270 2041**.

Good luck and thank you for your interest in working with Zest!