

National College of Ireland

"Training evaluation: an investigation of efficiencies and effectiveness in the Health Service Executive with specific focus on interviewer training."

BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of BA(Hons) in Human Resource Management, is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for assessment for any academic purpose other than in partial fulfilment for that stated above.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The Health Service Executive (HSE) was formally established on the 1st January 2005 in recognition that an integration of services nationally was necessary in order to meet the health needs of a growing and ageing population (HSE Transformation Programme 2007-2010). However, this recognition served as the first step of what has proved to be a very difficult and ominous task for the management of the HSE. The economic boom unfortunately created an unsustainable reality, which now needs to be examined and refined in order to reach budget targets for the years ahead.

Hiring a new employee is the start of a major investment, the cost incurred on the organisation throughout the new employee's career can be substantial. Recruitment selection is the first step taken by Human Resource (HR) and the foundation for all other HR interventions. Even if the recruitment and selection being carried out is for the purposes of an entry level grade, it is imperative to consider the potential promotional opportunities which may arise for the successful candidate, as that individuals' job role may go from being managed to that of a manger. Therefore, recruiting the best person for the position is the biggest decision in terms of investment in people. HR need to focus on ensuring that all aspects of the function are being provided in the most cost effective and appropriate manner and that an integrated approach to Business Strategy is ensuring value for money to the HSE. Therefore, effective HR is arguably more important now than ever (Wiley, 2008:1).

The training function is often the first HR area hit in economic downturn (Charlton, 2009) so it is vital that the function accounts for its costs and promotes the benefits of training. Often the evaluation of training is not given as much consideration as the planning and implementing stage of a training programme (Rajeev et al, 2009) but in the current climate validating the investment in training is fundamental in justifying its existence.

1.1 Background to research

The role of the student undertaking this research is that of Recruitment Manager for the former Midland Health Board, now Dublin Mid-Leinster (DML) area with a primary remit for the counties of Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath. This role has provided the author with firsthand experience of the interview process engaging every day with managers, interviewers and candidates, therefore this dissertation has

developed through discussing ideas with these stakeholders as a result of comments by interview board members and candidates to the style of interviewing adopted in the HSE and by individual interviewers.

1.2 Research problem and hypotheses

“Not all employees possess knowledge and skills that are equally strategically important” (Lepak et al, 1999:31).

Are the right people being trained? Do we know who the right people are? How can we assess if we have the best people carrying out interviews? Does the training work? These questions provide the hypothesis for the dissertation.

This examination will critique the current Interviewer Skills Training (IST) programme based on the theories of key writers on training evaluation. This review will be underpinned by the use of primary research. The outcomes of this research will form the basis for recommendations on the way forward in order to meet the strategic goals of the HSE.

1.3 Justification for research problem

The HSE is a vast organisation and while each area work to the same general principles some valuable learning can be lost in translation from corporate services to local HR. IST evaluation is currently carried out by the Performance and Development (P&D) team immediately post-training, through the use of a questionnaire. To date no other formal evaluation is performed in DML.

While the recruitment department monitor interview boards performance in an ad-hoc fashion, valuable information that may be captured is often not re-applied to the training programme. This gap in the evaluation process is broadly recognised by the both the Recruitment and P&D departments.

1.4 Aims and Objectives of Dissertation

This dissertation will focus on two main objectives first to evaluate the current IST programme in DML of the HSE, to establish if interviewers have adopted the competency style interview and are applying the techniques developed in line with the

CPSA Recruitment Licence and Codes of Practice and second to evaluate the value add of this training programme.

The main aim of the dissertation is to establish a structured process where interview boards are continuously assessed and systems are put in place to monitor performance. It is expected that by analysing the current system recommendations can be put forward to ensure that the most appropriate personnel are selected to take part in the interview selection process and the principles underpinning the Code of Practice for recruitment and selection are adhered to and built on.

1.5 Aims and Objectives of IST programme in the HSE

The current IST programme was developed following the introduction of the Public Service Management (Recruitment & Appointments) Act 2004. At this time each former Health Board area acted independently of each other and the process of training interviewers was adopted in different formats by different Health Boards. With the establishment of the HSE the former Eastern Health Board and former Midland Health Board merged their activities and aligned the training programmes through local discussion between the Performance and Development units and the Recruitment Managers. The evolution of the current training programme was the result. The defined objectives of the programme are as follows:

- Provide participants with the necessary skills to interview effectively
- Give participants an overview of best practice in recruitment and selection
- Ensure the participants have an understanding of the legislation governing the selection process
- Use the job specification to prepare for interview (interview framework)
- Provide practical experience in gathering and evaluating information from candidates
- Ensure candidates are treated in a fair and consistent manner by the interview board

1.6 Delimitations of scope

No HR activity can be run in isolation, for a HR process to be effective it has to be linked to the HR strategy and the overall organisational strategy. Going forward clear links need to be made from advertising positions to performance reviews and training analysis (Mello, 2006). Sparrow & Hiltrop, (1994) suggest that performance

management is a strategic technique where individual and business goals can be linked, this suggestion is strengthened by Fletcher and Williams (1992) and Gunnigle et al (2006) when they contend that by having shared purpose and aims, the organisation and the individual enhance the performance of the organisation and the individual. However with regard to this piece of research it is not possible, given the scope of deviation to develop this hypostasis in detail therefore limiting the research to one programme while appreciating their obvious link to other HR activities.

This research will focus on evaluation of IST in DML with reference though primary research interviews to the national scene. The time allowed does not permit a full evaluation of interview skills training in the full HSE, but the recommendations made should be helpful to other HSE areas in their attempts to determine the effectiveness of their IST.

1.7 Overview of Dissertation

By investigating the efficiencies and effectiveness of IST in the HSE, it is aimed to determine if knowledge has been transferred to the training participants, and if the skills and competencies required for interviewing have been established and applied. This examination will critique the current IST programme based on the theories of key writers on evaluation. This review will be underpinned by the use of primary research in the form of quantitative and qualitative research. The outcomes of this research will be the basis for recommendations on the way forward in order to meet the strategic goals of the HSE.

In recent years an abundance of academic literature has evolved which concentrates on the stakeholders of training and its evaluation. For the HSE, the key stakeholders involved in IST include the government, the commission for public service appointments, HR managers, trainers, line managers, employees and potential employees. Through elucidation of a literature review in this area and to fully encapsulate the fundamental nature of IST, the approach chosen incorporates an investigation into the specific theoretical and literature supporting the application of IST within the HSE.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In today's rapidly changing world having a highly skilled workforce to central in providing value to any organisation (Lingham et al, 2006). Training evaluation is often regarded as the final stage of the learning, training and development process (Gunnigle et al, 2006). Where little evaluation exists, the organisations can see the wasteful use of both human and financial resources. While often left to the last chapter in many training publications, evaluation of training is a continuous process (Garavan et al, 2003) therefore evaluation of any training programme should take place, before, during and after the training event. While a volume of articles and publication have been produced in relation to evaluating training, there still remains a lot of confusion, Schmalenbach (2005) surmises that for some people there is a general sense that something is missing or not quite right.

This literary review will define the efficiencies and effectiveness of IST, supported by relevant literature, identify fundamental issues in relation to bias and errors in using interviews for candidate selection and establish the legislative framework which underpins the HSE IST programme. This will set a foundation on which to build the parent theories relevant to training evaluation in order to clarify the chief misnomers associated with training evaluation.

In order to identify internal environmental influencers and main actors in the application of training evaluation, an overview of the HSE organisational structure will permit the organisational context of the evaluation methodologies to be exposed.

2.2 Efficiencies and Effectiveness of IST

Dale (1995) proposes that even the best techniques and practice in selection gives scope for errors, some of this fault can be attributed to the selection process but mostly it relates to the decision makers and their weaknesses. While many selection tools are available the traditional form of selection interviewing and reference checks is still the most widely used (Tiernan et al, 2006). CIPD confirms this assertion: interviews based on the contents of application are the most frequently used selection method followed by competency-based interviews (CIPD, 2009). While interviews

are often associated with errors and bias (Gunnigle et al, 2006) they still provide a very useful system for the selection of candidates.

Employee selection is at the heart of strategic HRM (SHRM) and the performance of all employees is likely to be evaluated based on their ability to achieve their strategic objectives, (Barney, 1991). One's selection methods should identify those employees whom are most effective and optimal for the prospective position available,

(Gunnigle, 2006). Therefore the person orientated approach, whereby people are recruited and selected based on their ability to adapt and learn in line with a changing organisational and external environment may be the most effective option, (Lawler, 1994).

Barclay (1996) argues that the structured interview process may be designed with competencies in mind a priority; therefore the questions may be geared toward incidents or indicators where particular competencies were perhaps displayed in the past or indeed the future.

The interview process can be pictured "dichotomously", either structured or unstructured (Chapman and Zurig 2005:675). Interviews can be structured in many ways, two of which are through situational interviewing (SI) or through behavioural descriptive interviewing (BDI), (Khele, and Latham, 2006). A BDI, which is employed by the HSE, has great predictive validity in comparison to unstructured interviews as a meta-analysis has shown (Robertson & Smith, 2001). The BDI and the SI are ways in which interviews can be afforded more predictive validity, (subsequent job performance), and criterion-related validity, (questions are related to the job being applied for), (Robertson & Smith, 2001). Alongside interviews functioning as an effective method for selection it is also efficient as Gunnigle et al (2006:126) identify structured interviews appear to be the most cost efficient method to develop and involve less complexity.

Therefore it is imperative for interviewers to be competently trained as decision makers, in order to retain the behaviour description interview procedure used by the HSE as an efficient and effective selection method, and to avoid a fault in the selection process as identified by Dale (1995).

2.2.1 Common errors and biases in interviews

Gunnigle et al (2006:121) discuss the unanswerable question of whether or not 'interviewers are born, not made.' In supplement to this, they recognise that a large volume of research conducted over the past twenty years identify that interviewing is subject to a number of underlying biases and errors that can impinge on the decision making role of the interviewer, and in turn undermine the effectiveness of interviewing as a selection method (Anderson and Shackleton 1993; Wareing and Stockdale 1987; Macon and Dipboye 1988; Dale 1995).

Anderson and Shackleton (1993) classified the most common error and biases with a view to eliminating as many of these as possible. Some of these common error and biases include: The *expectancy effect* refers to the positive or negative opinions based on information supplied at application stage where interviewers make quick decisions based on their instinct or gut opinion. *Information seeking bias* is generally associated with the interviewers initial expectations and although sometimes unconscious interviewers can then ask questions to confirm these expectations. The *primacy effect* relates to impressions formed in the very early stages of interview, which provide the basis for the decision taken at the interview. Furthermore, Anderson and Shackleton (1993) identify *Stereotyping* as a fourth common error and bias which is contrary to equality legislation and relates to questions and decisions influenced by gender, family circumstances or race. The *horns/halo effect* evaluates the candidate either positively or negatively in a universal fashion therefore even if the candidate portrays strengths in one or two areas these are dismissed due to the weight being heavily towards the negative aspects. The *contrast and quotas effect* occurs where candidates are compared to previous candidates and marked against their performance instead of against pre-determined criteria.

While these factors need to be taken into account there are many other aspects of the interview that also require evaluation, Arvey and Campion (1982) comment:

"Alternate dependent variables should also be considered. For example, interviewer behavior during the interview should be examined. Do interviewers ask fewer "leading" questions during interviews as a result of

training? Are they less nervous? Do they elicit more information from interviewees? Do they follow a logical sequence during the interview? Are interviewees more comfortable with interviewers who have completed training?" (Arvey and Campion , 1982:299)

With these errors and biases in mind targeted training interventions can be aimed at elevating the negative effects.

2.2.2 Legislative framework underpinning HSE IST

Under the terms of the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointment)

Act 2004 the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) was established.

It is the principle regulator for the recruitment and selection process in the public sector and has a statutory role in ensuring that appointments in public bodies are made on merit and in a fair and transparent manner. The commission has the authority to grant or revoke recruitment licences where necessary and have an independent role in evaluating recruitment policies and practices. The code of practice outlines the employers' obligation to ensure that the recruitment process is monitored and evaluated and that solutions are found where problems are identified. The codes of practice for Recruitment and Selection stipulates that appropriate training is provided and that the "effectiveness of training is monitored and evaluated and follow-up action is taken on an ongoing basis" (CPSA, 2007).

The Freedom of Information Act (FOI) establishes three statutory rights for citizens (Freedom of Information Act, 1997 & 2003):

1. The right to access information held by public bodies
2. The right to have official information relating to him/herself amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading
3. The right to obtain reasons for decisions affecting oneself

This portion of the legislation allows interview candidates to access their interview notes, which places an onus on interviewers to capture as much information as possible and document it to support the decision taken at interview.

The Employment Equality Act, (1994 & 2004) describes discrimination as the treatment of one person in a less favourable way than another person. Discrimination

is against the law on the basis of nine distinct grounds. Discrimination is defined as “the treatment of a person in a less favorable way than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine grounds” (Employment Equality Act, 1994 & 2004).

2.3 Defining training and evaluation

Training, development, learning, knowledge, human resource development, competency development are some of the many phraseologies associated with field of study surrounding work place initiatives targeted at training or developing employees (Gunnigle et al, 2006). Dawson (1995:36) simplifies training as a “means whereby an organization may promulgate learning.” Training in this study will take the broad definition encompassing all of the above to describe “the deliberate organisational intervention that seek to expand the range of knowledge, skills and competencies of individuals at work” (Gunnigle et al, 2006: 234)

The term evaluation is often elusive, with many varying definitions. Kirkpatrick et al (2000:3) summarised evaluation as the “effectiveness of a training programme.” Buckley and Caple (1992) support this definition with a more detailed description where evaluation attempts to assess the total value of training including the cost benefit and other benefits for the organisation and the individual undertaking the training. Hamblin (1974) encompasses all of the above in his general definition “Any attempt to obtain information (feedback) on the effects of a training programme and to assess the value of the training in the light of that information.”

2.4 Purpose of training evaluation

The overall aim of training evaluation is to determine if the investment of time, money and effort was worth it, deciding the definition of “worth” is dependent on the objectives of the training course (Townsend et al, 2004). There are magnitudes of reason for engaging in systematic evaluation (Bramley and Newby, 1984). For the trainer feedback can improve the design and delivery of future training programs. Evaluating the learner can determine if the performance gap or development opportunity has been effective. The organisation also requires the program to be evaluated to determine if it has reached the agreed objectives and in providing value in terms of improved performance and cost efficiencies (Philips, 1996).

Easterby-Smith (1986) contends that there are three general purposes of training evaluation: *summative evaluation*, which tests if the training intervention was effective in achieving its objectives. *Formative evaluation* relates to qualitative analysis of training in order to determine if any changes are required to the training programme and *learning evaluation* involves the measurement of how the trainee can use the learning to apply it back to job performance. Bramley and Newby (1984) in their work identified five main purposes of evaluation: *Feedback* which links outcomes to objectives, *control* which links the training to the activities of the organization, including cost effectiveness, *research*, which determines the connection between learning and training and its transfer back to job performance, *intervention* which looks at the results and the context in which they occurred and finally *power games*, which manipulates the data for the politics of the organization.

Gunnigle et al (2006) assert that the difficulty for most organisations is identifying measurable criteria that can be systematically assessed in qualitative terms, as many of the benefits of training like job satisfaction or improved morale are difficult, by their nature, to demonstrate in a qualitative manner. Deciding on the depth of the evaluation can also present dilemmas, the HSE HR effectiveness toolkit (2005) determines that it is dependent on the nature of the individual activity and state that it may be adequate to use operational evaluation if the programme is short term while long running programmes it may be necessary to evaluate over time and therefore the level of evaluation will differ with each training initiative.

A training programme is often developed when a problem presents itself to an organisation. What is important is that this problem is examined in detail in order to establish if it is the problem or just a symptom of the problem (Swist, 2001). In order to improve performance the needs assessment or analysis should be the first step. Therefore in order to evaluate a training programme, the first step needs to be a re-assessment of the training objectives. "A need is not a want or desire" (Swist, 2001), to paraphrase, a need is the gap between what you have and what you should have, the needs assessment is the process used to identify these gaps and is the first phase of developing a training programme and the first element in determining what is being evaluated. Reich supports this approach and defines a knowledge gap as the "gap that exists between what the trainer teaches and what the trainee learns" (Rajeev et al,

2009). The process of evaluations helps to measure Reich's gap (Bramley et al, 1984) analysing the value and effectiveness of a training intervention.

2.5 Classification models of training evaluation

Throughout the decades various evaluation models in terms of measuring the efficiencies and effectiveness of training have evolved, however, for the purpose of this dissertation, the evaluation models chosen include the evaluation models most applicable to the HR arena.

2.5.1 The CIRO Model

This model of evaluation developed by Warr et al. (1970) suggests four aspects of the training are assessed: content, input, reaction and outcome. *Content evaluation* focuses on deciding if there is problem that can be solved through training intervention (Hogan, 2007), enabling the identification of training needs which in turn form the course objectives. *Input evaluation* looks at all aspects of the delivery of the training and can occur during the training where all the resources or inputs into the training are evaluated, which includes participants. *Reaction evaluation* considers the reaction of the various participants involved and *Outcome evaluation* measures if the objectives were achieved (Garavan et al., 2003:494). The outcomes can be assessed at three levels: immediate, intermediate and ultimate evaluation.

Immediate evaluation focuses on the impact of the training intervention before the participant applies this new learning back to their job, it attempts to assess the changes in knowledge, skills or attitude (Hogan, 2007). According to Santos and Stuart (2003) *Intermediate evaluation* focuses on the impact that the training intervention has on job performance, attempting to measure how the learning is transferred back to the workplace. *Ultimate evaluation* looks at the overall results and impact of training in a departmental or organisational context.

2.5.2 The Kirkpatrick Model

Donald Kirkpatrick has been described as the “father of training evaluation” (Islam, 2006). Kirkpatrick’s writings on training evaluation have become the most widely adopted training evaluation tools since he first published a series of articles in the US training and development journals in 1959. His model for effective evaluation of training (Kirkpatrick et al, 2006) looks first at participants’ *reaction* to the training. He then considers the change in attitudes and improved knowledge/skill as a result of

attending the training and deems this to be the *learning* step. The third step considered is the extent of change in *behaviour* that has occurred as a result of the training and finally evaluation where he eludes to the *results* of the training.

2.5.2.1 Evaluation – Reactions

Within this stage of the evaluation process, Garavan et al (2003:495) summarise that the participants' perceptions and satisfaction levels are thoroughly examined and the effectiveness of that particular training programme is scrutinised based on these reactions. The evaluation reactions act as a foundation of evaluation for learning for both the trainer and the trainee. The use of "happy sheets" is the most commonly used evaluation technique at this level and as Kirkpatrick (2006) states that these happiness sheets are often criticised they can be often be used to determine if training programme delivery has been effective and if it can be improved. Alongside these aspects of reaction qualitative data can be produced, which can be given to managers and used to give base line standards for future training evaluations. Kirkpatrick (2006) contends that once the questionnaires are designed in a manner that determines what you want to find out and participants are encouraged to write comments and suggestions they can provide meaningful data. Once the data is collated and examined, the organisation can use it to make changes to the programme, trainer or facilities as appropriate. This stage of training evaluation is generally considered as the easiest stage in evaluation and the one most commonly used within organisation as identified by Gunnigle et al (2006:248).

2.5.2.2 Evaluation – Learning

Moving on from the reaction stage of the Kirkpatrick model, Bee et al (2004 :181) acknowledge that the second level of the Kirkpatrick model is fundamentally a more precise measure of the effectiveness of the training taking place. Bee et al (2004:183) state that in order to ascertain the volume of learning from a training programme, questionnaires are often utilised both before and after the training taking place. This realises the extent to which the trainee's skills, knowledge and attitudes have advanced.

Kirkpatrick (2006) contends that a control group, if practical should be used to test against the experimental group (the group that receives the training). Care must be taken to ensure that if this control group is being used that both groups have similar

characteristics in order for the data gathered to be valid. The suggestion is that a pre-test and post test paper and pencil test be used with scoring assigned to the results, the result of this kind of test will indicate if there is a quantitative, measured increase in knowledge or attitude. In analysing the results you will get a good picture of where the programme has succeeded or failed. While using a control group is the recommended method, Kirkpatrick (2006) acknowledges that this is not always practical. Regardless of whether a control group is used or not once learning objectives have been determined a pre and post-test assessment can determine if learning has occurred. If the course is aimed at a skill set Kirkpatrick (2006) contends that a performance test is necessary, some organisations require a one hundred percent pass rate on the post test, which participants have to put their name to and be graded on and participants who do not pass the post test must undergo training until such time as they pass the test. If participants are learning something entirely new then a post test will be sufficient to determine if they have learned.

2.5.2.3 Evaluation – Transfer/ Behavioural

The third level of the Kirkpatrick model utilises the information extracted in the previous levels as a foundation to measure the transfer that has occurred in the learner's behaviour due to a particular training event (Garavan et al 2003:495). As with the learning evaluation level Kirkpatrick (2006: 53) suggest a control group is used at this level also, but recognises that this may be difficult. Allowing time for behaviour to change is critical to this level of evaluation. Kirkpatrick suggests that surveys/interviews with trainees, their supervisors, subordinates and other who can observe their behaviour is useful at this stage of evaluation. Kirkpatrick contends that more than one source should be used in order to get an unbiased view against the trainee and to support the validity of the evaluation. Again getting one hundred percent response rates, repeating the evaluation at appropriate times and considering cost versus benefit of this evaluation is also important. By tabulating the responses to this level of evaluation a picture begins to form, over time this test can be repeated to determine the long term behavioural changes of participants.

2.5.2.4 Evaluation – Results

Garavan et al (2003:495) present that the final stage of Kirkpatrick's model, focuses on the evaluation and assessment of the training in terms of business results.

Kirkpatrick (2006) identifies this stage of evaluation as the most important but also the most difficult part of the evaluation process. According to Kirkpatrick (2006) trainers find this part of the evaluation difficult as they don't know how to measure the results and compare them to the cost of the training programme, even when they do know the evidence can seem unclear. Kirkpatrick's guidelines for evaluating results are six fold:

1. Use a control group if practical
2. Allow time for the results to be achieved
3. Measure both before and after the programme if practical
4. Repeat the measurements at appropriate times
5. Consider cost versus benefits
6. Be satisfied with the evidence if proof is not possible (Kirkpatrick, 2006: 65)

While these suggestions provide a basis for conducting a final stage of evaluation, Kirkpatrick contends that at this level when the training aims at tangible results rather than teaching management concepts it is then desirable to evaluate in terms of results. In effect it is not always possible to evaluate at this level and a lot will depend on the investment of time and resources and the expectations of senior management.

2.5.3 Return on Investment (ROI) Philips

Training is an investment in capability (Garavan et al, 2003), but training can also be measured to determine return on investment (Philips, 1997), but only if the right aspects are being measured "If we measure the wrong things in the wrong way then wrong things may get done." (De La Harpe et al., 2008:33).

Kirkpatrick four levels of evaluation has been supplemented by Philips (Philips, 1997) who has added a fifth layer to this evaluation process, (ROI) (Philips, 1996). This measures the cost of training productivity before and after training, relative to the training costs and turns these calculations into monetary value. This approach also measures Kirkpatrick's four levels but has the benefit of yielding statistical data.

Garavan et al (2003) suggest that this level of evaluation is time consuming and that in most events levels one to four of Kirkpatrick's model would be sufficient for most organisations, however in the current economic climate a real focus is being placed on return on investment. Findings by Burkett (2005) indicate that many organisations around the globe are using ROI evaluation within their budget while others are using

cost-saving approaches to provide credible data but acknowledges that doing so is not easy and is similar to implementing a “large-scale change initiative”(Burkett, 2005:97).

2.5.4 Six Sigma

Another approach to training evaluation is the Six Sigma Way (Islam, 2006) which proposes to provide a system that meets the business requirements aligning business processes with customer and business requirements, systematically eliminating defects by applying tactics to ensure that business expectations are met every time. The major difference between the six sigma approach to training evaluating and the models used by Kirkpatrick and Philips, according to Islam (2006) is that it incorporates a control phase with ongoing checks to ensure that the learning is maintained over time.

2.5.5 The Leatherman Model

Leatherman (Garavan et al, 2003) suggests that evaluation should be carried out in a simpler way and outlines three stages of evaluation: Within-training evaluation, terminal evaluation and post-learning evaluation. Within training evaluation involves planning evaluation to be conducted during the training, terminal evaluation to be assessed when training ends through standard form that participants complete and post-learning in order to determine the outcome of the learning.

2.5.6 The Hamblin model

The Hamblin model (Garavan et al, 2003) suggests five levels of evaluation that all require to be investigated in order to give a full analysis of the training intervention. This model is broadly in line with Kirkpatrick and Philips combined, and suggests that training should be evaluated at reaction, Learning, Job Behaviour, Functioning - effect of learning on participants department, usually through cost-benefit analysis and ultimate value – has it effected the organisations well-being and contributed to a committed workforce and ultimately has it increased profitability.

2.6 Developments in training evaluation theories

Clarke (2006) is critical of both Kirkpatrick and Philips in their use of evaluation and contends that in today’s world senior managers want hard facts and figures and Clarke (2006) suggests that the evaluation should begin at Kirkpatrick’s level four. He furthermore validates this opinion by ridiculing the use of happy sheets and cautions

that where participants may have enjoyed the experience this does not tell if they have learned anything and conversely if they have a negative experience this does not in effect mean they will not have learned anything. Alliger and Janak (1989) are also critical and found the connection between the levels weak.

“In these challenging economic times it is plausible to engage more readily in on-line or E-HR” (McCarthy, 2008:42). Many writers including Buckley and Caple (2007) have been synonymous with developments in the training world and in more recent times have looked at the contribution of e-learning among other areas (Buckley and Caple, 2007). The use of e-learning is further appreciated in work by Horton (2001) where he contends that the tool used to evaluate e-learning programmes could easily be applied to a classroom situation.

2.7 Contextual application of training evaluation

2.7.1 HSE Organisational Structure

The HSE’s organisational structure consists of four HSE areas; HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster, HSE South, HSE West and HSE Dublin North East. However, these divisions are currently being reviewed and although speculated, it is generally expected that these areas will be sub-divided into between six and nine regions with operational autonomy. At the HSE board meeting on the 15th January 2009 the minutes included reference to the finalisation of work to determine “the optimum arrangements for regional operating units including defining their areas” (HSE, 2009) indicating that plans for this reorganization are continuing.

2.7.2 HSE Dublin Mid Leinster, Evaluation Responsibility Matrix

The HR directorate in Dublin Mid Leinster is managed by the Assistant National Director of HR with each functional pillar assigned an area manager. The Area Recruitment Manager has overall responsibility for recruitment activity in the region, with the Area Training and Development Manager having responsibility for addressing training needs.

Traditionally evaluation of training rested with trainers as it was seen as their job (Chapman, 2004-2008). Rae contends that there should be a “Training Evaluation Quintet” (Rae, 2002:180) with each member of the quintet having a part in the

evaluation process, these members include senior management and although they don't take part in the actual evaluation they do control the budget and should be interested in the business results. Other members include the trainer, the line manager, the training manager and the learner, all with their own responsibilities.

HSE HR Effectiveness Toolkit (2005) considers the responsibility for evaluation and states that generally the responsibility lies with the trainer but it can be helpful to have external evaluators in order to ensure objectivity.

2.7.3 Evaluation tool suitable to the HSE

Deciding on the model to be adapted in evaluating any training intervention requires careful consideration. The HSE has adapted a model for evaluation through the application of theories on evaluation. *Figure 2.1* identifies the questions to be considered when deciding the level of evaluation to be carried out (HSE HR Effectiveness Toolkit, 2005). The appropriate tools of data collection are then considered dependant on the level required.

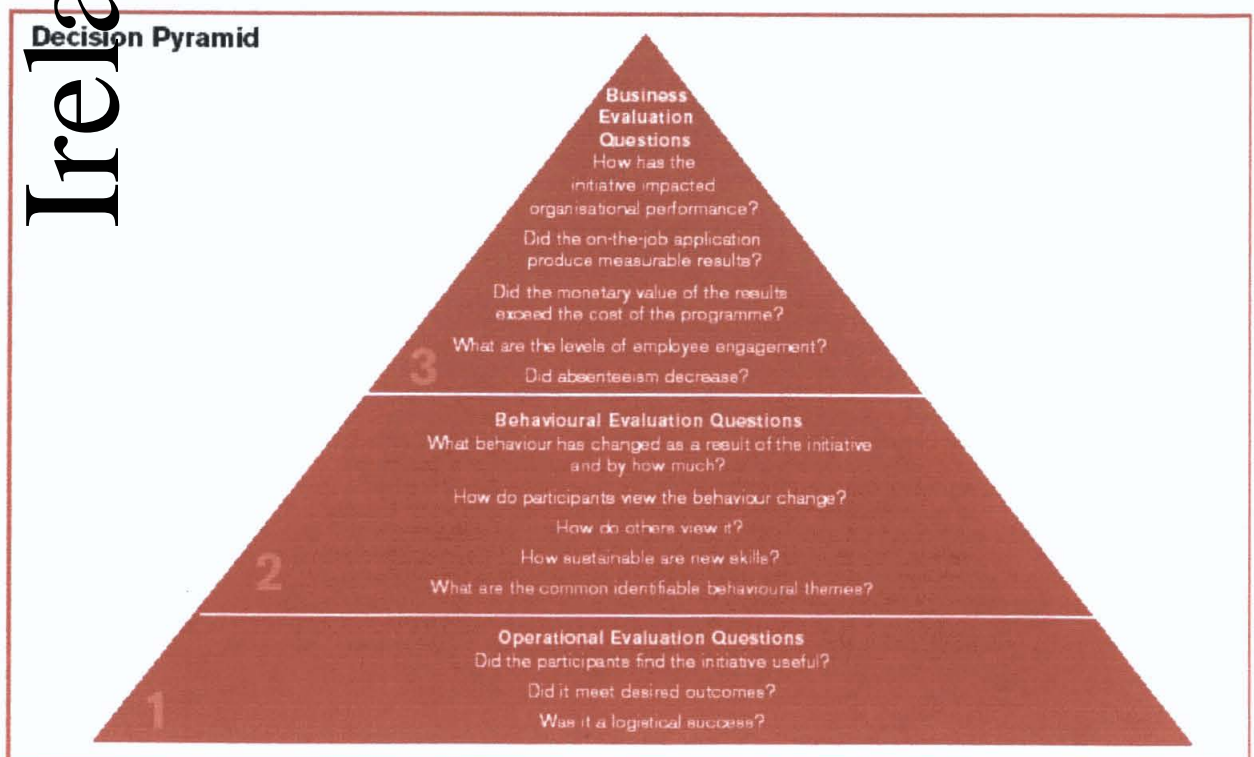


Figure 2.1 adapted from HSE HR Effectiveness Toolkit, (2005)

2.8 Chapter Summary

In summary, although selection interviewing has its deficiencies it is still the most commonly used selection technique. In recognising the biases that prevail in selection interviewing, interventions can be put in place to combat these biases and although they will never give a one hundred percent success rate the aim is to achieve maximum benefit from the training interventions.

It is therefore imperative that the organisation recognises the area that need to be evaluated and put systems are in place to evaluate at the appropriate level, that level being dependant on the programme that you are evaluating. The model used will also greatly depend on the key actors within the organisation and their objectives, some may require facts and figures where others merely require validation that the training intervention is meeting its original objective.

In all the persuasive rhetoric on training evaluation, one thing is clear from all the research and presents a common theme between all of the theorists examined; the bottom line depends on the type of training programme, the key players and the budget and resources available to carry out the evaluation. It is clear from the HSE perspective that the underlying concern is that the training intervention is meeting its objectives and therefore providing value for money in terms of return on investment and that is why the combined Kirkpatrick and Philips model is most applicable in evaluating this particular programme.

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Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research aims and objectives

The purpose of the primary research is to establish if the IST is effective. In order to ascertain this information a number of key questions need to be answered as previously identified in section 1.2 of this paper.

3.2 Identifying the Gap

The current training programme in the HSE, DML has been developed in line with the requirements of the CPSA. What appears to be amiss is the most crucial element of the training process - the evaluation step. The question remains: is the training meeting the needs of the organisation and providing value to the organisation.

Currently questionnaires are presented to the trainees at the two-day training course, which they are asked to complete and return. The arguments posed by the theorists is if these “happy sheets” (Clarke, 2006) provide any useful information or whether the use of further evaluation is necessary to determine the effects of this training. Another worrying aspect of the current IST programme is the presumption that once the two-day training course is complete, the interviewers are ready and competent to interview. The impact of selecting inappropriate participants to sit on interview boards poses a major risk, which needs to be assessed.

3.3 Preliminary Research

Through the use of exploratory interviews (*Appendix 1*) it has become apparent that qualitative data alone would not give a full evaluation of the interviewer training process. The interview candidate, which is a vital element of the process, was excluded. The format of the primary research has been reassessed and the decision taken produced a questionnaire to survey a group of candidates attending interview. This will allow a comprehensive evaluation and should take account of all representative subjects affected by the training (Kirkpatrick, 2006).

3.4 Methodological Limitations

During the course of any piece of research unanticipated circumstances can lead to a variance in the data collection. The unavailability of senior managers is one concern that was overcome by early scheduling of interviews. Another concern was the format of the interview and the fact that it was the intention to record these interviews. In

order to avoid concern, an e-mail was sent to each identified participant, outlining the reason and format for the interview and requesting their participation (*see Appendix 11*).

The interviews content was confidential; in clarification on this point (Bell, 2005:53) names will not be disclosed although for the purpose qualifying contribution it may be necessary to release participant's general titles. If individuals have objections to this they will be afforded the opportunity to withdraw from the process.

The questionnaires used in the case study are confidential and candidates were not be asked to sign the form. By adopting this approach as the first step towards the evaluation process there was concern that the sample taken is not representative of all competitions or interviewers. Some writers on research criticise the use of case studies (Bell, 2005: 12) as being over selective making it difficult to crosscheck findings. To overcome these possible shortcomings it was decided to use this method as one part of the primary research and support the finding through the interviews as outlined above.

Some participants in this research may have bias against the competency style of interview adopted in the HSE. This is the style adopted nationally and this dissertation is not aimed at changing the interview process. Bias is always a concern when selecting candidates to participate in a piece of research, being aware that personal bias and ensuring that focus remains on the objectives, is of the utmost importance (Kane et al, 2005). The format of the questions therefore must be objective

3.4.1 Case Study

When the decision was taken to conduct a candidate it was proposed that one case study would be assessed - that being a competition that was underway at pre-interview stage. The competition was a clerical grade IV competition, confined to current employees of the DML area of the HSE 160 candidates attending for interview and four interview boards assigned to evaluate candidates.

However, with the introduction of the government recruitment restrictions on the 27th March 2009, all recruitment activity within the health service ceased. Therefore it

was impossible to complete a case study, however the questionnaires were used to measure the learning and behavioural changes in interviewers in a live situation.

3.5 Benefits of chosen methodology to HSE

The methodological approach undertaken for the purpose of this study illustrates the effectiveness of IST. In utilisation of both qualitative and supporting quantitative techniques, it is envisaged that the methodology used in this research should assist in structuring new training courses and highlight the effectiveness of ongoing assessments within the HSE. It is anticipated that as a result of this research alterations to the programme may be necessary. The results of the research should also make recommendations on efficiencies in providing training.

3.6 Choice of methodology

3.6.1 Quantitative and qualitative dilemma

The fundamental reasoning supporting the conduction of primary research is manifested in the requirement to collect data specifically for the study at hand. Primary research may be collated through a variety of mechanisms such as through interviews or by questionnaire mechanisms. Primary research can be categorically defined as quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative is used to delve into a research problem while qualitative quantifies the elements of concern (Malhorta:1996).

In order to effectively encapsulate the current level of IST evaluation taking place, the researcher has chosen to conduct my primary research within the variants of both qualitative and supporting quantitative data. To ensure that the qualitative research is accurate and factual, interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed (*see Appendices 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 and 9*), and in supplement to this the researcher conducted quantitative research in order to statistically manipulate the findings of a candidate feedback questionnaire (CFQ) which was created for the purposes of this dissertation (*see Appendix 10*).

3.6.2 Quantitative – Questionnaires

Hudson and Ozzane (1988) contend that methodology refers to ‘how one answers questions.’ Thus, primary research has been conducted quantitatively by process of a self-complete questionnaire, which asked a specific spectrum of questions.

To effectively portray, accumulate and collectively ascertain the existing evaluation methods of IST being applied the HSE-DML, CFQ were distributed to the candidates attending for interview for a clerical Grade IV competition, confined to current employees. This questionnaire would then be used to determine if learning and behavioural changes occurred in the interviewees, which could be attributed to the training intervention.

Kane et al (2005:150), acknowledge some of the disadvantages in relation to the use of questionnaires as a data collection method, which includes the difficult task of avoiding culturally specific questions, which can result in biased opinion being put forward on the questionnaire. To avoid this, non-specific cultural questions were excluded in the CFQ and instead the approach took a more generic and holistic line of questioning. Kane et al (2005:150) more positively confirm the advantageous use of questionnaires and recognises their explicit usage as “a standard instrument can be given to large numbers of people to get a broad set of representative (assuming correct sampling) responses to questions about attitudes, perceptions, behavior.” This premise is also supported by Hart (1987) who states that “one of the greatest advantages of survey research is its scope: a great deal of information can be collected from a large population, economically.” Furthermore she argues that other advantages of this form of research methodology includes its ability to function, as “...it is logical, deterministic, general, parsimonious and specific.” Thus it is proved that this chosen methodology as a useful method for the purposes of extracting the required information on learning and behavioural changes post training.

The construction of the questions contained in this questionnaire (*Appendix 10*) has been structured in light of the candidates' interview experience and perceptions. The utilisation of the CFQ provided an arena for the sample to provide their answers within a non-intrusive environment, as Bee et al (2004:75) corroborate, ‘...it only involves the target group and there is no external intervention in the form of an observer or interviewer.’

Candidates were advised that the survey was part of a piece of research in relation to IST and were asked to voluntarily complete the questionnaire immediately post interview. Candidates were advised that this process was completely separate to their

interview; it was anonymous and would not in any way effect the results of their interview. This quantitative piece of research focused on gathering measurable information (*see Appendix 10*) for the purpose of this dissertation.

3.6.2.1 Pilot Testing

The CFQ was tested on 4 employees in the Recruitment department in DML, including the Area Recruitment Manager; feedback on the CFQ was incorporated into the final version. The CFQ circulated contained one question which required amending as it was perceived to be contrary to the commitment that the questionnaire would be anonymous. The CFQ asked for the time and date of interview as part of the survey, which could possibly identify the participants. The questionnaire was amended to take this into consideration.

3.6.3 Qualitative – Interviews

In order to effectively manipulate the hypotheses being studied in this paper, it is essential to establish a framework which establishes the general boundaries for how the research should be conducted. Aaker et al (2001) illustrate that each research category has a bearing on the research purpose, research questions, the precision of the hypothesis formed, and throughout the design process. Thus the research category the researcher has chosen to adopt is exploratory research as it is primarily concerned with the general exploration of the problem at hand and the variables that relate to it (Tull et al 1990 and Aaker et al 2001). The researcher has chosen this method of research as little is pre-defined or determined and hence flexibility and lack of formality exist leading to greater opportunity to pursue alternative or unconstrained ideas. Qualitative research is usually but not exclusively utilised with studies of this type (Crimp and Wright 1995). Therefore, exploratory research has the potential to be on occasion quantitative in nature within green-field areas where no study has taken place previously, which is fundamentally essential to the hypotheses of this paper. Interview themes can be developed in a number of ways, through the literature reviewed, experiences relative to the topic, common sense, and discussions with co-workers or research participants or through a combination of these (Saunders et al, 2007).

3.6.3.1 Pilot testing

In this investigation in order to develop themes, unstructured exploratory interviews were used at the beginning to get a broad sense of the topic (Kane et al, 2005). For

these interviews general questions were used as the researcher was looking for opinions on where to start. Notes were taken and non-verbatim notes were written up post-interview, these are recorded in *Appendix 1*. These interviews, along with the input from the literature reviewed and common sense formed the basis for the questions for the semi-structured interviews. These questions were influenced by the Kirkpatrick and Philips models of evaluation encompassing questions in relation to learning, behavioural change and results including return on investment.

3.6.3.2 Interview Bias

Interview bias can be on the part of the interviewer or the respondent and can be attributed to tone or non-verbal way in which the interview is conducted (Saunders et al, 2007:318). Bias is always a concern when conducting interviews (Bell et al:2004). As discussed in the literary review, bias, once identified can be limited. Therefore, open-ended questions were primarily used with probing questions used to elicit the information required, statements (Saunders et al,2007: 326).were also used to put the questions into context. Theoretical concepts were only discussed where the participant was familiar with the models being discussed (Saunders et al, 2007) and in clarification on the information provided.

3.7 Data analysis techniques

Bell et al (2004:152) extricates the significance of the interview technique and opines that it enables complex issues to be explored and allows for the collection of comprehensive information. The qualitative research was completed via a series of semi-structured interviews. A transcript of the interviews which were conducted from the 20th April to the 29th April 2009 and outlines the questions and answers provided during this interview (*see Appendices 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 and 9*). In order to extricate accurate and specific details from the qualitative research conducted, it was essential to engage the use of an audio-recorder in order to transfer the interviews into word-processed text. This was completed in conjunction with advice from a theoretical perspective from Saunders et al (2007:475).

To effectively statistically manipulate the data extracted from the CFQ (*Appendix 10*) in a structured form, the researcher adopted the recommendations of Saunders et al (2007:479) and adhered to categorisation and correlating relationships between the variances of responses generated. The researcher inputted the data from the CFQs

into Microsoft Excel and employed the method of control charts to produce the findings, which Bee et al (2000:93) states effectively analyses the quantitative data.

3.8 Sample

A sample is a selection from the survey population (Lucey:1996:72). The reason for choosing the sampling method is as a result of the large number of individuals involved in both the quantitative and qualitative research methods.

When the decision was taken to conduct a CFQ, the next step to be considered was how to get a representative sample of candidates. The competition for which the CFQ was distributed was a confined clerical Grade IV competition. Interviews for the position were held for one week from the 24th Feb to the 4th March, with 160 candidates attending for interview, of which 154 responses were obtained, thus generating a 96% response rate. Thus, the sampling procedure was completed by the researcher bearing in mind that the sample population chosen is statistically representative of the target population (DeVaus 2004:70). This form of sampling, known as probability sampling, is suited to exploratory research and as the nature of this research requires exploratory assessment, it is necessary to obtain a statistically representative sample. DeVaus (2004:70) confirms that the usefulness of probability sampling as a most effective tool to capture the varying characteristics of a survey population.

By definition a sample involves selecting a sub-set of subjects representative of the given population (Bell, 2005:145), however when using qualitative analysis the subjects are generally not chosen randomly, rather they are chosen because of their unique characteristics aimed at solving the research question presented, this type of qualitative research is referred to as purposeful sampling (Kane et al:2005). When deciding whom to choose to participate in the qualitative research, consideration was given to the subject knowledge and the responsibility matrix within the HSE. As outlined in Chapter 2, the key actors in evaluating interviewer training include the trainer, the line manager, the training manager and the learner, therefore when selecting participants it was imperative that these key actors were involved. Eight participants were identified, broken down into two groups, group one represented the DML HR subject experts including: The Area Training and Development Manager, The Area Recruitment Manager, The Lead Trainer for IST, An Occupational

Psychologist, working with the National Recruitment Policy & Standards Unit & national recruitment office. The second group comprised of interviewers who were also DML line managers, this group comprised of: a Local Health Manager, representing Primary, Community and Continuing Care, a Director of Nursing, representing Clinical Line Managers, a Receiving Line Manager from the Acute Hospital Setting and a Receiving Line Manager from a Corporate Setting.

In order to extrapolate the required information, participants were invited via e-mail to contribute to the evaluation of IST. They were afforded the opportunity to withdraw if they were uncomfortable taking part; a copy of the e-mail is attached in *Appendix 1*.

Participants in both groups have gone through at least one training programme on IST at different stages over the last few years. Interviews took place between the 20th and 20th April 2009. The interviews took place on a face-to-face basis for seven out of the eight interviews. The final interview because of work demands took place over the phone. The order of questions varied dependant on the conversation flow (Saunders et al, 2009). The interview varied slightly between respondents and additional questions were asked and some omitted dependant on the area of expertise of the respondent. Each of the interviews were recorded using audio-recording and subsequently transcribed, copies of the transcriptions are available in *Appendices 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 and 9*.

The interviews were semi-structured, in-depth interviews exploring the area of interest as advised by Saunders et al (2007:312). In preparation for the interviews a list of questions was drawn up that related to the research area being examined, this list of questions was used as a guide. For the purpose of this research it was important to understand the meaning that respondents ascribed to the subject matter therefore the researcher adopted an interpretivist epistemology (Saunders et al, 2008:315). This gave the researcher the opportunity to probe and lead the discussions into areas that were previously not considered (Saunders et al, 2007:316). The interviews lasted between twenty and forty five minutes.

3.9 Ethical considerations

In completing the primary research, it was important to consider various ethical contexts in order to avoid incommensurable implications to the research being conducted. Kane et al (2005:165) advise to consider a variety of situations from an ethical stance, which should extend to and include, "To whom, or what, are you responsible? The organization for which you work? The sponsors of the research? Your profession or discipline? The people who help you in the research?" In supplement to this Kane et al (2005:166) identify that each of these questions need to be addressed on an individualistic but also integrative basis.

Therefore, for the purposes of this dissertation the researcher is responsible to both the HSE as an organisation but also to the participants of the primary research from a confidentiality perspective. For instance, the identities of the participants of the qualitative primary research have solely been identified in terms of their role of the HSE but remain anonymous. In addition, the participants of the qualitative research have not been requested to divulge their identities but solely required to state their employment status with the HSE.

A second ethical consideration extends to the responsibility that the researcher upholds ethical requirements with reference to the place of work. It is essential that the research conducted does not violate the confidentiality requirements for employment and that the confidentiality agreement is upheld between the employer, that being the HSE and the employed, that being the researcher. In supplement to this, the researcher must uphold an ethical standpoint in terms of the sponsors of the research. For the purpose of this dissertation, any costs incurred in completing this dissertation have been incurred by the researcher. However, upon completion of this dissertation, the extracted recommendations may provide the HSE as a sponsor, to adopt or fund further research in the area. Therefore, the methodology used in completion of this dissertation has been done in consideration of its findings to be afforded to possible future sponsors.

In addition, as Kane et al (2005:165) argue, it is essential to consider the researchers profession. The role of the researcher is that of a Recruitment Manager. Thus, in order to avoid jeopardising the confidentiality agreement between the researchers role

as a manager, this confidentially agreement must also be upheld. This viewpoint rests in correlation with the ethical considerations of the organisation for which the researcher works as previously discussed. Finally, another significant ethical element to consider is the people who help you in the research (Kane et al:2005). Thus, it is imperative to bear in mind the ethical obligations that the researcher has in terms of maintaining confidentiality to all those involved in the research process, which extend to the research participants but also to the HSE personified as an employer.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter led to conclusions regarding the research methodology. In utilisation of both qualitative and supporting quantitative research, the researcher is afforded the opportunity to investigate a range of perspective of IST. In addition the usage of the chosen methodologies have permitted the researcher to collate the primary research in a clear and concise manner. At this stage the hypothesis has been formulated, and in employment of the chosen methodologies this will guide the research analysis process. More importantly, a relevant research technique has been introduced and employment of the classification models of evaluation presented by Kirkpatrick (1959) and further developed by Philips (1996), will enable an investigation into the efficiencies and effectiveness of interviewer training and exploration of the evaluation process currently in place in the HSE-DML.

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Chapter 4: Analysis of Data

Chapter 4

4.0 Analysis of Data

4.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to illustrate the analysis that was undertaken as part of this study. The use of interviews in the data collection process for the purpose of qualitative primary research and the use of questionnaires in the data collection process for the purpose of qualitative primary research, demonstrated a variant of similar and differential responses. The discussion in relation to the implications of this research will be discussed in chapter 5. In this chapter, the classification models which are applicable to the study undertaken as defined in Chapter 2 and investigated by means of the methodological processes as outlined in Chapter 3, will permit patterns in the data research to be presented and generate the hypotheses to be discussed.

4.2 Qualitative research findings

4.2.1 Description of subjects

As outlined in the research methodology the qualitative data is broadly broken down into two groups. Group one represented the DML HR subject experts including: The Area Recruitment Manager (*Respondent 1*) The Area Training and Development Manager (*Respondent 2*), An Occupational Psychologist, (*Respondent 3*) and The Lead Trainer for IST (*Respondent 4*). The second group comprised of interviewers who were also DML line managers, this group comprised of : A Local Health Manager, representing Primary, Community and Continuing Care (*Respondent 5*), A Receiving Line Manager from the Acute Hospital Setting (*Respondent 6*), A Receiving Line Manager from a Corporate Setting (*Respondent 7*), A Director of Nursing, representing Clinical Line Managers (*Respondent 8*).

4.2.2 Profile of training undertaken

All eight respondents have undertaken interviewer training. *Respondent 1* and *5* have undertaken the full two-day training course with HSE DML in the last twelve months. *Respondent 2, 3* and *4* are involved in managing and delivering training as part of their remit and are therefore very familiar with the training programme. *Respondent 4* is also accredited to SHL. *Respondent 6,7,8* have undergone the full two-day course with HSE DML over 2 years ago and have subsequently undergone refresher training in preparation for sitting on upcoming interview boards. In addition to the training offered by HSE DML *Respondents 7* and *8* did courses with the IPA and the former

midland health board area. *Respondent 1* and *5* had undertaken previous training, which was not relevant to the competency style of interview currently in use in the health services.

4.2.3 Evaluation in place

The question was posed as to whether or not any form of evaluation had been preformed post-training. *Respondent 1* indicated that she was not evaluated “formally” but was involved in an equality case in which the decision of the interview board was upheld. *Respondent 1* recognised that the outcome of the interview could be challenged which implied a type of evaluation but not in the formal sense.

Respondent 3, while working with the national recruitment office had in place. This included supervising the use of behavioural indicators and the other method applied and sitting in on an interview boards. *Respondent 4* was evaluated as a trainer and was “shadowed” by an occupational psychologist in order to be accredited as a trainer. *Respondents 2, 5, 6 and 7* were not evaluated as interviewers. *Respondent 2* and *3* indicated that evaluation of the training course was done post the training event for all training events including interviewer and this involved the use of a questionnaire or as *Respondent 2* called it a “happy sheet”. *Respondent 2* clarified that further evaluation was required that looked at the end result in terms of “level 2 and maybe level 3 evaluation”, and explained this was in relation to the Kirkpatrick model. *Respondent 4* confirmed that course evaluation was done by the use of questionnaires and these responses were fed into the HR system. *Respondent 4* also confirmed that reports of these course evaluations were available from a named person in the P&D department. *Respondent 4* went on to clarify that the feedback through these evaluation was available through the HR system and that a member of the P&D team could access the reports on request.

4.2.4 Application of training

When questioned about the application of the training post training *Respondents 5, 6* and *7* confirmed that they had taken part in interviews immediately following interviewer training. *Respondent 5* indicated that “some people were being pushed into it like me, who were doing interview boards the next week” but qualified this statement when he clarified that while initially he could not understand why he, as an experienced interviewer, needed to attend a two day course that after completing the course he appreciated that it was “absolutely essential” and that “you won’t do an

interview board properly or interview people properly unless you have gone through the interview training”. *Respondent 6* agreed with this and confirmed that in relation to the training, which in *Respondent 6* case was a refresher programme. *Respondent 7* stated that the training was “actually critical” and she would probably not have taken part in the interviews without the training. *Respondent 7* clarified that in terms of “consistency and standardisation” that when multiple boards come together they need to partake in the same training to ensure everybody is “singing from the same hymn sheet”. *Respondent 8* took part in a refresher programme in March but has not interviewed since that date due to the embargo on recruitment in the public sector, however it is important to note that *Respondent 8* acknowledges the requirement to have refresher training on an ongoing basis where people, like herself are regularly sitting on interview boards and thinks that a half day is sufficient, however also recognising that people with less experience and training may require more than that.

4.2.5. Changes in behaviours or attitudes post training

Respondent 1 expects that the training will mean that she will conduct interview differently going forward but has not had the opportunity to put the training into practice to date. *Respondent 2* has found a difference between people who have been trained and those that haven’t and cautions that all three board members require the same training in order for it to be fully effective.

Respondent 3, in her dealings with the national recruitment campaigns, survey interviewers post interview using a board member survey form, which gathers their feedback in the experience of the interviewing process, affording interviewers the opportunity to give feedback on all aspects of the recruitment campaign. This approach uses open comment boxes to allow interviewers to comment on improvements for future campaigns. *Respondent 3* has observed a change in attitude post training especially in candidates who have been interviewing for years and can often be the most challenging but in general people are “open to the experience”.

Respondent 3 stated that research suggests that follow up is important and that “people fall back into their comfort zone” if the learning is not updated and refreshed. *Respondent 4* sees changes in attitude between day one and day two of the training course describing participants as “streets ahead” on day two as their “confidence is building”. The question was posed to *Respondent 5* about his change in behaviour

post-training, he responded by saying that “if we don’t do it right the risk is we lose out (recruiting) licence” and “I have changed my approach.” *Respondent 6*, when asked if she taught that by receiving training her judgement of candidates changed replied “well yes it did because candidates were judged on the experience to determine if they had the skills for the job”.

In contrast *Respondent 7* stated that her attitude after attending the refresher did “not specifically change”, she qualified this by virtue of her experience and the number of interview boards she had partaken in. *Respondent 8* acknowledged a change in her behaviour post her initial competency style training and refers to the old system in a negative sense where decisions were heavily based on qualifications and not experience, therefore highly qualified candidates generally did better at interview as they were allotted additional marks for their qualifications. When asked if she taught evaluating interviewers was a good idea *Respondent 8* stated “there is always something one could learn or improve on.”

4.2.6 Can anyone Interview?

The question was put to all eight participants, and the answers varied slightly between respondents but commonalities emerged. *Respondent 1* when probed clarified that “persons who are not in a position to open up their minds beyond what they want as distinct from what is needed for the job” should not sit on interview boards.

Respondent 3 commented that “there are people that are not cut out to be interviewers.... just don’t feel comfortable interviewing and don’t reach the skill level required”. *Respondent 4* noted that “only maybe on two occasions” she come across participants that she had concerns about and in these instances she contacted the recruitment manager to express her concerns. *Respondent 5* hesitated before answering the question but confirmed that in his opinion some people “are not made for interview boards” and by placing these people on interview boards the they are “not doing the candidates any justice at all”. *Respondent 5* outlined that if someone hates sitting on interview boards even if they are the named experts it “defeats the whole purpose... of getting the right candidate”. *Respondent 7* considered the question and argued the point through the discussion of this question, she concluded that “there are people who are not the most appropriate to sit on an interview board”.

In contrast *Respondent 2* replied “I imagine if they got the proper training, I can’t see why not” this was further qualified by *Respondent 6*, who contend that the training course is excellent and” there is no reason why they shouldn’t” be able to participate after training.

Respondent 8 acknowledged that there were certain attributes required of an interviewer including “I think you need to be courteous and you need to be respectful and you need to be fair and have a warm personality and welcoming and calm and make someone feel relaxed.”

4.2.7 The role of the Chairperson

The role of the chairperson was described as “crucial” “vital” and “hugely central” and “key” by four of the respondents. *Respondent 1* states that the chair person’ role is central in establishing if an interviewer is not up to the job. *Respondent 3* re-iterates the need for a strong chairperson in terms of consistency and recommends that chair persons be heavily involved in the competition specific training provided on the national competitions. *Respondent 4* outlined the need for strong chair people who will guide the interview. *Respondent 6* states that the role of the chair is “the most important role of the whole thing” and refers to their responsibility to “lead and drive” the interview, however this respondent has stressed that not all chair people take on this aspect fully but it is all covered in the training.

Respondent 8 has experienced extremes when it comes to chair people, some leaving all the work to the other two board members and some meticulous chair people which was her preference because “ it keeps each and every one of us on our toes”.

Respondent 4 sited an IST programme where the chair people were in attendance and she found that the chair people “weren’t quite open to it” and in some cases were “quite dismissive”. *Respondent 2* raised issues with chair person bias and stated that “sometimes chairpersons of boards who might know some people for interview so that can be difficult as well in term of following the procedure fully”.

4.2.8 The role of recruitment in IST and evaluation

This questioning area was discussed at length with the respondents. *Respondent 1* would advocate ongoing interaction between trainers and recruitment to ensure consistency and when the question was posed as to the whether someone from recruitment should attending the training course it got a positive response. *Respondent*

I also deducted that this approach would put in place some form of assessment. When *Respondent 2* was asked about recruitment's role in training interviewers the reply showed the need for a combined approach to training. When discussing the evaluation of the training *Respondent 2* concluded that "the new line manager, recruitment and performance and development need to be involved". *Respondent 3* considered that the evaluation should be "joint in the current structures, shared learning, shared experiences..." In relation to the training course *Respondent 3* insists that the recruitment manager is present for IST at national level and strongly believes this gives a better understanding of the whole process and makes dealing with appeals easier for the manager. *Respondent 4* advocated that interviewer be empowered; if they are not happy with any element of the interviews they should contact the experts in the recruitment office. *Respondent 4* also believes that the responsibility for evaluation should lie with the recruitment office but also considers that performance and development should play a supporting role as they have experience through some of their other programmes. *Respondent 5* contends that that is a "gap" as no one from recruitment attended the training course that he was on. He feels that there is a role for someone from either recruitment or employee relations even for a half hour at some stage on the course. *Respondent 8* also commented that line managers had a role to play in evaluating placement of candidates.

4.2.9 Return on Investment

Respondent 2 outlined the difficulties associated with implementing Kirkpatrick's and Philips outcome and return on investment level evaluation and justified the lack of this level of evaluation based on the fact that it would be labour intensive and time consuming. *Respondent 4* concurred with this assessment and added that what they currently do is try to assess the skill level prior to the training event by asking "where you are currently at, tell me exactly where your skill level is". In relation to return on investment *Respondent 4* confirmed that a body of work had been undertaken a few years ago in relation to another IST programme, but did note that at that time there were an additional four staff members working in performance and development. Another interesting point was raised in relation to priorities was that these can change frequently and that the current priorities were in IT training for the new primary care teams. *Respondent 8* added that in light of the current climate that a "random selection" of competitions evaluated would be sufficient.

4.2.10 Suggestions for development of IST

These interviews allowed for many opinions and suggestions to be made. *Respondent 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7* implied that the use of an e-learning platform would aid the process, *Respondent 6* added to this and suggested in relation to the legislative piece that people should be able to read and understand this without it being gone through in detail at the training and mentioned that even the people delivering this are “rambling” through it and the “punch is gone on it”. *Respondent 2* suggested that developing scenarios and assessing the answers can leave it very interactive. These could then be evaluated to aid the development of the course. *Respondent 1* suggested that videoing at training would be a beneficial and *Respondent 3* confirmed that that approach would be very useful but cautioned that on the downside of this it would possibly be expensive and labour intensive. *Respondents 3 and 4* were looking at developing a DVD as an example of the perfect interview but because of the current budget situation this has not progressed. *Respondent 4* also suggested that the interviewers practice in real situation such as having a nominated candidate to play the part of a candidate, as this would make the practice interviews more real to the interviewers. This approach, according to *Respondent 4*, was used successfully with a recent IST programme. Another key suggestion was made by a number of respondents in relation to recruitment taking part in the training event. *Respondent 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5* in particular suggested that this should take place at each of the interview training events. *Respondent 4* emphasised the need for regular evaluation as it does not last for years but can change if the circumstances change and these changes should be reflected in the programme itself to ensure it’s “fit for purpose”. He added that there is also a need to evaluate candidates placed after the interview to ensure they match the objectives of the interview, the results could reflect that it was not the training that was at fault but it could be the recruitment process.

4.3 Quantitative Research Findings

4.3.1 Description of subjects

4.3.1.1 Gender profile

Figure 4.1 is a summary of the respondent sample, which was 154 out of 160 candidates whom attended for interview for the competition clerical Grade IV officer, and who completed the Candidate Feedback Questionnaire. The volume of responses generated a response rate of 96% of the total chosen sample.

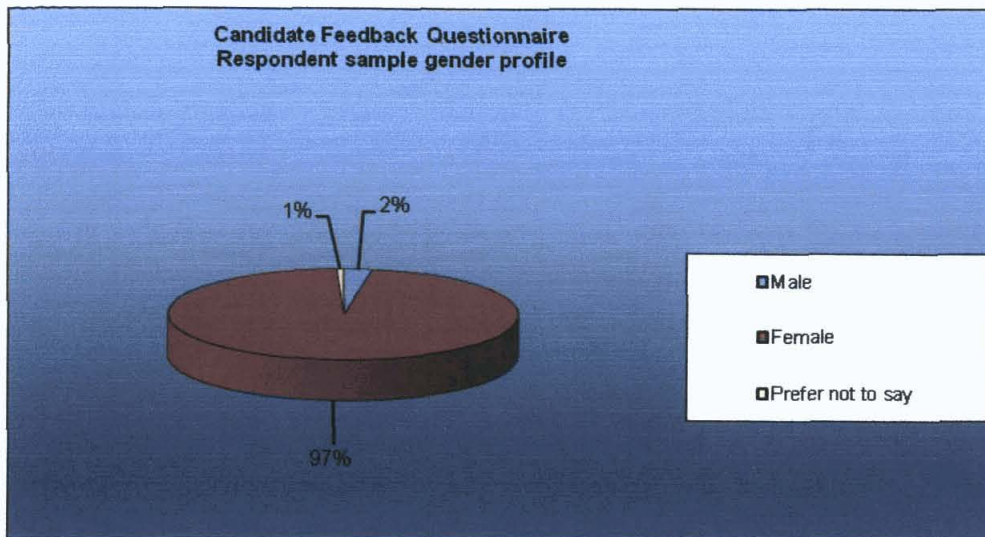


Figure 4.1 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire Respondent sample profiles

Figure 4.1 identifies the respondent sample gender split which was 3% male and 96% females, with 1% unwilling to identify their gender. This resulted in a 99% accurate gender identification of the sample that participated in the quantitative research.

4.3.1.2 Age Profile

Figure 4.2 below demonstrates the individual age group and the volume of respondents placed in each age group category. 21% of the sample were in the '25-29' age group, with 25% of the sample in the '30-34' age group; which totals 46% of the sample age falling within the age bracket of '25 –34' age bracket which is almost half of the sample. At this stage of the data analysis, the identification of gender and age of the responding sample have been clearly established.

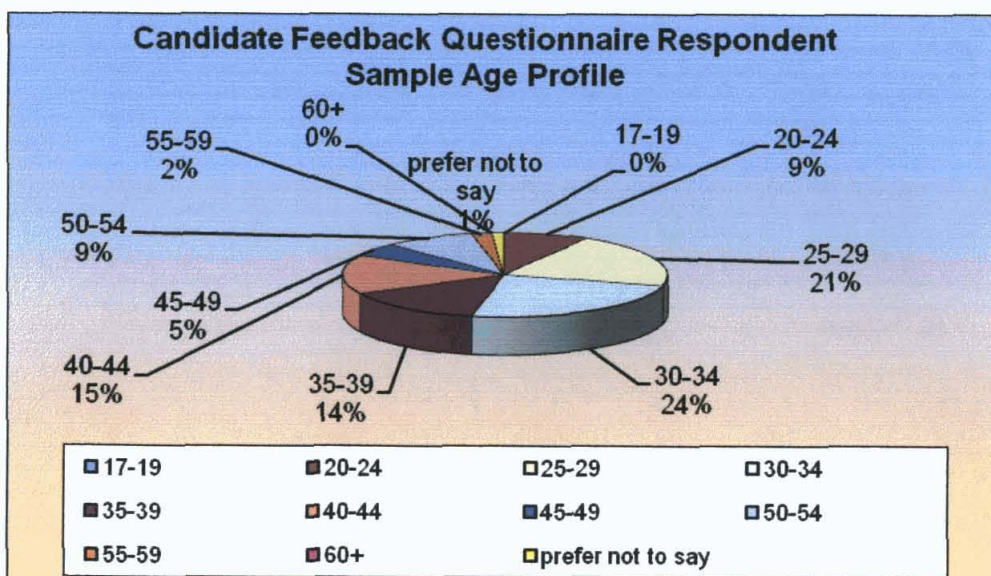


Figure 4.2 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire respondent age profile

4.3.1.3 Employment Profile

Figure 4.3 below reveals the employment profile of the sample of the qualitative research. The identification of the statistical data in the area, permits the researcher to gain an understanding of the employment status of the sample attending for interview of the internal Grade IV Clerical Officer competition.

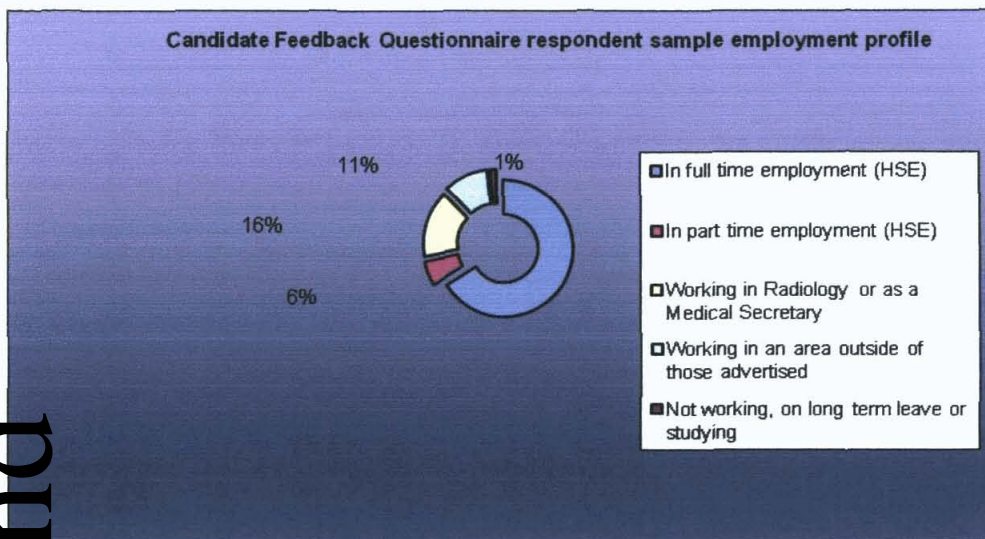


Figure 4.3 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire respondent employment profile

4.3.1.4 Work Experience Profile

Figure 4.4 as seen below, permits a further description of the sample to be exposed. The respondent sample work experience profile resulted in 47% of the candidates claiming that they had gained in excess of 6 years experience, 27% stating they possessed 4-5 years experience, 23% possessed 2-3 years experience and with only 3% having 0-1 years experience.

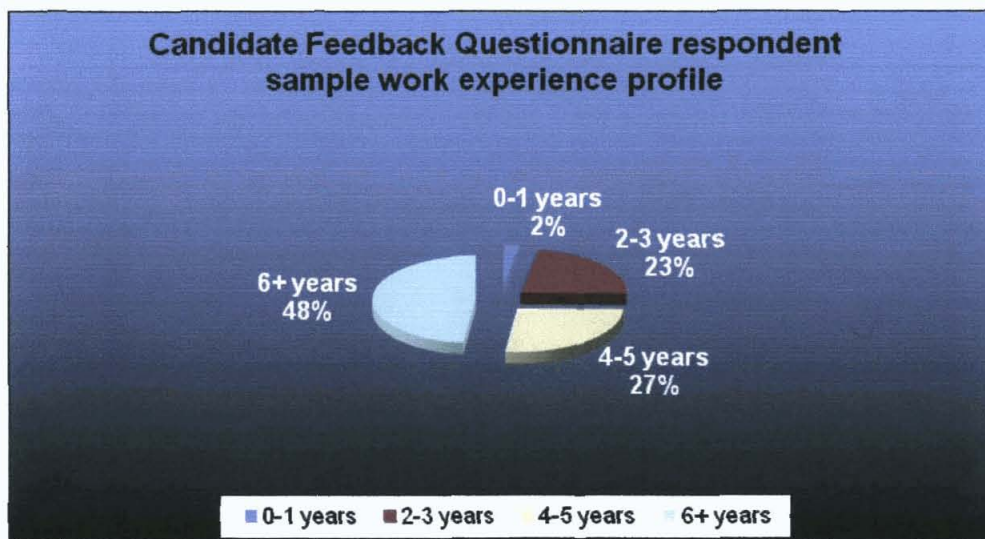


Figure 4.4 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire respondent work experience profile

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4.3.1.5 Grade Profile

In order to gain a further understanding of the sample, the researcher requested the sample to state their current grade. *Figure 4.5* illustrates the various levels of staff, with exactly half of the sample being currently employed as Acting Grade IV Officers, 49% Grade III Officers and 1% employed as a non-clerical grade.

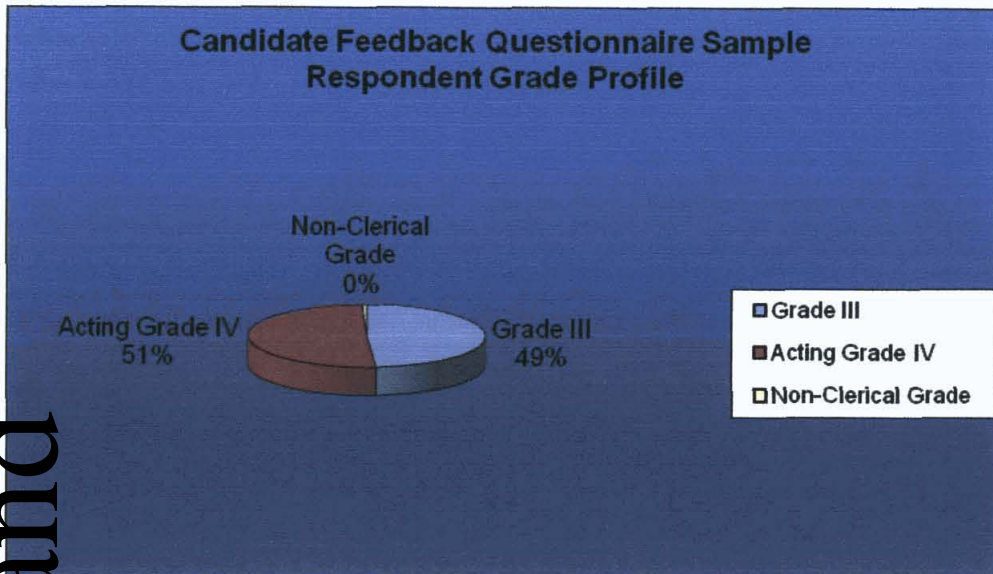


Figure 4.5 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire respondent experience profile

4.3.1.6 Jobs applied for in the last 12 months

To extract the respondents' opportunity for promotion and indeed their desire to obtain a promotion within the HSE, the respondents were required to state the number of jobs that they had applied for in past 12 months. *Figure 4.6* below identifies that 106 of the respondents out of the 154 had solely applied for this competition only. In contrast, only 42 of the 154 respondents had applied for 1-4 other jobs and 4 of the respondents stated that they had applied of five or more jobs in the past 12 months.

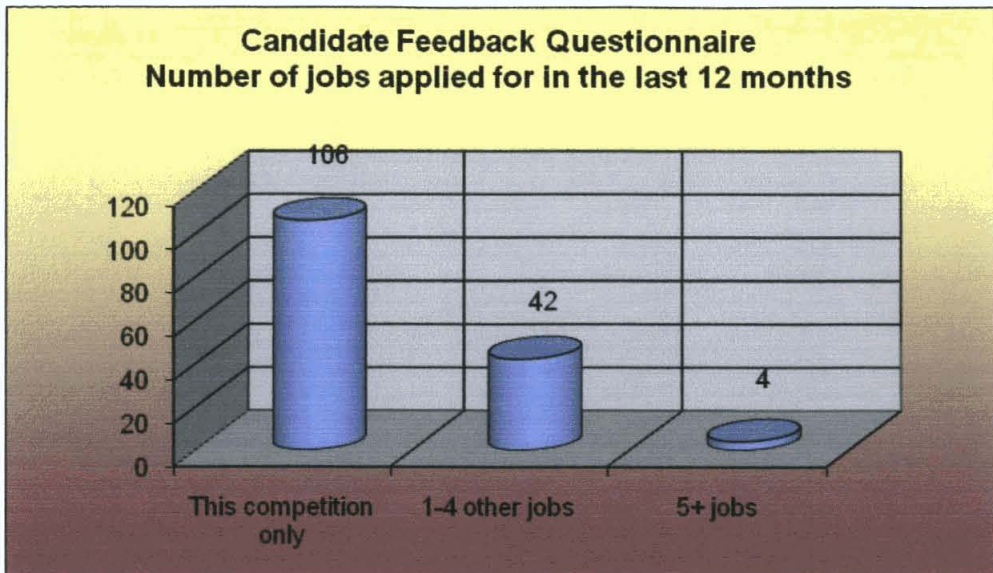


Figure 4.6 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire number of jobs applied for in past 12 months

4.3.1.7 Education profile

As part of the quantitative research conducted, the respondents of the candidate feedback questionnaire were requested to identify their educational profile. Four various states of education status were offered, including a primary-secondary, a diploma, a degree or a postgraduate qualification. As this information was non-compulsory to state, the option was also granted to the respondents to not state their educational status. Almost half of the respondents, 48% stated that they had obtained ‘primary-secondary’ education. 34% of the respondents stated that they had continued their education to Diploma level, with 11% stating that they had obtained an educational status to degree level. However, 3% of the respondents did not confirm their educational status and opted to not state. Therefore a 97% accurate educational profiling of the respondents was obtained.

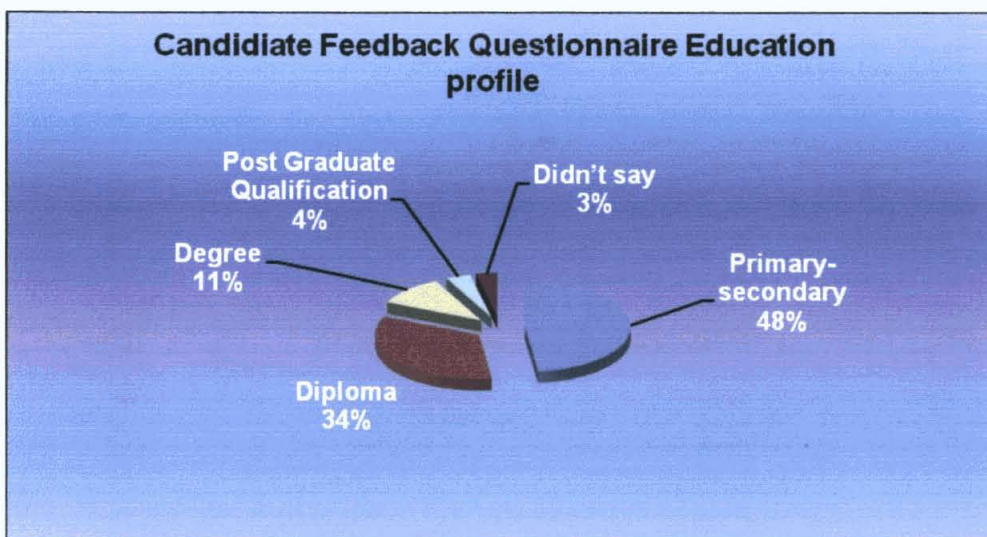


Figure 4.7 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire education profile

4.3.2 Structured interview experience

To generate an understanding of the level of experience that the candidates attending for interview of the Grade IV competition, the respondents were asked to identify if this was their first experience of a structured interview. While 66% declared that this was not the first time that they had experience of this form of interviewing, 34% revealed their unfamiliarity with the process as they had not previously experienced a structured interviewing process (see Figure 4.8).

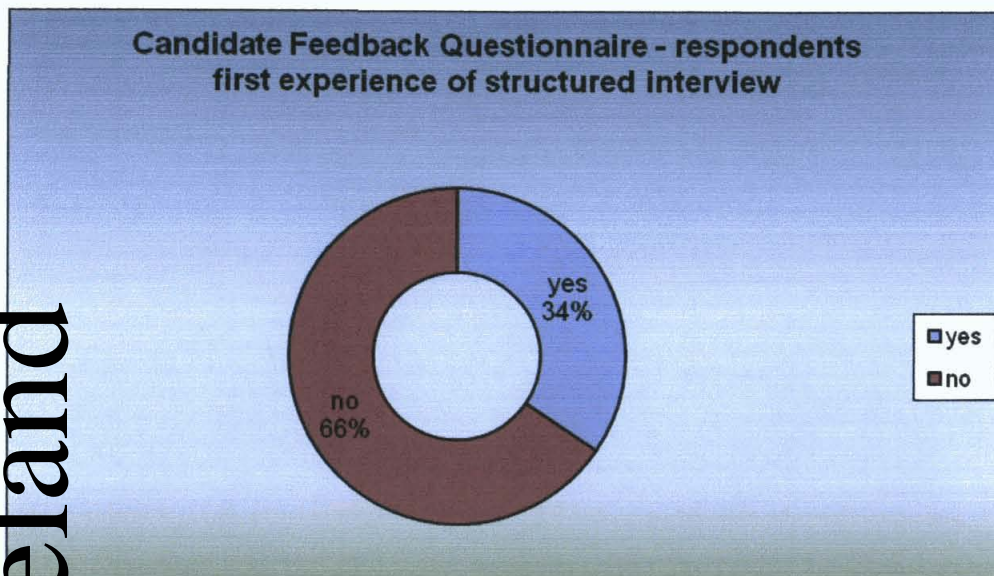


Figure 4.8 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire respondents first experience of a structured interview

4.3.3 Structured versus unstructured interview

Figure 4.9 outlines the responses gained in the qualitative research with regards to the approach used in the interview campaign for the Grade IV competition. This permitted the researcher to gain a comparative preference analysis of structured and unstructured interviewing. 93% of the respondents stated that they preferred the structured form of interviewing to unstructured interviewing. In contrast, 7% of the respondents stated that their preference rested with the unstructured/ traditional type of interview.

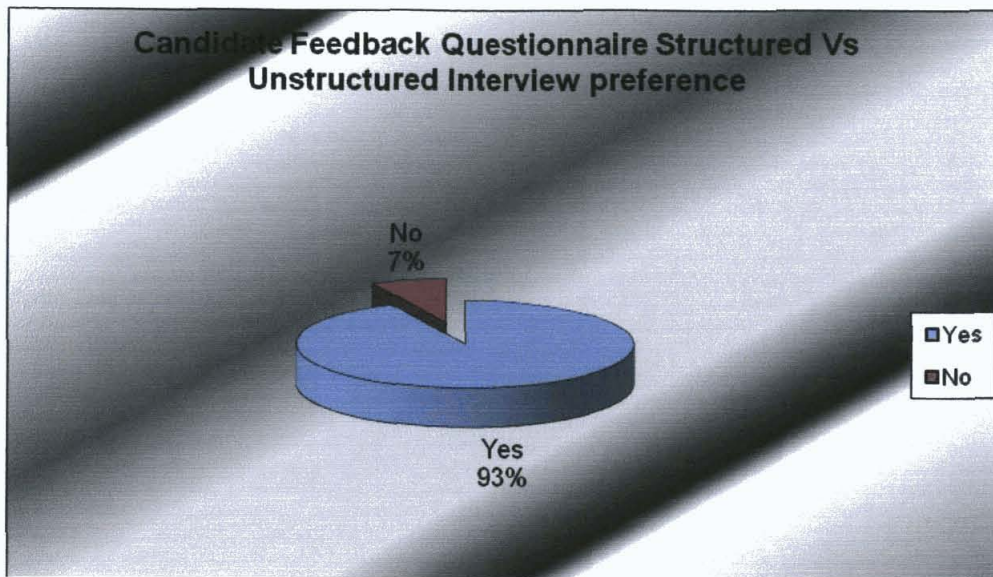


Figure 4.9 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire structured vs unstructured

4.3.4 Satisfaction rating of interview board

To effectively depict the perceptions of the respondents in relation to the quality of the questions asked by the interview board, the respondents were asked to rate their opinion in terms of satisfaction. Figure 4.10 reveals the satisfaction levels, which illustrates that 97% of the respondents were satisfied, however, 2% were dissatisfied and 1% chose not to comment.

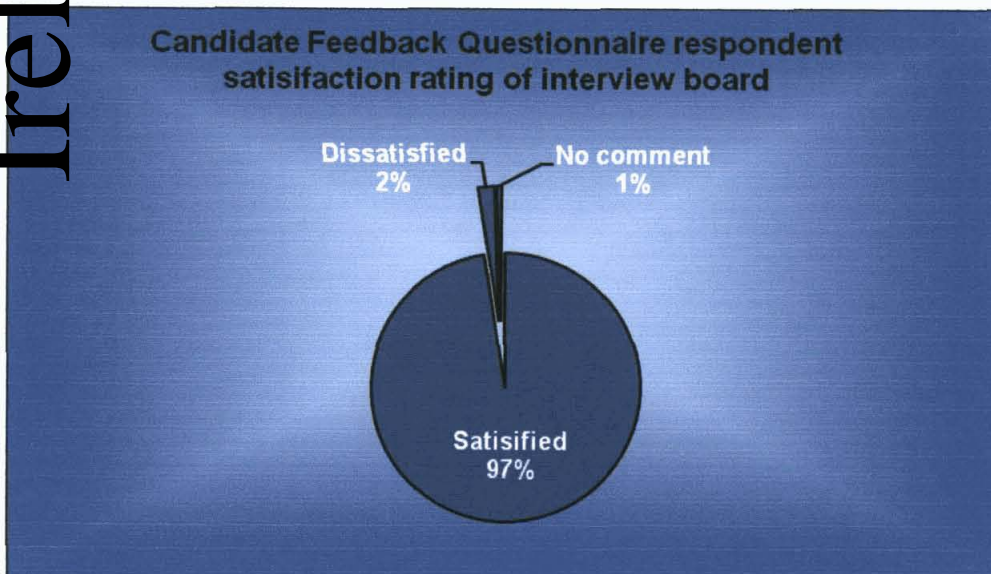


Figure 4.10 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire respondent satisfaction rating of questions asked by the interview board

4.3.5 Questions in line with published job description

To investigate the consistency element of the interview process, the researcher requested the respondents to identify if the questions asked at interview were in line with the details published in the job description. While from a positive perspective, 96% of the respondents stated that there was a correlation between the details



published in the job description and the questions asked at interview, 1% had no comment on the matter and 3% stated that the questions asked were not in line with those published (see Figure 4.11).

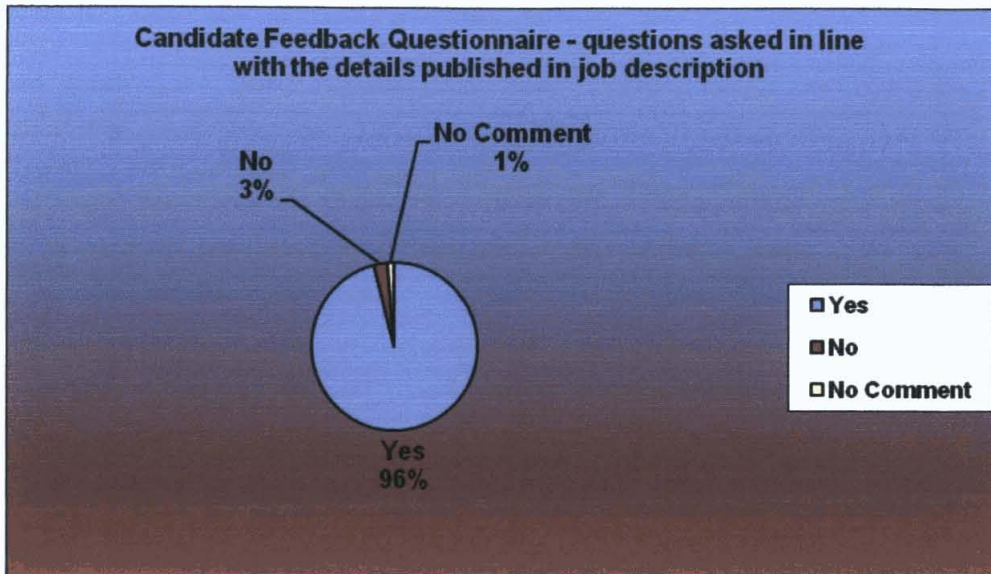


Figure 4.11 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire – questions asked were in line with the published job description

4.3.6 Appropriateness of questions asked during interview

The researcher requested the respondents to identify if they considered any of the questions asked at interview were inappropriate. Figure 4.12 portrays that a large percentage, 96%, indicated that they did not consider any of the questions inappropriate, however, 1% chose not to comment and 3% stated that they considered some of the questions asked at interview to be inappropriate.

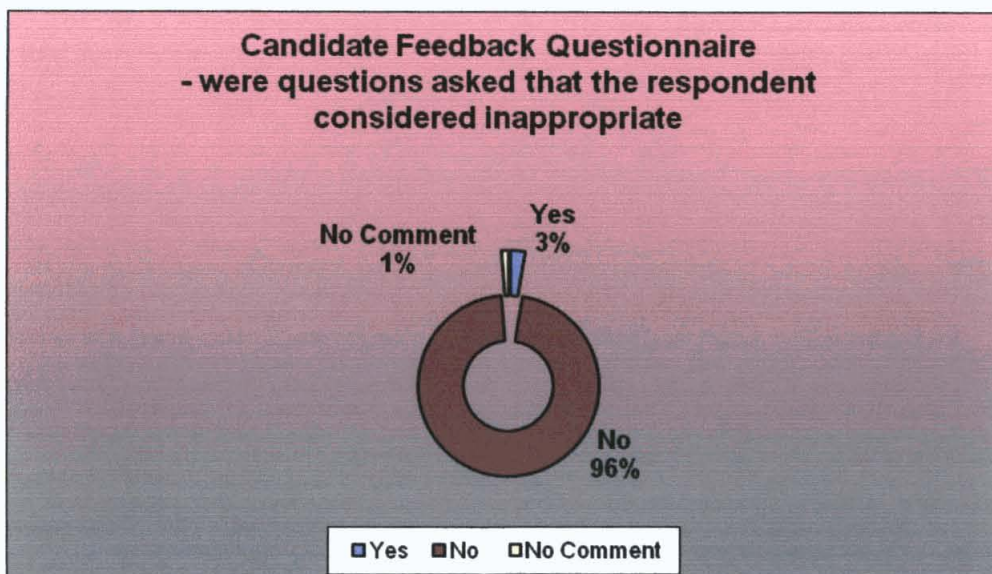


Figure 4.12 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire – were questions asked that the respondent considered inappropriate

4.3.7 Discriminatory questions during the interview

The data obtained through the candidate feedback questionnaire produced some disconcerting results in relation to questions asked during the interview. While a large volume, 98%, stated that they were not asked any discriminatory questions during the interview, 1% stated that they were asked questions which were discriminatory in nature and the remaining 1% of the respondents preferred not to comment which portrayed an ambiguous response.

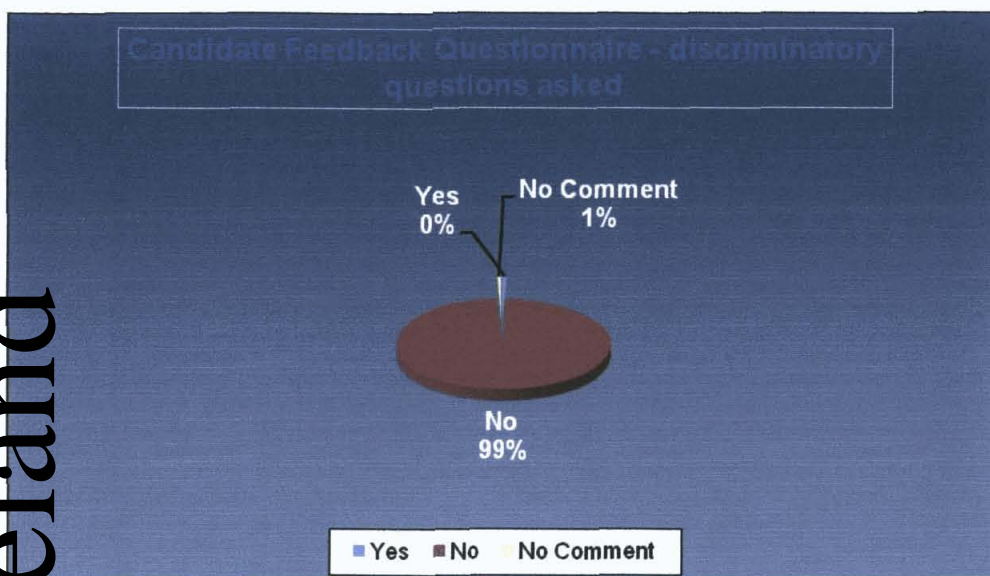


Figure 4.13 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire – were any discriminatory questions asked

4.3.8 Note taking during interview

As part of the quantitative research conducted, an element which needed to be investigated was to establish whether or not notes were taken at interview. The respondents were requested to identify whether or not notes were taken during the interview process. 98% of the respondents indicated that notes were taken, however 1% had no comment and the remaining 1% stated that notes were not taken during the interview.

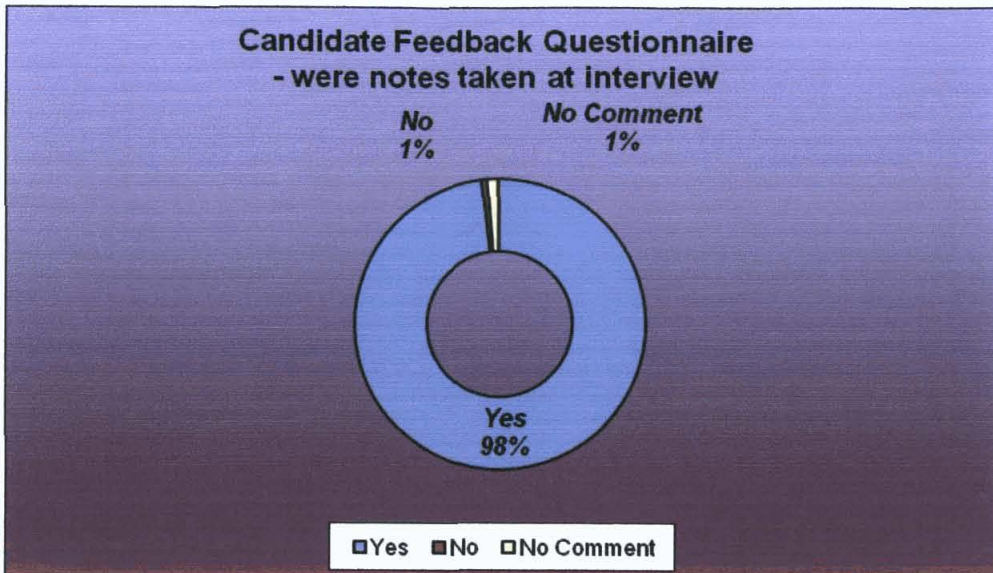


Figure 4.14 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire were notes taken at interview

4.3.9 Interview time commencement

Clarification was sought by the researcher in relation to the timing of the interviews and the ability of the interviewers to keep to a structured schedule. The researcher requested the respondents to identify if their interview started at the scheduled time. Of the 144 respondents 75 stated that their interview commenced on time, however the remaining 79 respondents attending for interview stated that their interview did not commence at the scheduled time (see Figure 4.15 below). The variance in responses identifies almost a 50% split of the sample which highlights an area of concern which will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

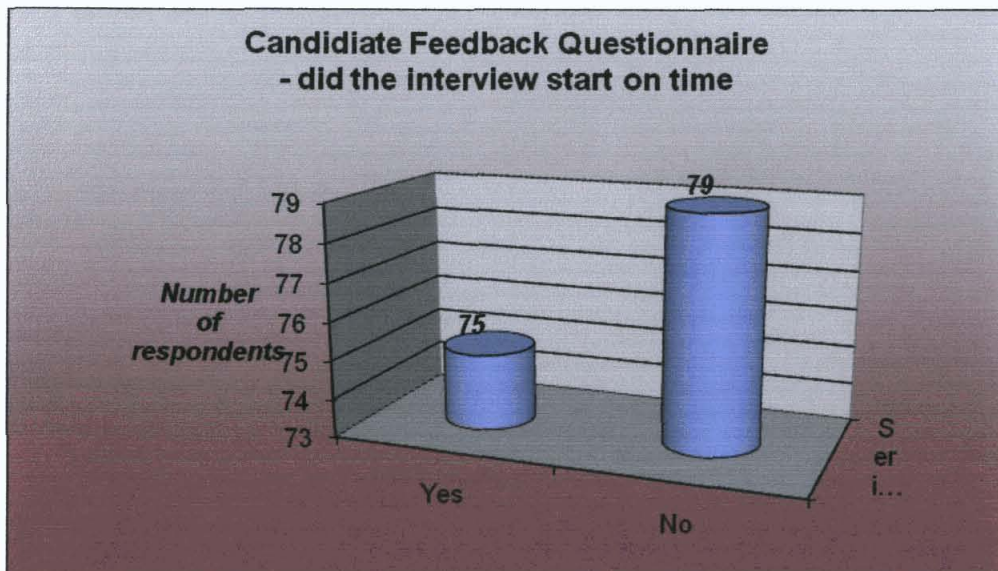


Figure 4.15 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire – did the interview start on time

4.3.10 Friendliness of interview board

The perceived affability of the interview board was investigated, whereby the research requested the respondents to identify their opinion of the interviewers friendliness. In terms of satisfaction, 98% stated that they were satisfied with the friendliness of the interview board, however, 1% had no comment and the remaining 1% stated that they were dissatisfied. Overall, the general consensus was a high satisfaction level.

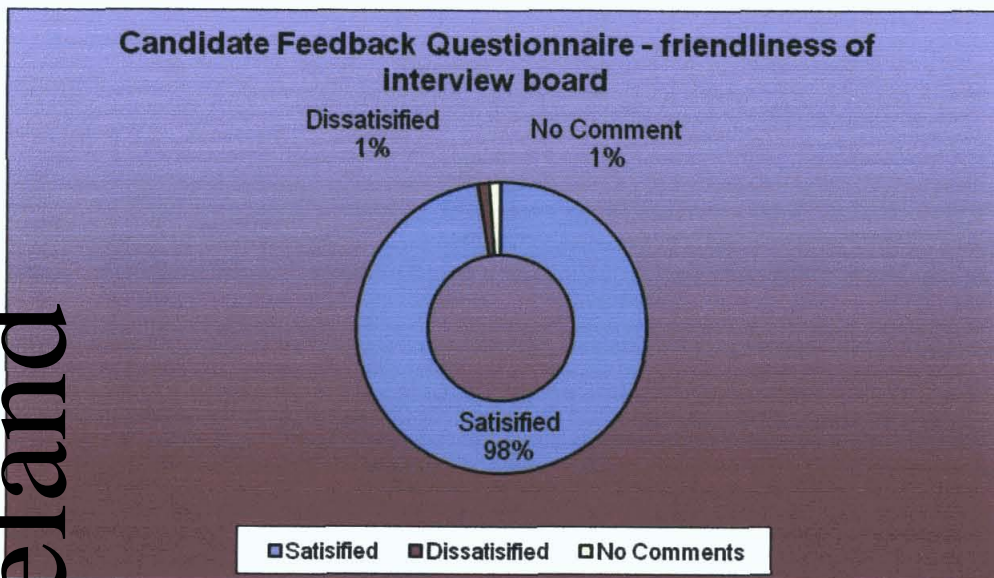


Figure 4.16 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire – friendliness of the interview board

4.3.11 Quality of interview board

Finally, the researcher wanted to gain an understating of the interviewees perception in relation to the quality of the interview board. *Figure 4.17* below demonstrates the opinions of the respondents, which identifies 98% of the respondents being satisfied with the quality of the interview board, 1% with no comment and the remaining 1% being dissatisfied with the quality of the interview board.



Figure 4.17 Candidate Feedback Questionnaire – quality of the interview board

4.4 Chapter summary

In conclusion to the quantitative and qualitative research conducted, a variant of elements of the interviewer training and conduction of interviews were investigated from an interviewees and interviewers perspective in order to ascertain the efficiency and effectiveness of the interviewers training skills. The volume of respondents, that being 154 out of 160 for the quantitative research and eight respondents for the purposes of qualitative research, permitted an accurate and large enough sample to be generated in order to investigate this area. The conclusions drawn from the data analysis will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

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Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this dissertation was to establish through evaluation if the current interviewer training programme in HSE DML is effective in its objective of providing the information and skills required to participate on interview boards in the HSE and also to determine if this programme is providing value to the HSE. By analysing the literature and testing its veracity through the application of primary research a number of interesting elements have been uncovered, which form the basis for the conclusions and recommendations section. The recommendations aim to provide guidance on insuring that systems are in place that effectively monitors performance on interview boards.

5.2 Conclusions in relation to research hypotheses

Chapter four has outlined the general themes that were uncovered through the application of primary research. In relation to the quantitative research conducted, it was found that there was an overall satisfaction level with the current interview structure in the sample tested, however there remains scope for re-emphasising areas where comparatively low percentages of dissatisfaction were revealed. The qualitative research while revealing areas where improvements could be made and also found an overall satisfaction level with the current programme, however, the research has left scope for an improved approach to evaluation in order to justify the continued use and refinement of the training programme. The evaluation looks at the effectiveness and efficiencies of interviewer training by applying the responses to the Kirkpatrick and Philips model of evaluation and will determine the level appropriate to the interviewer training course in the HSE.

5.2.1 Evaluation Reactions – Qualitative Data Analysis

Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation looked at participants' reaction to the training as the first level in evaluating training. Primary research confirmed that reactions to training are collected post the training event in HSE DML. The uses of "happy sheets" are found to be used both in DML and in the national recruitment office. However in DML, the information contained in this evaluation has not been requested by the recruitment department which reveals a lack of formal linkage between the performance and development unit and the recruitment unit. Kirkpatrick (2006) recommends that this information be used to make changes to the programme.

The overall reaction to the training intervention was positive with responses such as it was “very useful” and “absolutely essential”, however when respondents looked back on the experience some suggestions were made that would have been beneficial. One of these was that a recruitment link be put in place as a continuous feature on the interviewer training programme. By analysing the information and feedback jointly by recruitment and performance and development positive improvements can be made to the training course. Also as suggested by *Respondent 1* this will give recruitment a firsthand view and access to perspective interviewers which will greatly assist in the evaluation of perspective interviewers.

5.2.2 Evaluation Learning – Qualitative Data Analysis

Kirkpatrick (2006) outlined the importance in this stage of evaluation in using pre and post training testing as a means of determining if participants had learned through the training intervention. *Respondent 4* in particular mentioned the application for training as a point of evaluation where skill level was assessed prior to training in an attempt to organising the training around the skill level. A further development of this approach would be useful in determining pre training skill and knowledge level. This information could then be used against the post training questionnaire to determine if learning occurred. In order for this approach to be effective, it would be necessary to revise the current post training questionnaire to add this element of learning. Where the participants are entirely new to interviewing a post training assessment would be sufficient (Kirkpatrick, 2006). There may be some objection to this type of assessment as noted by respondent 4 but justification for the approach is well founded in the literature studied. It is important to note that through the use of the one on one interviews it became obvious to the researcher that the participants were acutely aware of their obligations under the code of practice for recruitment and selection, with *Respondent 1* using the equity case as a justification for the requirement to know the legislative framework that applied to the interview process and respondent 5 noted the rationale for having a good understanding of the process in order not to jeopardise the recruitment licence.

5.2.3 Evaluation Transfer/Behavioural – Qualitative Data Analysis

Behavioural evaluation can only be advanced once interviewers have been given the opportunity to put the training into action (Kirkpatrick, 2006), so the timing of this evaluation is critical. Advancing this evaluation through the application of the national approach (as confirmed by *Respondent 3*) where interviewers and candidates are surveyed post interview, this would give a good indication of behaviour change. During the course of the primary qualitative research behavioural change became obvious with respondents recognising the impact the training initiative had on their own behaviour and questioning techniques with most respondents recognising that their approach changed as a direct result of the training. While the respondents selected recognised their own behavioural changes, observations in relation to interview chair people in particular demonstrated that some interventions were necessary to evaluate the “on the job” performance of interview boards. The approach taken by *Respondent 3* in the national office of using observational techniques to evaluate interviewers would appear to be a good approach. In addition *Respondent 8* suggested that independent observation would be a good idea and this approach would validate the behavioural changes in interviewers post training. Another rationale for this type of evaluation is supported though the in-depth discussion surrounding the area of whether interviewers are born or made, this questioning area derived from the literature review and particularly the work of Gunnigle et al (2006) see 2.3.1. The results of this questioning area suggested that if people are open to experience and have confidence in their abilities there is a high probability that the training will be effective in teaching the skills required, however it became apparent that everybody does not meet this requirement and many “bad interviewers” and indeed chair people can jeopardise the effectiveness of the interview process therefore behavioural evaluation had become an important consideration in this review. While Kirkpatrick (2006) reminds us to consider cost when applying this level of evaluation, the general consensus from the group interviewed was that this was the most important step in terms of cost benefit.

5.2.4 Evaluation Results including ROI – Qualitative Data Analysis

Return on investment became a topical issue due to the current economic situation, however the fact that there is a recruitment embargo in place currently made it

difficult to determine if this level of evaluation was necessary or relevant. While conducting the literary review that element of ROI was considered in some detail, with evidence of some success within budgetary confinement (Burkett, 2005). However when this level of evaluation was tested on the respondents it became obvious that the resources' in terms of finance and people would greatly influence the minds of senior management and that in the current climate it would not be feasible to evaluate at this level. While Clarke (2006) contends that senior managers require hard facts and figures this research had determined that for this course it is more important that the training is meeting its objectives and providing value to the organisation in terms of its effectiveness.

5.2.5 Evaluation Learning and Behavioural – Quantitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis has been used to determine if interviewees are applying the learning from the training intervention in a live interview situation. From the statistical data obtained from the quantitative research a number of key areas have been revealed in relation to this topic. *Figure 4.4* demonstrates that almost half of the candidates for interview have over six years experience within the HSE which implies a good understanding of the interview format. 50% of respondents were currently employed at the level of grade IV in an acting capacity (*Figure 4.5*). However 34% of respondents stated that it was their first time to experience a structured interview (*figure 4.8*). Respondents outlined an overall satisfaction rating of 97% with the interview board with only 2% dissatisfied (*figure 4.10*). 96% of the sample indicated that they were happy that the questions asked were in line with the published job description, however 3% did not agree (*figure 4.11*). When asked if any of the questions asked were inappropriate the overall majority of 96% confirmed that there were no inappropriate questions asked (*figure 4.12*), however once again 3% of respondents considered some questions inappropriate. Discriminatory questions once again revealed a very low percentage (1%) of participants that stated they were asked such questions (*figure 4.13*). Again in relation to notes being taken at interview 1% of candidates revealed that they considered that no notes were taken at interview.

The question relating to if the interview started on time revealed the largest variance with 79 out of the 154 respondents (*figure 4.15*), stating that their interview did not commence at the scheduled time. This raises an area of concern, as this significant

element of the interview process disrupts the effectiveness of the interviewees and interviewers ability to adhere to the structured format in conducting the interviews in a timely manner. One element to consider is that less time may be afforded to the interviewee during the interview and another element is that the interview may be rushed as a result. Thus, the interviewers' ability to obtain significant information during the interview process may be tainted as a result of poor timing. This is an element would most certainly need to be addressed during the interviewer skills training as poor timing could have disastrous effects on the quality of the interview. In addressing this area of concern the efficiency and effectiveness of interviewer training could be increased.

While 98% of respondents were satisfied with the friendliness of the interview board and the overall quality of the interview board (*Figure 4.16 & 4.17*) the 1% unsatisfied may need to be assessed.

In considering the findings of the quantitative analysis it is important to consider that there were four interview boards assessing candidates therefore. If these small percentages of dissatisfaction were attributed to one interview board this would reflect a significant increase in the percentage dissatisfied with one interview board. However, in this study the responses cannot be aligned to individual boards.

5.3 Conclusions about the research problem

In order to solve the research problem in the context of the literature reviewed and the research conducted, it is important to once again revisit the aim of this piece of research. Are interview boards equipped with the knowledge and skills to interview effectively and is the HSE content that the systems of evaluation controlling this are meeting the organisational needs. The conclusion drawn is twofold, while the impact of training seem in the main to be meeting the requirements, elements of deficiencies came to light in the primary research that need to be incorporated back into the training programme. The second conclusion was that effective evaluation was not currently in place and without systematic evaluation processes being put in place deficiencies cannot be identified and addressed.

5.4 Implications for theory

The conclusion from the literary review was validated through the application of primary research; it was found in the course of the research that the level of evaluation required was dependant on the programme objectives and senior managers' views and the budgetary constraints in which the evaluation process can be applied. In testing the validity of the Kirkpatrick and Philips model in particular the general consensus was drawn that it is not the model that is important but the expectations of the key actors in evaluation.

5.5 Recommended implications for policy and practice

The research has identified a number of areas where evaluation can be systematically carried out within budgetary constraints which can then be reincorporated into both the training programme and the recruitment process.

5.5.1 Using 'Happy Sheets'

While happy sheets or reaction questionnaires are being used, the valuable information contained therein needs to be reintegrated into the training programme and recruitment process. The evaluation on this level needs to be used not only as validation from the trainers' perspective but also from the recruitment office. The recommendation in this area is that the post training evaluations are made available and a system put in place to reintegrate these back into the training programme.

5.5.2 Providing a permanent link

The recommendation here is to provide a permanent link from Recruitment to attend all training programmes in order to evaluate the programme on an ongoing basis, giving Recruitment insight into perspective interviewers and their skill level, therefore allowing a mix of experience and skill to be present on live interview boards

5.5.3 Tailoring IST to meet participants needs

Varying degrees of experience and skill were observed through the qualitative data analysis with some interviewers requiring more training than others. A particular reference was made to the inconsistency in behaviour of interview chairs, who were determined as critical to the proper conduction of interviews. A key recommendation based on the research is that selection of course participants should reflect this skill level. The recommendation here would suggest an evaluation of interview chairs in

particular is necessary, this should be conducted through observational interventions in line with the approach taken at national recruitment level.

5.5.4 Introduction of e-learning

The evaluation looked at alternative suggestions to the delivering of this training programme; some suggestions around the use of the e-learning centre in particular came to the fore. In order to concentrate on the behavioural and learning outcomes of training it is recommended that the legislative module of the training course could be covered with this approach.

5.5.5 Introducing post- interview evaluation

A questionnaire post interview would have a benefit in evaluating the live experience where the learning is applied. This suggestion would replace the ad-hoc feedback that is currently in place and give a mechanism to interviews to individually evaluate their own and their co-workers performance.

5.5.6 Introduction of assessment during interviews

Observing behaviour would greatly assist the recruitment office in determining if the key trading skills are being applied during the interview. The introduction of observational analysis on a range of interviews would also assist the trainers in concentrating on areas where skill level was not meeting the required standard.

5.6 Limitations

As outlined in Chapter 1, this research was limited to the DML area of the HSE. The dissertation did not assess the style of interview adopted in the HSE as this the competency style interview has been adopted nationally and has been evaluated at a corporate level as the most appropriate form of candidate selection tool applicable in the HSE at this time. By using a semi structured approach to the interviews respondents were afforded the opportunity to discuss at length how the interviewer training initiative could be evaluated through the use of other HR interventions. In particular the induction programme, probation period and the possible introduction of performance management programme were discussed, which would be linked to the recruitment activity. While discussed because of their relevance to the research topic, responses in relation to these areas were not evaluated in detail as they are outside the scope and time parameters of this research.

5.7 Implications for further research

The sample chosen for the qualitative interviews, while in line with the recommendation of key theorists excluded the views of interview chair people. As noted by a number of the respondents in the qualitative research the chair person's role is determined to be crucial to the smooth running of the interview process and therefore future research should look at this role in particular to evaluate their contributions and assess their skill and how and if training has impacted on their behaviour.

Another area for consideration for future research is the linkage between interviewer training and other HR activities as outlined in limitation section above. Recruitment is the start of a series of HR interventions, which need to be linked to the overall HR and HSE Business strategy

5.8 Concluding Summary

On the outset, it was the aim of the research to investigate the evaluation of interviewer training skills within the HSE DML, and that this dissertation would provide a foundation on which to build an evaluation system. With today's economy organizations are looking to cut programs that do not work, this lackadaisical attitude towards training evaluation is changing, but not necessarily towards ROI (Return on Investment), but rather towards ensuring that training supports the business units' needs. This is primarily because stakeholders do not view training as a profit center but rather as a strategic partner who supports their goals.

While during this review the general feedback supported the introduction of systematic evaluation the current economic climate has restricted the application of evaluation at ROI level. However the suggestions made in the recommendations section provide some scope within budgetary constraints to implement evaluation, which will provide effective and efficient feedback mechanisms to support the ongoing training needs.

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Appendix 1.

Exploratory Interviews

<Respondent 4> - Lead trainer on Interview Skills 060209

<The Researcher>: Hi <Respondent 4> thanks for calling me back

<Respondent 4>: No problem, I hear you are doing your dissertation on evaluating interview skills training

<The Researcher>: Yes well that's the idea, we spoke before Christmas in relation to this area and I am hoping to develop that further for the purpose of my dissertation

<Respondent 4>: Great, it really needs to be done and should address some of the issues we have talked about in the past, what angle are you taking

<The Researcher>: Well I am hoping to look at a combination of things, maybe take one of the competitions that we have advertised recently and evaluate it at each step and look at it from line manager's perspectives. As the competition is internal I could talk to current line managers and post interview talk to some of the new Line Managers after appointment to determine if the assessment at interview reflects the skill mix that they were looking for

<Respondent 4>: That would be a good idea; I did the interviewee module for the 3 hospitals over the past few weeks and have a few people coming to the training on the 17 & 18th February. Would you like to come along to it and get a feel for the types of issues that are coming up?

<The Researcher>: That would be a good idea; I will try to free myself up for those dates

<Respondent 4>: Do you want to participate or observe?

<The Researcher>: I might observe if that's ok, it would give me a better change to analysis the programme content.

<The Researcher>: I spoke to <Respondent 3> this morning and she was saying that you were rolling out the revised training for DML; I didn't know that was on the agenda

<Respondent 4>: No I haven't started it yet, I am waiting to link with <Respondent 3>

<The Researcher>: Would you be available to meet up I am interested in getting some feedback from the previous sessions, some of the interviewers that are sitting on the upcoming boards did the training with you on the last occasion.

<Respondent 4>: Yea, I am in the office on Tuesday is that suits

<The Researcher>: Great – I will give you a buzz on Tuesday

<Respondent 4>: Grand, if there is anything else I can do to assist please let me know

<Respondent 3>, Occupational Psychologist, Interview 050209 by phone

<The Researcher>: Hi <Respondent 3>, Have you a few minutes to talk to me? I am doing my degree in HRM and as part of this I have to do a dissertation and the proposal is to be submitted next week.

<Respondent 3>: Sure <The Researcher>, what area are you looking at?

<The Researcher>: Training Evaluation, specifically interviewer training

<Respondent 3>: Oh, ok

<The Researcher>: Just looking for some guidance from your experience on national competitions

<Respondent 3>: Yea sure

<The Researcher>: I have noticed through candidate feedback that not every interviewer is following the format as outlined in the training and am trying to put some system in place to elevate this so I'm interested in talking to you about your experience

<Respondent 3>: Well, as you know from the documentations circulated we ask interviewers and interviewees to complete post interview questionnaires to monitor the quality of the interviews. I have found this very effective and have changed material as a result of this feedback.

<The Researcher>: The return we get from questionnaires is limited as we don't have personnel to collect the data immediately following interview, we post out the assessment with the results of interview, which I think may be affecting the quality of the information gathered and lessens the response rate

<Respondent 3>: Well our response rate is very high – around 96/97% it is filled in on the day of interview

<The Researcher>: Have you a copy of the questionnaire you use

<Respondent 3>: It's on the documentation I sent out for the national campaigns, everyone should be using it.

<The Researcher>: Thanks I'll check to make sure we are using the same one, what other areas would you look at when evaluating training?

<Respondent 3>: Well, really the local management and their monitoring skills play the biggest part in the monitoring process, by looking at the quality of the notes taken and referencing them back to the interview framework you would get a good picture of interviewer performance

Of course campaign specific training is also recommended, and you need campaign managers to ensure that quality is focused on, if interviewers are not good at interviewing then they should not be on the board, I have spoken directly to interviewers after reviewing notes and have also sat in on interviews to assess the questions being asked and the monitor the quality. You need to have campaign managers who have the skills to intervene and who are tactful and can cajole

people if necessary. Quality assurance is very important. At the end of the day if an interviewer is not skilled enough to sit on a board, they should not be on the board.

<The Researcher>: What about the chairperson's role?

<Respondent 3>: Really important – a good chair is essential to the smooth running of an interview, they are worth their weight in gold.

<The Researcher>: Is there anything else you think may be helpful to my research?

<Respondent 3>: The trainer for DML is piloting the new national training programme in Dublin Mid Leinster so you might link in with her

<The Researcher>: Yea thanks, she is on my hit list, I have worked with her in developing the one day refresher programme and we also did the chairperson's session last year for DML which was very useful, we looked at their roles and tried to tie up different approaches that were being adopted and standardise the procedure. I didn't know she was running a new programme? I will give her a shout

<The Researcher>: Thanks for that **<Respondent 3>**, you have given me some areas to explore better, if it's ok I might contact you again shortly to arrange a formal interview for my dissertation, I will have a more structured format at that stage

<Respondent 3>: Sure no problem **<The Researcher>** talk to you soon Bye

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Appendix 2. Transcript of Interview conducted on Respondent 1

Interviewer (Introduction):

Ok thanks for doing this <Respondent 1>. As you know I'm doing my dissertation and the topic that I have chosen is the evaluation of our interview skills training programme and how effective it is. The competency style interview has been adapted nationally, so I am not trying to qualify whether the competency style is the one to use or not so. What I am trying to assess is if the training programme is effective in teaching the skills needed to be a good interviewer, and in your opinion if any of the elements of it need to be changed

Interviewer	Respondent
To start, you might just give me a little bit of background to where you came from and how you ended up here	I am the Area Recruitment Manager for the Dublin Mid Leinster region, previously I have held roles as Project Manager for large building project in the midlands, hospital manager, Recruitment manager in the former Midlands Health Board
Thanks <Respondent 1>, so you've undertaken the interview skills training programme & when did you do it	I have, the competency based one yes –it would be about 12 months ago
Have you undertaken any other training before this	Yes, but not on the competency based, it would have been generally interviewing techniques
On that one, would you have been taught skills	Yes, and I would have been videoed in terms of how I put my questions, and body language and that kind of thing which wasn't in the competency based on I found it very useful because I had styles that I didn't realise I had, and had commented to other that they had it without realising that I had the same type of style myself
Would you find it useful in our training programme	I certainly would advocate it yes
How long after you sat on our interview skills training programme did you participate on an interview board	I actually haven't taken part in an interview board since then
Not since then, but you did do competency interviewing prior to that	I did indeed, yeah
Did you find the training a benefit after doing the training, were there errors	Defiantly, it was very focused and it focused my mind on the type of questions that I would have put beforehand. It certainly focused your areas in which you were going to ask the questions

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or things that you were doing different beforehand	and the type of questions
So you found the training useful	Absolutely
Can you remember what areas you covered	Obviously we would have dealt on the legislative background, the purpose of the competency based interview and the type of questions that illicit the competencies of the individual
Can you remember the type of questions	You would be focusing on their experiences, via v the job spec, and actually that was another element of it the job spec and how the job sec came about and that was helpful to link the preparation of the vacancy and the competencies required into the interview stage
Do you think that the training will affect your judgement of candidates	I would expect, hope that I would be more acutely aware of looking at their experiences to date instead of putting the hypothetical questions to them which you would have been inclined to do hereto fore
Do you think there are certain people that should or shouldn't interview or that there are certain attributes that are required in an interviewer	I think the training brings out what might have been your preconceived ideas rather than having you ideas based on the needs for the job, am, therefore your hypostasis going into interview selection based on the type of person that you want rather than the type of person that is needed for the job would have come to the fore as part of the training
Personal attributes – can anyone be an interviewer	No, again going back to the hypostasis situation, persons who are not in a position to open up their minds beyond what they want as distinct from what is needed for the job, I think that comes through in the training
So you think that is covered in the training	Through the questioning style of the individual
So then, after someone does the 2 day training course do you think they are ready to be an interviewers	I wouldn't necessarily say that, if someone has a difficulty in changing their style and obviously it would require practice too if you are use to a particular style and are use to that then that requires practice, putting them into a situation where they are interviewing in the live situation could be problematic
Have you ever sat on an interview board with someone who wasn't up to the job	I certainly would, I think that the chairperson plays a particular role there
Would you think that the role of the chairperson	Absolutely in every respect, not just in the competency based style interview but in ensuring that the proper procedures are

could be described as paramount to the interview	carried out that no one individual is given more time than another, given more favourable comment than another, certainly the role of the chairperson is crucial;
Have you ever been assessed post interview	No – not formally, other than I would have been challenged not personally, but as a member of an interview board in terms of the quality legislation being applied to a particular interview – you probably would be familiar with that one yourself
Would you like to go into that – without giving the exact details	Well it would be some time ago and just on the onset of the competency based interviews, I was one of three members of an interview board and the intended line manager for the particular post and one of the candidates challenged the outcome of the interview, indicating that it was against the equality legislation. The decision of the interview board was upheld in terms of the equality tribunal
So what did you do at interview to ensure that it was upheld	At interview we had all of the questions set out that we intended to ask the candidate, we had very good notes on the questions, the responses of the individuals and the individuals were given the opportunity to add or subtract from whatever they had given, so it was quite clear from our note-taking particularly that every candidate was treated in the same manner and also I think another relevant element was that the questions put to the candidate were very well indicated back to the job spec
Would you feel comfortable sitting on an interview board tomorrow	I would pose the question, where the job is it one that I would know enough about, assuming that the material I was reviewing for it and the job spec was good I would have no problem with it
Would you need any training	Defiantly need that on each occasion – first of all to refresh your mind and secondly as a constant reminder as to the importance of the relevant areas of the competency based interviews and the overall legislative framework in which we work
Have you ever received candidates through the competency style interview process,	Yes
Do you think their performance at interview translates to their job performance	In general yes, now I wouldn't perhaps be the greatest judge of that in term of o the number that have come to me as they have been small, but certainly I would say yes
In your opinion does induction aid the	Induction is the follow on from the interviews, you are putting the job in context, and you are setting the parameters of the job,

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recruitment process	you are detailing the job specification, the actual duties as distinct from the broad range of responsibilities and also your setting the parameters in term of standards
In the HSE we have a period of probation for new appointees and obviously the induction process goes in line with that, what about for internal promotions	The promotion element can be very subjective I think that would certainly require careful consideration. I would know from the private sector that it can be very nepotism type, favourite so it would want to be a very streamline and evaluated process as part of an overall process
Do you think there is scope then to have evaluation post interview	Absolutely, similar to what done after probation
Have you been involved in new induction process for new staff	No I haven't
Just in relation to the 2 day training course, would you arrange the training days in any other way or have any suggestions	The only suggestion I would have would be on the videoing, I felt it was an absence, the day is very packed, there is certain element of time given to acclimatising yourself to the group as the group is quite varied, they can come from nursing backgrounds they can come from totally different areas you would never have met the individuals before so there is an element of acclimatising yourself so naturally that takes time
So is there any element of the 2 day training course in any different way	Well some of it could be done on line perhaps through the internet
Have you used the interactive training programmes before that are available on line	Not personally, but I would know other who have done training through that methods, and you know when you see other professions doing a lot of their degree type training through internet there is no reason why some of this couldn't be done, in fact some of the induction programme is done that way with the information being downloaded
What parts of the interviewer training could be done that way, could the legislative piece & theory pieces be done that way	It is and some of that is actually repeated on the day on the interviews when you are selected to do an interview, the immediate time leading up to the interview there is a repeat of that. That's certainly something that could be done outside of the framework of the 2 days but I do see an necessity to repeat it, there is nothing like repeating, repeating and eventually it sinks in
Have you any other	The current 2 day programme is pretty well packed, some of it as

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<p>suggestion or comments you would like to add</p>	<p>we've spoke about perhaps could be taken outside the framework of the 2 days and maybe some evaluation by the trainers themselves in how they perceived the group formulate, how, what feedback they have to provide</p>
<p>Would you see them as having a role in assessing whether an interviewer will do well on an interview board or is that outside of their scope</p>	<p>It certainly would have been something I would have spoken to some of the trainers about, they would feel slightly compromised by it, none the less I think there's an evaluative process required on it</p>
<p>Have you ever been in a situation, perhaps from your previous interviewer training, where that was certified or where there was an evaluation process done on it</p>	<p>Yes there would now but it is very difficult that in the 2 days that is in place at the moment to have that evaluative process carried out, it would possibly have to bring someone back at a later stage to carry that out</p>
<p>When you did the HSE training did you do out the evaluation sheet at the end, how would you have found the trainer</p>	<p>The trainer certainly in my case was very very good, very positive, didn't hesitate in highlighting issues that were of concern to him in relation to the mock interviews that were being held</p>
<p>How much involvement do Recruitment have with the 2 day training course</p>	<p>That was one I suppose one of the issues that prompted me to attend the training. The fact that there wasn't a direct link, that wasn't particularly I suppose the fault of the trainer, other than there just wasn't that linkage, someone had to take the initiative, I would be advocating that there would be ongoing interaction between trainers and the recruitment process to ensure that we are singing from the same hymn sheet and that would give you an insight into the type of candidates we have out there as well</p>
<p>Would you propose that we would have someone in with the trainers for the programme</p>	<p>Yes, that certainly, it would provide as they say a link, an evaluative process to ensure we are all singing for the same hymn sheet and I think it also would give some insight into the quality of the individual trainers, obviously that would be something that I think the recruitment section would need to have some form of assessment, link with Training and development people in advance of this taking place</p>
<p>In your role as recruitment manager what input do you have in the people that are selected to sit on interview boards post</p>	<p>We have very strict guidelines in who takes part in the interview process, firstly they have to have undergone the training, we have a process in place where there is feedback from candidates and the interview boards themselves, so those assessments would have an ongoing, I suppose effect on in terms of the people you</p>

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<p>training</p>	<p>would place on interview boards</p>
<p>When someone is nominated to sit on an interview boards, can you take me through the process that recruitment go through</p>	<p>Recruitment starts with the line manager who is requesting the post to be filled, and who would suggest persons for the interview board. In terms of the expert for the position and one other, the third person on the interview board is the chairperson and that chairperson is selected by the Recruitment Officer. So when those 3 persons are put together they come to me for sign off. I would consider feedback in terms of previous performance at interview</p>
<p>Where would you get that feedback from</p>	<p>You would take that from the feedback at the end of interviews and together with informal feedback, sometimes people aren't as prepared to put feedback in writing but we do seek it in a formal way. The informal feedback would come through the Recruitment Staff in the Recruitment dept</p>
<p>Is there anything else that you feel needs to be added at this stage</p>	<p>We have sort of a 2 year rule at the moment in terms of when people need to be trained and I think that's very important, the other thing that I would be concerned about as a Recruitment Manager is the level of experienced people we would have in particular categories of staff, I think the medical profession in general, I would have concerns about that. That's not casting any aspersions on individuals but it's their training in the competency based interviews would be lacking</p>
<p>So how would you get buy-in from those categories of people where it's very difficult, their jobs make it very difficult to attend a 2 day training course as well as sitting on an interview board for perhaps a week</p>	<p>I think that there has been some work done on that nationally particularly in light of reports done by the commissions done on our licence and it's been emphatically set out now that all grades irrespective of their category must have the training for interviews. I think the licences system has been very helpful in giving some clout to the requirement to have that training</p>
<p>That's great thanks you very much <Respondent 1></p>	

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Appendix 3.

Transcript of Interview conducted on Respondent 2

Interviewer (Introduction):		No problem
Ok <Respondent 2> thanks for doing the interview. As you know I'm doing my dissertation and the topic that I have chosen is the evaluation of our interview skills training programme and how effective it is. The competency style interview has been adapted nationally, so I am not trying to qualify whether the competency style is the one to use or not so. What I am trying to assess is if the training programme is effective in teaching the skills needed to be a good interviewer, and if so or not what can we do to change it or amend it.		
Interviewer	Respondent	
Were you involved in the initial set up of the interview skills training programme	At the very outset, I suppose I was involved in some of the national discussions and then with <Respondent 4> in our local team because she took the lead role	
What were the main objectives that were set out to run this programme	At the end of the day we wanted to ensure that the people that sat on the board, were I suppose aware of the competency style interview and were competent as interviewers	
Have you got on a training course yourself	I did yes, but not this one	
Have you got on interview boards	I have a good few, yeah	
Have you found that the training translates to doing the interview	Very much so, yeah, I suppose I think it's important that the other members of the board are kind of familiar with the same training because one instance where I had gone on the training and the other 2 people hadn't while you're trying to follow a certain approach and they are not aware of it can be difficult, and sometimes chairpersons of boards who might know some people for interview so that can be difficult as well in term of following the procedure fully but defiantly it's well worth while, I think the other thing is it needs to be pretty timely just before going on interview board, I think having done it the year the beforehand, I don't know how effective that would be	
Has there been any evaluation done post interview training	I couldn't speak rightly now, but as far as I know every training we do we evaluate the training after the event	
So that's the questionnaire	The questionnaire Yeah, so what we try to do, I suppose it' like a happy sheet in terms of how the people, you know, did the training match up to their expectation and the objectives that were set, did we meet those in terms of the information that they gained and the whole process, saying that we probably need to go more in dept and kind of look at the end result, you know, are we picking, selecting the right candidates, so	

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	maybe that I suppose that's level 2 maybe 3 evaluation we need to get into
When you're talking about level 2 or 3 is that the Kirkpatrick model that you are talking about	Kirkpatrick in the main yeah
So do you do that kind of evaluation for other training courses	Yeah, we do a lot, we're starting at the moment, we have a programme in the acute hospitals what we do there is we sit down with management I suppose in terms of where things are at in the hospital and what the programme is trying to address, so you'd have kind of key objectives linked to the hospital objectives and then when we deliver the programme which is a 2 day programme kind of team development programme we'd review first of all with the attendee and then with the hospital, have the person made changes to behaviour, are they doing things differently, have they taken on board information are they working better with their colleagues
So looking at change in attitude	Yeah, change in attitude, and in terms of their style of working as well, a lot of people are busy but maybe busy doing maybe the wrong things, so we're kind if looking at a review of all of that and it's been very good, it's like 360 degree feedback by getting the managers involved, they're aware of what their staff members are attending, cause they have to get involved, because they have to give feedback so they are more kin of clued in to the whole thing
So it translates better for manager and the individuals	Yeah, absolutely they are all involved in the process
Were the managers involved in the training as well, did they receive the same training	Well what we're doing at the moment we doing the primary care team development programme and it that programme we're actually going to get the managers to sit on the same programme that their staff members are sitting on, but for the hospital no, are targeted at different levels to the hospital but they were involved in the development and in agreeing the key objectives to ensure they were happy with what we are doing
In general are people better placed to sit on interview boards after the 2 day training programme that we provide	Absolutely, and the feedback we could get from everyone would be that they would feel more confident around the whole process
Can everyone be an interviewer	Am..... I imagine if they got the proper training, I can't see why not, you know what I mean, I suppose, it depends, there are some people who

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<p>interviewer</p>	<p>kind of approach this as. Particularly for interviewing in their own particular area, as a means to getting the person that they want...but I think if they are aware of the licence and kind of are working in line with what they are trained on I can't see why people shouldn't develop the skills</p>
<p>Have you ever been assessed post training and what kind of assessment</p>	<p>Yeah, oh you mean post training in terms of having attended the interview pieces, no</p>
<p>Any other training programmes, were you involved in any of the assessments</p>	<p>Well a lot of the programmes that we would actually do or even nationally wise, we could be involved in assessment, even the whole induction programme process would have involved, I suppose In project managing that national wise we would accessed the roll out, and then the training and then seeing if it was meeting what we had intended</p>
<p>And that induction programme is very much linked to our interview programme, do you see it as a big benefit in assessing now candidates get on post interview</p>	<p>Well I think it's ideal because I suppose with the induction, there kind of 4 parts now, there's the pre employment so you kind of put things in place before the person joins, the departmental induction when the person arrives with the first week or 2, so that immediate chance to access, the person has been assessed on I suppose meeting certain criteria, I don't think anyone would actually have the full list of full list of knowledge and skills when they come in to an organisation, they kind of develop a lot of the other information pieces when they are in the organisation for a while, but the departmental one is a very good one to check that because you ensuring people are aware of the policies, procedures, you're aware of the little nuances that are in your their new work location as opposed to where they worked for 20 years previously and I suppose probation comes in there as well</p>
<p>While we are talking about probation, probations for new entrants works well, what about people who are promoted internally</p>	<p>Well I suppose the situation is at the moment is that they wouldn't serve probation again, I suppose is my understanding is that but I think there should be some... what a lot of senior managers say to be is that when a person goes to a certain level then they should be able to do the job, I don't agree with that nonsense, when you move into a new area they're is new information that you have to take on board, so three should be some kind of...</p>
<p>Some kind of evaluation on whether they are reaching the level</p>	<p>Yeah absolutely cause if you are working with a team their bad management can effect an entire team and then ultimately patients or clients</p>
<p>Performance appraisals then would that be the way to go</p>	<p>Well performance appraisals, the ones that is there if developed further, again on day one you're outlining and your manager agrees the kind of key objectives and then you can review the performance in relation to</p>

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<p>way to go</p>	<p>that, but then again the manager needs to be objective in assessing that performance as well, you might just get someone who has a certain style and mightn't appreciate your new ways, they need to be trained on how to do the evaluation</p>
<p>If someone doesn't work out post interview – what are the options</p>	<p>Well, there are a few thing in that, some people get promoted and go into a position past their level of competence in some cases and go into a position, say Finance or, say training where they don't actually have the natural expertise for it, so I think the organisation should be looking at rather than square pegs in round holes, they should be looking at kind of why it is the person is not working out where they are, because they might have done very well somewhere else and they maybe just happen to be in area where they're not suited and their skills and knowledge aren't suited, maybe those things should be explored and maybe then as I suppose, in term of fair procedure, they should be gone through and given a bit of help and assistance in saying what are the difficulties rather than just letting the person flounder</p>
<p>So then I suppose the generic type of interview from the grading system the clerical admin side doesn't help matching particular skills, because it's a very generic type of process, so what you're saying is that perhaps there should be some kind of a process where skills are better matched to jobs</p>	<p>Yeah I think so and maybe if the form that the manager needs to complete where they give an evaluation of the person's current work and if that was I suppose more objective and if they stood over that that would be a better way of kind of figuring out where the person skills and knowledge out, but then again how reliable is that, some might just put a very glowing one down because they want to move the person on, but if that was reliable it would be very helpful</p>
<p>Have you taken people from panels that have gone through the generic process – have people been assigned to you say in the training department</p>	<p>No not really no most have come in through training</p>
<p>Do you think Recruitment play a role in the interview skills training</p>	<p>Big time actually yeah because again I think we need to work together in terms of the process, recruitment process and what we are all trying to do is get the right people, with the skills knowledge to do the job effectively so I suppose we need to be working with yourselves to make sure that what it is people are looking for and I suppose you need to look at us in terms of what our training pieces are to meet that requirement</p>
<p>So who should carry out</p>	<p>Well it probably needs to have a few involved because the person, the</p>

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<p>the evaluation on the effectiveness of the training</p>	<p>new line manager has to be involved, they've got the person they have an expectation around the person that they wanted is the person matching up then Recruitment needs to be involved in terms in term of their process to ensure that whatever process they went through was done well and if there was a problem with the interview board, then we could look at the training, maybe the wrong people maybe they weren't skilled enough, so I think the new line manager, recruitment and performance and development need to be involved</p>
<p>If someone is hired through the competency style interview, how do we link that back to the recruitment process</p>	<p>If they start in a job and they are not matching up to what was required, you have to go back and say where was the problem, again maybe it was recruitment maybe it was P&D maybe the style or the way we go about recruiting someone and maybe does the person that was sitting on the interview board – getting the right people, maybe lack of communication between recruitment and the interview board in term of you know and often times you have people on the interview board for a purpose and they want certain type of people maybe the type of people they have it their head are not the best person for the job and they come in with this historical kind of thing I want, Mary, Pat Joe and then they have Mary Pat and Joe and they're still not happy</p>
<p>Do we do any evaluation at ROI level within the HSE</p>	<p>No what we've looked at Kirkpatrick's level four and Philips model but from the amount of time we would actually spend to get all the stats for it would be very labour intensive and I think hard to justify that involvement of time, what we do is a semantics around the cost of the trainer, the venue and all the costs associated around the cost of the event but not the full range because if you did the full range the interview board would be costed, but there's probably some that we should so, Philips is a very labour intensive piece of work you know</p>
<p>We look for everyone to have the 2 day training course before putting them on a board and it's often difficult for certain grades of staff to release people for the 2 days to do the course, is there any way around that</p>	<p>Well I suppose where I worked previously, often times people that were put forward for the interview board were people who had failed at interviews themselves previously and they select the same type of people, if you think of the investment in the organisation and how long they are going to be in the system it is imperative that you get the right people on the interview boards...</p> <p>Maybe if it was like the courts, the people have to spend a certain amount of sessions doing interviews, so that in the year I have to sit on 2 interview boards... It's the most difficult because people cancel the last minute... because I'm in the labour court and maybe they are the best placed to sit on the board</p>
<p>Is there any other way we could organise the 2 day to make it most accessible for people</p>	<p>Sometimes maybe location wise because maybe we can't bring it to a central location, maybe if you had an interview board from a particular health centre it could be done from their own location, but sometimes if you do it that way they might get dragged off so they are in the middle of it and they see their current work as more important, gone for an hour</p>

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	<p>or answering the phone so there are plusses or minuses, sometimes off site at least they have to dedicate their time to it.</p> <p>Again, if it's seen to be part of the managers role to be sitting on interview board, it's like induction where it is mandatory... another would be around the e-learning because I suppose that's available on the e-learning centre, and it can be just in time training where people can go in just refresh their skills just before they attend an interview board</p>
<p>So that's something we might be able to look at for refresher type training</p>	<p>Well the evidence, people actually say that the important thing is to bring it to the front of your memory just before you go in and you refresh the knowledge and they can present scenarios to you that can be done anywhere.</p>
<p>Can that be incorporated as part of the 2 day course</p>	<p>Well that's something that we are thinking about now the whole blended learning piece, there are some parts that people can read up on before training so maybe not wasting so much time on the day going through legislation and then on the day they can do a piece and maybe cut back in the workplace and so on line and complete a little assessment or something</p>
<p>Well just talking about assessments, at the moment you do the 2 day course and you are fit to do the interview board, would assessments be the way to go</p>	<p>The only problem is it might turn people off because when they see assessment... but I think it's how the assessment is done, at the end of the day it is important that if people have attended the training it is important that they are competent to interview people so if there is some way of assessing with some kind of questions or scenarios and it can be a very interactive piece so it shouldn't be kind of off putting</p>
<p>People are more use to going on line</p>	<p>Yeah and then you can go further, you can track you can go further look at case studies, analyse that for development of courses</p>
<p>Is there anything else you would like to add on the whole evaluation of the training programme</p>	<p>It needs to be pretty regular, sometimes the problem it is you evaluate now and that lasts for a few years – laugh- ...you know the way, when the licence changes or the circumstances change or even the kind of people that we are recruiting or the circumstances that they are working in changes then maybe be need to reflect and look at the training again to see if it is fit for purpose</p>
<p>Would you do something annually</p>	<p>I think so yeah, but you also need to look at evaluating the effectiveness of the people that arrived on site either promoted or new entrants to see did they match up to our objectives, and if they didn't is those people out there in the first place or is our selection process not fit for purpose so the matching should be built in as a regular thing as part of business</p>
<p>Thanks very much <Respondent 2></p>	<p>Ok thanks very much</p>

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Appendix 4. Transcript of Interview conducted on Respondent 3

<p><u>Interviewer (Introduction):</u></p> <p>Ah <Respondent 3> thanks for doing this. As you know I'm doing my dissertation. The topic that I have chosen is the evaluation of our interview skills training programme and its effectiveness. The competency style of interviewing is not under evaluation, that's being adapted nationally, so I am not going to go down that road. What I am trying to assess is if the training programme is effective in teaching the skills required to be a good interviewer, and in your opinion if any of the elements of it need to be changed.</p>	
<p>Interviewer</p>	<p>Respondent</p>
<p>To start, you might just give me a little bit of background to where you came from and how you ended up here</p>	<p>I am a Registered Occupational Psychologist. I am employed by the Public Appointments Service. I've been there for, oh God, over 10 years. I have been on secondment to the Health Service for the last 3 years, I think it is, and for another year. So I was brought across to help with standardisation of Recruitment policies and procedures nationally</p>
<p>Ok So you're involved in training of interview boards at a national level and in evaluating that training</p>	<p>That's right, yeah, that would be part of my workload</p>
<p>So you might just take me through the evaluation process you apply to national level</p>	<p>Ok. I suppose there are two streams that I have been involved in, in relation to interview skills training. I have worked with <Recruitment Business Manager, named> and indeed <Respondent 1> and <Respondent 4> from DML as well and we've pulled together a national structured interview skills training programme, but that hasn't been rolled out yet, but <Respondent 4> is using elements of it, - most of it in the training she runs out for DML and we tick tack just in relation to how she's getting on – feedback from participants</p> <p>At the national level then for the national campaigns, I would do all the training for that, so before the training course starts, I like to get a sense of calibre of people, their experience of training previously so you can pitch it at an appropriate level</p> <p>So then, run the training programme and then afterwards give them a briefing evaluation document, basically to see what aspects they enjoyed, what they find useful, things they'd like to see covered if they were to do it again, that kind of thing</p> <p>And that is really, really useful in helping me to pitch the training for subsequent campaigns for that particular speciality. Different groups, different pieces of feedback and you know to be able to</p>

	<p>implement those for future training courses is really good</p>
<p>And then post the actual interviews are there any evaluation done at any other interval</p>	<p>There is. On the final day of the interview boards, the board members are asked to fill in a board member survey form, and that's to get their feedback on their experience of the process, what they taught about the training, the training, the interview guide, the blend as a team, their experience of the benchmarking process and there's loads of open comment boxes if they want to give us feedback as to how they might see improvements being made for future campaigns</p> <p>As well as that the candidates, each candidate once they have left the room are invited to complete a candidate feedback questionnaire – and again it's to get their experience of the interview so did they feel they had a good opportunity to present themselves, how did they find the information they received in advance all that kind of thing,</p> <p>Again, they are really useful for making improvements from campaign to campaign</p>
<p>Ok So translating what you've learned from that to the Recruitment unit in B&W what can we learn from you, from your experiences to date</p>	<p>Am, I suppose the importance of being flexible and being able to tailor your interview training to suit the needs of your population. Like for some of the campaigns now at this stage, because I know the board members and have been training them for the last while its quite advanced the type of training I present with them so there a lot more practical experiences, we would review previous notes, summary comments and all the rest of it, it's quite engaged and it very hands on and you know I suppose every time I train someone I want to ensure they learn something new or something additional and develop on their existing skills so for some campaigns now we'd have some very advanced board members.</p> <p>But also even for an operational perspective to have a mix between skilled and less skilled board members so that they can learn from each other and try and keep each other on the straight and narrow</p> <p>In terms of the evaluation...</p>
<p>Have you ever sat in on an interview board</p>	<p>I have, I frequently monitor as part of the national campaigns as we could have up to fourteen interview boards running parallel. So we want to ensure consistency in terms of approach to questioning and the standard being applied during the scoring</p> <p>So, we have to have a couple of mechanisms to ensure that there is consistency, one is to ensure they are using their behavioural indicators and approach to questioning that is required of them, so if I do have a problem board or if I have a board that's a but as cued in their terms of the scoring profile I would sit in on the board and</p>

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	<p>monitor their questions and monitor their approach to scoring and give feedback as appropriate</p>
<p>And have you had any negative feedback from even candidates with an extra person sitting on the board</p>	<p>They don't, I always check with the candidate first. If the candidate didn't feel comfortable with it, obviously I wouldn't sit in, I just explain to them that it's not themselves that I'm assessing I'm actually monitoring the quality of the interview board....</p> <p>I've never had anyone who wasn't comfortable with it but I always give them the option in advance</p> <p>I certainly sit to the back or the side and don't interfere with the questioning the board just work as they would normally</p> <p>I just give them feedback afterwards.</p>
<p>So it is a very integrated role, I suppose in your position, it is a very integrated role because you're doing the training and the paperwork...</p>	<p>It's actually easier as well because I start out with the initial designing of the job specifications- right through to the design of the short listing and interview guides, it's like a process and it's easy to bring people through the process</p> <p>Sometimes the interview board members would be involved in the designing of the jobs or they understand where we are coming from ...Am, it's a journey then, that, its just easier for me to suggest feedback, that they are more open to it because we have done so much already</p>
<p>Do you keep then a log of the feedback that you give</p>	<p>I do as part of the national campaigns, the recruitment manager, whoever the recruitment manager is, in the national recruitment services, I have done up a template for a review report for every campaign. So for all the national campaigns, whoever the project manager is does a review report.</p> <p>It includes, an overview A-Z of the actual campaign, the board member feedback, the candidate feedback, the stats around the campaign and you know around the different board and that' done for all the national campaigns</p>
<p>An that's all feed back</p>	<p>Yeah, that's all fed back, I would give them a hand in pulling the reports together and some of the technical bits in terms of stats for interview boards and that</p>

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<p>I might have a look at some of those samples if you have any...</p>	<p>Yeah, sure yeah</p>
<p>I suppose, do you see a big change in attitude in interview boards post training – someone who hasn't sat before on an interview board</p>	<p>Yeah, that's a good point; some people can feel a bit daunted by it all. Some people may be practiced interviewers for years and years and sometimes mightn't have the best techniques so they can often be the most challenging in that you are trying to teach them what best practice is and trying to get them to break free from their old routines if you know what I mean, so they can often be the most challenging</p> <p>People overwhelmingly enjoy the experience, they are quite open to it and positive towards it and definitely there are people that just are not cut out to be interviewers. There are some people that they just don't feel comfortable interviewing, just don't reach the skill level required</p>
<p>An would they generally withdraw themselves</p>	<p>Oftentimes they would. There are different types support systems</p> <p>Because, and it depends on the disciplines as well, if it's a challenge for us to get sufficient people, if you have 14 boards running multiple that by 3...it's a huge amount of people</p> <p>So what we do if we have weaker people, we put them with a strong chair. We have a pool of really; really strong, excellent chair people and they can help the weaker people through it.</p> <p>I haven't come across it yet in the HSE, but if there is someone that just doesn't meet the standard and isn't open to learning it would be suggested to them that interviewing mightn't be their strongest point,</p>
<p>You mentioned the role of the chairperson there...they have been recognised as nearly as a central point in the interviewing process,</p> <p>Is there specific interview skills training for the chairperson, or do you incorporate that into the</p>	<p>Yeah</p> <p>The chairperson, even though they have sat on 100's of campaigns</p>

<p>generic training</p>	<p>they are always invited to the briefing sessions so they can meet their board members in advance so everyone has a common understanding as to what we are looking for because</p> <p>It can be a challenge at the benchmarking if I'm saying that the profiles are as cue, if everyone isn't understand where we're coming from, It's too late at that stage, so they are always invited along. Anyway, Different bits of documentation might be update or we might be changing skill areas so it is important they would be involved but they defiantly have a hugely central role and because we have a good scope of people that have plenty of experience it actually helps</p> <p>In terms of keeping consistency across the boards as well</p>
<p>Can there be a generic programme? You know when you are dealing with large campaigns you are dealing with multitudes, so it's easier to bring everybody together and do a training course for that specific campaign. But for small interviews where you would have maybe only one interview board sitting for a half day, what would your suggestions around that be?</p>	<p>Well, for the national interview skills training programme that I mentioned initially, the idea there was that that was a generic programme, so that people would attend,</p> <p>Well we haven't decided if it's a 2 or 3 days course yet,</p> <p>But then they would attend that course and it's literally interview skills so what's good approach to questioning, efficient questions inefficient questions and all that and it's not campaign specific ...but we would have examples maybe health & social care professional one or administrative ones just to give them the practice at it, the idea being they would be skilled interviewers regardless of the disciplines at that stage</p> <p>The recommendation then was that in advance of the interview going life the Recruitment unit would have a 2/2 half hour briefing session just to go through the specifics of the campaigns and get them to familiarise them with the specifics of that campaign</p>
<p>Perfect, that's obviously not being done yet, hasn't been rolled out, so that would tie in well with what I am trying to do here.</p> <p>There are some negative comments I suppose from the system we currently have in place, from managers, where their</p>	<p>Most of the ones I have done, ones for allied health and the ambulance service as well. That was I suppose an obstacle we encountered when we were trying to draw up national job specs day one</p> <p>Like, at the time the first ones we worked on were for primary case teams, so they were kind of stand-alone. And then there was for PCCC. At the moment there is an acknowledgement that there is for the senior grades that you may have care group or speciality areas but for the staff at entry level posts it would be generic recruitment</p>

<p>candidates come through generic interview process where they are doing a more specific role. Have you encountered that with the national campaigns?</p>	
<p>If you have somebody then where there is specific skills required, say for example a Grade IV, but there is requirement for them to be a typist... to assess that skills, would you see that as part of a generic process or training in house after interview.</p>	<p>Well I suppose that is up to the corporate powers that be. At the moment there are no nationally agreed job specs for the administrative grades. If it was felt that there was you know.... It does boils down to the content of the job spec, you could have a generic Grade IV spec but if there was a specific requirement for someone to have typing skills you could factor that into the recruitment process</p>
<p>So, you would advocate training for every interview board that someone sits on specifically for the interview they are doing</p>	<p>Absolutely. Yes.</p>
<p>What about the generic two day, at the moment, training course. Would you see that as some kind of a refreshment on the generic piece at intervals after the 2 day course</p>	<p>There is research to suggest that follow up after, I think it is between 3-6 months and even refresher every 2 years is good practice... because people do fall back into their comfort zone so refresher courses would be important</p>
<p>From out office we develop a 1-day refresher programme with <Respondent 4> in training. So we look for people to training after 2 years It unearths some behaviour... Two years is not a long time but you would be surprised at the amount of comeback and</p>	<p>But that's great because people will forget their employment equality, they forget these things.</p>

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<p>behaviours</p>	
<p>I suppose we were looking at trying to provide that in some different level and there has been some suggestion around using the e-learning piece. Would you have any thoughts on that</p>	<p>Excellent - We were exploring the option from a national level, Declan Lyons from Performance and development is on the steering group. We were exploring the option of having even a DVD or something that you could download, so that people could do it interactively. The Public Appointments Commission have a DVD set, it' like a briefing but on a DVD, they have one for interviewers and one for interviewees</p> <p>That's useful in terms of a refresher or for people that are a bit nervous</p>
<p>Another suggestion that came up, I don't know if it ties in or not as part of the 2 day course would be to have people practising their skills</p> <p>Is that something that you would consider</p>	<p>Sure, yeah, yeah, I think defiantly it is a good course of action as people can really learn from it, I suppose sometimes people are really nervous, and shocked as to how they come across. I think that people could really learn from it. Defiantly very good feedback</p> <p>I suppose on the downside it's probably costly and resource intensive.</p> <p>There is no reason if we were having a 3-day course that we could factor it in.</p> <p>Defiantly the practical exercises as well and maybe getting people to practice with mock candidates before going live. They really find that useful and it gets them to implement what they've learned in a safe environment before going live</p> <p>That would be a good thing to do.</p>
<p>We also have the probationary period has proved to be very effective in monitoring</p> <p>I suppose whether their skills that came across at interview translated into their job performance</p> <p>I suppose, it has been</p>	<p>Well, is this for internal administrative grades?</p>

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<p>noted as well that, that is lacking per say for internal promotions, as they don't have an assessment tool at the moment to assess candidates that haven't been promoted. Would you have any suggestions around that?</p> <p>Yes for internal candidates and for any grade where they go for interview, they have already served their probationary period, which you only serve once in the HSE. So you would serve your probation, you could serve it at a Grade III level and you now could be going for a Grade VII job, you don't have to serve probation for a second time.</p> <p>So the interviews, the final step if you like, on that journey</p>	<p>What you can do is to do an evaluation, say when I am using psychometric tests; you can actually correlate their performances on the job subsequently. So that will actually validate the use of your assessment techniques and that would be good practice to do that. Even if you are to do it every 3-5 years your candidate population can change with time so you need to ensure the tools that you are using are still valid and doing what you want them to be doing</p>
<p>So you're looking at rearranging the training programme at the moments. You will have plenty of time, with the current embargo in place</p> <p>From your position, what would you recommend the 2 day training be changed in any particular way</p>	<p>I suppose from earlier version that might have been available there's probably more emphasis on the practical things</p> <p>So, the code of practice and all the legislation is in it all that but there is more practical examples from audit findings, feedback from assessors and that just brings home the importance of legislation and hurdles that people perceive that we're putting in front of them</p>
<p>Could that legislation piece be done through e-learning</p>	<p>Absolutely, there is no reason why not. Definitely. But also to incorporate the more practical elements that if we can fit in practical exercises into it, the most practice they get ,</p> <p>Exactly. Or even hands on stuff to review notes taken from</p>

	<p>previous campaigns to look at the standards that were applied. All these things would help and to ensure when and if benchmarking is being used that they understand the practice of it...</p>
<p>Ok. We just might go into the benchmarking a little bit.</p>	<p>Ok. Usually if there's more than one board we'd undertake a benchmarking process, which is basically a quality assurance process, we have data sheets where scores are entered once board members have determined their scores it's dropped in a central admin area and collated and we can actually watch the score profile as the weeks move on and then throughout the interview schedule the board members are regularly updated with their score profiles, they will get the score profile for each board and the overall one, so that they can assess their standard deviation and that's useful for us in identifying if there are potentially any problem boards or ones that we might just want to spend a little bit more time with, so it is just a useful source of information for interview boards</p>
<p>Have you had to manage interview boards where they have gone off the target?</p>	<p>Yeah sometimes they will and candidates are randomly assigned to interview boards so it might just be a case where boards had a string of week candidates, but from my perspective I need to be sure that these are week candidates and there not extraneous factors.. You know. Whether it... taking information not relevant to the scoring into it to it or if there's any extraneous things that they shouldn't be bearing in mind that are having an impact on the scoring profile so you know a board may go as cue but as long as I am satisfied that there is rationale for it</p>
<p>We do similar for multiple boards, there was an issue during a grade IV competition previously... Which we learned from...</p>	<p>Right... even to go back, I lean very heavily on the board members, it is their decision at the end of the day, they have to prove their rationale for a decision but like during the training, I always tell them that's it's important that they are open to the process and open to doing it the way that we want it done, in line with best practice, so I suppose as long as they're aware of their responsibilities before they ever go near the actual boardroom it just makes things easier</p>
<p>Is there anything else you would like to add</p>	<p>....</p>
<p>Should the evaluation process be done by P& D or Recruitment</p>	<p>Depends where it sits... P& D roll out the training, but the Recruitment dept would be able to bring in the feedback, I suppose it should be joint in the current structures, shared learning, shared</p>

or Recruitment	experience...
You're very involved with the programme, do you think it would be appropriate for someone from Recruitment to attend the training course	I would always insist on the recruitment manager being there, because I am not there every day for the interview boards, I am only there to facilitate best practice so it's the role of the campaign manager to ensure everything happens as it should, I would always let the Project/Recruitment Manager give the initial introduction to the training course, talk through the logistics, who's on what board, all this kind of thing, because they are the people who are going to interact with the board every day, they are the people who will share the score profiles everyday and I strongly believe that needs to be a strong link between whoever is running the campaign and monitoring and working with the interview boards on a day to day basis and it better for them as well as they are the ones dealing with appeals and it just makes sense that they have the thorough understanding of how it works.
Thanks very much <Respondent 3>, if you have anything else you would like to add please feel free	No I think we have covered a lot, I will give you those few bit we were talking about
Thanks a million <Respondent 3>, really appreciate your time	No Problem, best of luck with it all now...

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Appendix 5. Transcript of Interview conducted on Respondent 4

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<p><u>Interviewer (Introduction):</u></p> <p>Ok thanks for doing this <Respondent 4>. As you know I'm doing my dissertation and the topic that I have chosen is the evaluation of our interview skills training programme and how effective it is. The competency style interview has been adapted nationally, so I am not trying to qualify whether the competency style is the one to use or not so. What I am trying to assess is if the training programme is effective in teaching the skills needed to be a good interviewer, and in your opinion if any of the elements of it need to be changed.</p>	
<p>Interviewer</p>	<p>Candidate</p>
<p>Were you involved in the initial set up of the interview skills training programme</p>	<p>Not in the initial set up, no, that was actual put together by the Recruitment department in Shared Services, so we came on board at the delivery stage</p>
<p>Do you know how it came about or who was involved</p>	<p>As far as I can remember I spoke to <Named HR Manager> who was the HR Manager, a few years ago along with her dept – <named recruitment officer>, they were in touch with the IMI and they put together this course in relation to the interview skills, and I think it all stemmed from the fact they were a shared service and they needed some kind of quality assurance in relation to the interview boards and that and as far as I know that's where it stemmed from. They had got a number of people trained in the recruitment dept but over time with all the changes and that people just moved on, promoted for whatever reason they moved on and performance and few were asked to come in and develop it.</p>
<p>You have extended your remit into the former MHB area, into the four counties</p>	<p>In the last 2 years As I remember <named recruitment officer>– when she was moving off I don't think there was anyone else within Recruitment to take to take over her role and they were quite happy to hand the whole lot over to us, as in you know, getting people on board, scheduling booking the rooms and all that</p>
<p>Has any evaluation been done in the interim between yourself and Recruitment</p>	<p>No, there hasn't no</p>
<p>I know there is an open dialog between local recruitment and the trainers</p>	<p>Yea, but there is no formal evaluation, what we did as well, we did take it over in DML I suppose the people who it was aimed at was those sitting on permanent panels, recruiting for permanent panel, we decided that the people who were going to recruit on a temporary basis very same pitfalls, same legislation we opened it, just made sure that we had some kind of boundaries in place so it wasn't a free for all for anyone to</p>

	<p>go, if you were interviewing within 2 months, we kind of looked at the application form and make sure we were getting the right people on the course as well because we still felt that confidentiality obviously was crucial in the whole kind of you know access in this particular course.</p>
<p>Had you had difficulties with any particular areas or groupings of staff in attending training?</p>	<p>No, I suppose at the start we got complete interview boards and that worked out very well –you could do your interview guides, with all the members present plus the chairs but over time more and more people were trained so they didn't need to go on the 2 day training course so over time it became a generic training course, it probably lost some of its uniqueness, something when it became a generic course, as there was no guarantee that people were going to become completely involved in the whole recruitment process that became something for you guys in Recruitment to manage more so than performance and development</p>
<p>Have you attended interview training yourself</p>	<p>In order for myself to be trained I would have...I'm accreted to SHL the occupational psychologist just to make sure that I as up to speed in relation to what competency based interviewing was about, that process I shadowed one of the occupational psychologists at the time and she delivered with me, 2 or 3 of the sessions and she sat in and shadowed me to make sure I was actually getting the right message out there and literally that I understood it myself. I as accredited</p>
<p>So you have been evaluated as a trainer, have you seen much changes over the last 2 years since you started delivering in DML</p>	<p>Yes, I have been evaluated as a trainer</p> <p>When we came to DML we – myself and <co-worker> use to deliver it quite a bit, the main difference - there was the... I don't know... there was a different kind of interpretation on what competency based interviews were about, and again I had been delivering it for about 2 years prior that in the old EHB area and some of the differences were quite, well I suppose startling in the fact that people taught it was quite a rigid process and you couldn't look outside of certain boundaries and I think at that stage we were looking at using the old system and combining it with the new system, and then people just sat into their comfort zones and that's one thing that really stood out.</p> <p>We had a look at the areas and spend a lot more time at those areas to make sure people knew that this was the way we should be doing competency based interviewing</p>
<p>Have you sat on interview boards yourself?</p>	<p>Yes I have and I suppose that's what kind of spurred me on to delivering a piece like this because again when I did the original training to sit on the interview boards it was a very good course but I again I just taught there was some things missing in it and again even working with the other interview boards there was a lot of inconsequence's, that again is a personal view on my part</p>
<p>The role of the</p>	<p>Yes I was involved in the PHN sponsorship programme for Shared</p>

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<p>chairperson as a board member, have you had the opportunities to train chairpersons for interview boards</p>	<p>Services and the chair people were invited in and the majority came forward and we just went through one of the interview frameworks, and that was the whole idea around it, now I felt they weren't quite open to it and in some cases they were quite dismissive, because they felt they had all the experience and why should I be going through all this again, but again just to make I was covering may part I went through it all, but I certainly couldn't put my hand on heart and say that they took it all in and went away happy with it</p>
<p>The programme the year before last with interview chairs for DML, I know the roll out never out never happened because of budgetary constraints – there was some very positive feedback from the chairpersons from that session</p>	<p>They were delighted to be brought together and given the opportunity to have a discussion to around interviewing and that and build on their experiences, they were a very mixed group but I think in general they were quite positive and most of the groups came up with very similar suggestions as to how to improve it,</p>
<p>The role of the chairperson is the mix n the boards important, people who have just done the 2 day training sitting on a board for the first time – what would you thought be on the chairperson's role</p>	<p>I think they do in general take on a very supportive role, but again I think it probably going back to like can anyone sit on an interview board after 2 days are they fully skilled, and in some cases you would day yes absolutely, from day one to day 2 we see a huge kind of difference in the way people are interacting, but again when you have a specific course for a competition and everyone is there it gives them those 2 days to build up their rapport and gel together and that, where as when people are leaving the 2 day course and then meeting up with their chairperson they still need to take that time and actually get to know each other and build up that working relationship to make sure they are doing their best for each and every person coming in, it really does depend on the personality I suppose of that chairperson, and I think even from experience that the majority are absolutely fantastic</p>
<p>Have you seen changes in attitude from day one to day two of the training programme</p>	<p>Oh Absolutely, Absolutely, and that's you know there was talk of it becoming a 1 day and some people saying a 3 day and we'll take some of the role play out but that's the nice thing about the course is that on day one we're getting in tune to exactly what is the whole process, what is it all about, people are becoming you know comfortable with one another, some people say they have been interviewing for 20 years, do you know what I mean, and I've been doing this and you'd say is it competency based or is it the old style knowledge based... oh no it's competency based, and in all fairness at no stage has anyone come back to me and said well I actually knew all of that, they have all come back and said I taught I was doing it competency based and it's only going through this process that they realise and they realise that on day one so</p>

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	<p>what normally happens is they'll go off and we'll have a joke about it saying make sure you practice all you talking in the past tense and doing this that and the other , and I would say the majority do cause they're is no comparison between day one and day 2 they are streets ahead because they are seeing it in each other as well, and they all see it – God you were much better today – because the confidence is building</p>
<p>Right, well is there any elements of the course that could be done in any other way</p>	<p>There was one part that we tried to kind of push there for a while but again because of the budgets and that..., because a lot of people say... I want to see how, how it should be done, show me the perfect interview, so what we were trying to do was actually...and in fairness some of us from performance and development had volunteered to do it... to actually put a CD together or a DVD together write out the script and do absolutely everything, in conjunction with you guys in Recruitment and then just show the DVD... this is what it looks like.</p> <p>In general what happens is because there is such a mix on the courses, there is normally one group of people that you can put together that will almost guaranteed that it is the perfect interview, so you know what I normally do is have those people right and everyone then is observing, at the end so they can actually see it so that's kind of as good as it gets, but if we could actually put a DVD together and show them what's going on and also</p> <p>if you could get some people to come in and just for a mock interview, we did it recently just down in Arden Road (Tullamore), one of the ladies there actually volunteered and it worked out absolutely brilliant, because sometimes what happens is because of the 2 days, especially if people know each other, there is a lot of giggling, and you know people don't take it serious, and no matter how serious I remain or whatever, it is still. Sometimes that just adds to it, so if you have someone from the outside it makes a world of a difference because they want to do the best for the individual and it makes it more of a reality check, although saying that as soon as you put the table out and everything the whole atmosphere does change, even through its a training environments, it's one of those things that we can all react to, and the seriousness of it. I think they are the key changes that I would make</p>
<p>It's currently a 2 day programme, I know for some of the service managers to release people for 2 days and then to release them for a week or 2 for interviews boards, it's a lot of time, what is your opinion on that</p>	<p>It's a lot of time but it's a lot of time well spent, because again you've got to look at what is the outcome, what are they there to do,</p> <p>If they are going to recruit and you know put a lot of people on the panel you've got to make sure they are skilled enough to do it and they are actually able to make tough decisions. A lot of people come in and say... you know gosh, I put them on the panel because I taught that they are so far done that they would never get a job but you know we say to them listen.. If you're not going to work with them tomorrow then you have to make tough decisions, and people are saying...well yeah I can</p>

<p>opinion on that</p>	<p>understand that now because I can see the monetary value, I can see how much money that I've been asked to spend on behalf of the HSE, so again it is time, a lot of time invested but I think for an organisation this size it's a lot of time well spent, you know going to one day the difference between day 1 and day 2 is just phenomenal and you would actually miss that. And again you know what's not there is the fact that there's nobody there to assess them but I have to say in the past 2 years that I have been delivering it maybe on 2 occasions I came across maybe 2 people who I had concerns about, and what I did in relation to that was I gave the Recruitment Manager a quick ring just to say to be careful but it could be just a nerve thing as well, people will make sure that they are fully prepared before the first person comes in if they're given the time to do it</p>
<p>Sitting on a board yourself with 2 other people on the board, can you bring us through a scenario you have experienced yourself where you have seen negativity because you'd nearly be evaluating it yourself because of your current role</p> <p>Yeah please go on</p>	<p>Do you want something very negative... something that has stayed with me</p> <p>My first time to interview, we meet the chairperson I think on the day of the interview and there were difficulties between the 3 of us from day one and it was more... I have to be careful here... It was more they way they spoke about certain individuals coming into the room and how they favoured a lot of individuals coming into the room, once someone of a certain age or a certain size came in, their whole kind of demeanour changed and it was just eye opening, it was very upsetting for both of us, you know -at the start I thought it was just me, maybe I'm just a bit sensitive, it was some of the comments, now I did say it to him - that totally out of order, but everything was quite funny then and I suppose I was inexperienced, I mentioned it very unofficially to one of the Recruitment people and they kind of .. It really just him and...</p>
<p>So how do you capture that then, when someone doesn't perform at interview board</p>	<p>Well I think defiantly what I have tried to do is empower people sitting on the interview board not to have the same experience I had, if something is going wrong and they are not happy with whatever is going on they need to do a little bit better than myself and go and talk officially to the right people, by all means say it to the person involved and again the 2 of us felt the very same but again the 2 of us were very unsure and very inexperienced also we didn't know if this was right or wrong. But again I would say to people you are there and if there is anything going on, please, please go and talk to recruitment that's what the experts are there for, because again if there is inappropriate language, inappropriate behaviour going on again it was just treating the individuals coming in, I just didn't like that, I put myself in their shoes thinking, you don't expect that never in a million years would I have guessed that any of that would have gone on and that's why I say to people now make sure it doesn't go on it's totally unacceptable and again for the fairness for</p>

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	<p>every single person coming in go and do something about it.</p> <p>I think we also have to be talking to individuals going for interview and empowering them to actually to, come up and say listen I wasn't too happy with that for x,y,z. Now we also do the 2-hour information session – the preparation for your interview, and I've done it for the last competition, if you're not happy don't worry about... They've already done your marks out, they are not going to take marks from you, the process is there and it's there to protect each and every one of us and if we do feel that we've been treated incorrectly that we've followed that procedure that's there as well and make sure people know, they're no point in giving out in the tea room</p>
<p>We did the evaluation of the grade IV interview and we had a very good return rate, it was really useful so even the scare mongering on the phone – when people rang up afterward</p>	<p>We are just so... it's almost like a cult everyone has to give out, no one wants to stand up and say that actually I was treated fairly, that's going against the grain, but what's shown there is when you talk to people individually and you ask for their opinion then that's when you get the real opinion, people are afraid to stand up and say something positive about the organisation in case they're shot down by their peers and that</p>
<p>Since we're on the topic of Recruitment involvement in evaluating the programme where would you see recruitments role in that</p>	<p>I think because it's a recruitment programme I don't know whether the ownership should be with Recruitment or whether it should be with P&D, really where I think the ownership should sit with Recruitment because ultimately you have responsibility for all these competitions which is a huge responsibility, but I think P&D have to come in and you know work with you in relation to it and support you through the whole evaluation piece because again we would have the experience in relation to some of our other programmes, not that we're great at evaluating, we know we have to do it, we spent an awful lot of time putting a structure together, again in the current climate with time and all of that sometimes we can't actually do it, but I do defiantly think we should be supporting you through the whole evaluation piece</p>
<p>When you are talking about the "whole" evaluation piece how would you break it down or how would you start evaluating it</p>	<p>Well it's looking at the programme itself, because again it hasn't really changed over the past no of years, now when I meet up with people...oh I've met you at the Recruitment course, and I would ask if there is anything I've missed - they would say no – no one has actually said, well yeah you never mentioned this or that, so it's hard to tell it's very informal</p> <p>I would love to start with a questionnaire, whether it's on an e-learning piece that people can actually comes back and say it was x,y or z. With me asking them are they really going to come back and say well <Respondent 4> it was a load of rubbish or you were this or that...I think in general</p>

	<p>If you're giving feedback directly to a person people don't like to be negative, so I think it should to be taken outside of the personal piece and just really look at their experience, and talk to them very soon as after they've had the experience of actually interviewing, But again in general I think that should be the starting point and already what you're doing talking to the interviewees, but this needs to be right from the beginning, from the training piece right through the process</p> <p>Does that answer your question?</p>
<p>Yes thanks, Recruiting someone is just the first step in their career, from an evaluation perspective how do you evaluate the candidate post interview</p>	<p>Well I suppose that's where it's going to kick in , I say to the interview board you've got 20 minutes, 45mins at the most to evaluate the person but the organisation HSE has a whole year in relation to the probationary period</p>
<p>And what about people that are promoted rather than new appointments</p>	<p>Well I suppose they are all going back to our local agreements, it will take a lot of time, discussion , debate to change that or whether it can be changed, I certainly wouldn't be able to comment on it, but the parts that we can actually start on are the new recruits within the organisation and get it right</p>
<p>I know from the four countries the probation is used very effectively, dedicating people to do probation reviews in conjunction with the line manager, doing the 5 and 10 month review and is extended if they haven't been in work or where they are absent but our problem is with promotions because where someone is appointed to a senior post there is no evaluation</p>	<p>Again it's all in motion, performance planning and review, that was meant to be brought in and we also have the tool in relation to team based performance management and again that can help to motivate teams motivate the individuals, but it's trying to actually get managers to take it on board, <Name> in P&D has been doing it for the past 5 years if not longer and she has about, something like a couple of 100 teams if not more gone through and again that will help to build on the skills of the individuals, but the other tools that are there – you are really reliant on Line Managers to have the skills to manage these individuals through the probationary period and even through promotion to make sure that the standards are set and that people are aware of them.</p> <p>Because I don't know, in general and again from other pieces of training that we are doing currently in relation to the attendance management we hit on team based, we hit on probation, induction, a lot of people sit there, line managers sit there with blank faces and that has been an horrendous eye opener for us because we thought that for the last few years we have been doing the people management, but again what we feel and I'd feel strongly about is that I get to see the same faces, that same line manager because they want to be the best and then you've got – because they are not mandatory courses, do you know what I mean some people will just sit back because unless they are told to go on a course they won't</p>

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<p>And do you think there is value in having mandatory courses for people skills</p>	<p>Well, I suppose the legal framework is mandatory and again what use to happen when we were outside of DML, the Employee Relations Manager they took ownership of it, we delivered it, and they actually sat in with us so quite a number of people went through it, the demand was huge, and quite a lot of people went through it because they were earmarking people and people didn't have the option and that worked out very, very well</p>
<p>So something similar to that could be applied to Recruitment, if someone from Recruitment sat in on the courses</p>	<p>Well, yes in the managing attendance, get a HR person to sit in as well, if there is no one else there and it's just the training dept, we were almost like a target we should know everything, that's very unrealistic, so when we do have a HR person or we do have the likes of John Brow sitting in on the effective people management it's a totally different arena, and we get more informed questions that people really want to know, well I've done my research here now tell me what I should do next, what's my next step and I think that would work the very same way with Recruitment, when the giggles set in, if there was a recruitment person there people take it more serious because you guys would be more involved in the whole training of it as well</p>
<p>Have you adopted any particular model in relation to the evaluation of your training courses</p>	<p>I was part of the evaluation group, what we did was looked at all out courses and decided which ones needed pre evaluation, post evaluations, what we should be doing in each and every one of them, in some of them we felt you know if there was maybe to do with a policy, there wasn't a awful lot of evaluation that could do on it. Where you have maybe the 3 day people management course there is quite a lot of information in that, so we should be seeing the different behaviours, do you know what I mean, because it's a skills development course where normally with a policy it's really about information and making sure the person knows exactly what this policy is all about and if they do have any questions they can review the information</p>
<p>The interview-training course is skills and the legislative framework around that so is it a 2-way evaluation?</p>	<p>Absolutely, it is and by all means there has to be an evaluation piece and we were looking at the Kirkpatrick model and the Philips model as well but again we haven't really done an awful lot in all honesty, between the time the group being set up and looking at evaluation and starting to roll it out. We are trying to capture when people come to the course, when people come to the course, where you are currently at, tell me exactly where your skill level is, and I suppose I'm an offender myself we are so use to giving out the evaluation at the end of the day or the 2nd day instead of giving it out at the beginning</p>
<p>Do you have much feedback</p>	<p>Yes, and they are all feed into training an events so we have all the number involved and also if anything did happen on the day, we do have a trainers evaluation piece as well so it's just really to evaluate how many were expected, how many turned up and if anything happened on a particular day</p>

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<p>They are often referred to as Happy sheet, is there statistics around that</p>	<p>All that goes into training and events, and <P&D Name> P&D, she would be able to do you out a report on it and by all means use it, and we're hoping to get to a stage where we are using it a lot more and in a lot more detail and we're trying to develop the SAP system that will actually meet our needs as a training dept as well and they're talking to the lads that are here in the SAP(HR System) office in <place name> to see if we can change it slightly to get the information we are looking at rather than set up another data base, an access data base.</p>
<p>It's possibly something we should be looking at after your training course</p>	<p>Yeah, absolutely</p>
<p>Because our feedback would be very informal with the interview boards before they start the actual interview, we would do some refresher and clarity bits with them before interview but it's very informal</p>	<p>Yeah, yeah, we were talking , we're doing induction as well and a lot of say the experts in the area would come in and we were talking with one particular person who wants an evaluation on her particular piece, so again it could be that we would have our evaluation page and we could attach another page in relation to recruitment side and make people aware, and we always say please be brutally honest, the only way we can make sure that we are doing a good job is if you actually telling us,</p> <p>In general and the feedback is quite good, people do enjoy that course now I have to say and even if they start off and they are quite negative, there was, I suppose it comes with experience, at the start it was very much just listening to them, and now it's just like stop and say .. well I know you have taught around it and perhaps don't feel you should be here but I'll come back to you after day 2 and if you still have concerns I will get them addressed...and nobody has ever come back because they have a complete turnaround, because they see how fair the whole kind of process is and again they take on board their responsibility, nobody else can turn around and say well that didn't go well because of their part of it and it's going well because of their input into it as well</p>
<p>Evaluating a programme in terms of return of investment</p>	<p>I know there was a huge body of work done by <name> in relation to the dignity of work policy but we haven't really started going down that route at all, we defiantly know we should be but you know it's the time, this time 4 years ago we had an extra 4 staff members and we are across the whole of DML area and it depends on the priorities, our priorities can change like monthly, and that can be quite difficult as well, all of a sudden, at the moment out IT trainings is the priority as we have to get all the primary care teams up to a certain level so they can use the computers and the data bases that are there and with so many staff gone, if someone leaves their work load is divided out among the staff are left</p>
<p>So ROI is not a priority,</p>	<p>Yeah and I even cringe at the thought of it as a trainer cause it has to be</p>

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<p>it's down the line</p>	<p>up there but it doesn't always go that way</p>
<p>You mentioned earlier about different member of staff attending the course and you said your preference was to have complete boards if you like attending the training, obviously that's not always possible because you would have small numbers</p>	<p>Well so many people have been trained at this stage and they don't need to come back</p>
<p>Or do they?</p>	<p>Well I suppose, they don't need a full 2 day training, ideally the people who don't, if you have 3 people 2 have gone through it, the 3rd person comes in goes on the 2 day training then they would need a half day session together, at least a week, maybe 2 weeks beforehand so they can actually get all their information ready and really just do their preparation, digest exactly what they are looking for, know their clear role and be quite comfortable and happy</p>
<p>I know our half day pre-interview is a lot of times a half day on the day of the first interview perhaps a few days before, if they get released for a period and everything has to be packed into it</p>	<p>What I say to people is, as soon as you know who is sitting on your board and especially if it's a competency based application form, start you thought process really have a look at it, if you know who is on the interview board pick up the phone, start to build that relationship, don't wait on the Recruitment manager bring you all together, because you are putting extra pressure on yourselves, you have a limited resource with a huge amount of competitions going on.. as soon as they know make the phone call take responsibility, don't wait for everything to be handed because you could be left waiting until that morning, if you are inexperienced that's not enough time</p>
<p>In some areas, the Recruitment office do the actual framework, this approach is also taken at national level for the national campaigns what are your opinion on that</p>	<p>At the start I was appalled by it, as I really felt that the interview board they're taking responsible recruit, to put these guys on the panel so they all have to come together and agree what they are actually looking at but I was involved with training 2 interview boards last Sept/Oct and like that we had the framework out, and again when you actually read through it made life a little easier for the interview boards and gave them more time to sit together, have a read through, and really this was agreed and we can't go outside of it and really to have a good discussion around well ok, so how are we going to interpret this so I think it did actually help</p>
<p>I know we have done them for the big competitions for a number of the big</p>	<p>Right, but the ones I did they couldn't change anything so that was fine I did go back and forth but they weren't allowed to change anything</p>

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<p>competition as it's very hard to get consensus when you have a multitude of boards sitting, and like yourself I was appalled first but it focused them very much and then what I did was that if there was anything as a group they wanted to change they could come back as a group and make recommendations</p>	
<p>found it helpful to change as they were coming as a group with their combined experiences and it was taken out of the job description and when Recruitment do it they are doing it on the basis of the job description and it's very difficult to prioritise the competency areas, without that input from the people on the ground</p>	<p>Well I think for the national level, they brought the heads of discipline together and you know the experts were involved in it and especially in relation to professional knowledge that piece there really worked well,, I noticed over the years that people really struggled with trying to put the questions together for professional knowledge, and that one of the areas I was alluding to earlier on with questions together people felt they couldn't go outside of you know.. "Give me an example of " in relation to professional knowledge ,and that is a key area for anyone in the clinical area, when they are being recruited that we need to know that they do actually know a certain amount of information, they are up to the standard and they can demonstrate it</p>
<p>So that's where it's gone semi-structured really</p>	<p>Yes, absolutely so that's why a lot of people say in this particular area, the old midlands they felt that this is not going to work because they were so restricted, and we said no you have to be able to ask these questions and come outside the structure in this area and this area only</p>
<p>So, have you any other suggestion, I think we have covered everything in a roundabout way, have you any suggestions or more comments</p>	<p>No , the feedback that I have got from the course is generally brilliant, I would always say that performance and development can't take credit for that, it was put together by the experts and that shines through</p>
<p>Can keeping things updated be a problem as</p>	<p>It can but I think we have kind of got over that because again, <Occupational Therapist> has been working quite a lot on it, and over</p>

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<p>things change</p>	<p>the past few months whenever I was going to do anything for you guys or Shared Services I'd always run it by herself just to see am I right or has there be any changes because there was no point in people coming to us and getting changed and then maybe 2 months later going to <Name>e or a national competition and seeing something totally different, so it was good to have that link in there as well.</p> <p>In the last training course there was a number of consultants on it as well and I hadn't realised that there was a whole other piece of work done in consultation with the consultants in relation to recruitment of NCHD's and I would have gone blindly on but at least she was there I had access to her</p>
<p>Because that piece has not been historically done by recruitment, Medical manpower have always done it</p>	<p>Yeah I know but again, I need to be confident, it's not that I want to know everything, but that I'm pointing people in the right direction delivering the correct information and not wasting their time</p>
<p>Anything else to add</p>	<p>No I think that covers everything, defiantly it probably is the missing link and I don't know, P&D we have to take some responsibility for that as well but again, it's just one of those things, but it has to be a 2 way thing just to give it credence as well, the size of the organisation, the current climate we are in, so many changes, the resources are being taken off us left right and centre and unfortunately something has to give and regardless of whether it's the private sector or the public sector it's always the training area that's hit and I think time always tells that it was the wrong area to hit</p>
<p>And it's the mistake that continues to be made</p>	<p>Hopefully one day people will realise that we need to focus on the training</p>
<p>It probably more important than ever at this time to focus on training and to recruit the right people, this whole recruitment embargo, the scope for accessing talented individuals is so broad, but that's it. Thanks <Respondent 4> for your time</p>	<p>Absolutely, absolutely,</p> <p>No problem, the best of luck with it</p>

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Appendix 6.

Transcript of Interview conducted on Respondent 5

<p>Interviewer (Introduction):</p> <p>Thanks <Respondent 5> for doing this. As you know I'm doing my dissertation and the topic that I have chosen is the evaluation of our interview skills training programme and how effective it is. The competency style interview has been adapted nationally, so I am not trying to evaluate it so what I am trying to assess is if the training programme is effective in teaching the skills needed to be a good interviewer, and if so or not what can we do to change it or amend it.</p>		<p>OK</p>
<p>Interviewer</p>	<p>Respondent</p>	
<p>Have you undertaken the interview skills training programme</p>	<p>Yes Catriona, August of 2008</p>	
<p>OK and had you done any other formal interview training prior to that</p>	<p>Yes years and years ago, but nothing as formal as what we did on the 2 days nothing as structured either</p>	
<p>Ok have you sat on many interview boards</p>	<p>I was sitting on an interview board within a week or ten days of the training, but I haven't sat on anything I the mean time</p>	
<p>Have you how long ago did you get the other type of training</p>	<p>If I said 5 or 6 years ago, it was before the new recruitment regime took place so it would have been in the older days</p>	
<p>And did you sit on many interview boards after getting that original training</p>	<p>Yes, lots of them up and down for all sorts over the years</p>	
<p>Just to give us an idea how long have you been around doing interview</p>	<p>Laugh... I would say doing interviews probably, well 37 years around in total but I'd say, for the first period of your life you're at a grade where you wouldn't be asked so probably for the last 20 years I've been doing interviews</p>	
<p>Did you find our 2 day course useful</p>	<p>The course was... useful, I couldn't understand initially why it was going to take that long, and almost couldn't understand somebody that was around as long as I was had to do it, but certainly having done the course I appreciate the need to have to do it, and it is absolutely essential ,you won't do an interview board properly or interview people properly</p>	

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	<p>unless you have gone through the interview training</p>
<p>From memory <Respondent 5> and I know it's a while since you have done it, what general areas did the training cover</p>	<p>Am.. general areas would be well I suppose the things that come back to me would be why we are using competency based interviews, isn't it funny I one things that keeps coming back to me now around the interview is that ... not sharing information with interview board members before the interview, what else can I think of that really it's how you perform on the day at interview that is important, in the past we would always have brought views and thoughts of what we taught of a candidate into the interview board with you, especially if you were interviewing locally, you always knew something about the guy or girl, that they were good, bad or indifferent or how they were thought of generally, but that really doesn't count anymore, you are interviewed on your competence, on the questions you were asked on the day, it's a lot more structured, there is much more requirements to keep your notes properly – those are the sort of things that cross my mind around the training day. The other thing was there was a real mix of people on the training with me that day, some people were being pushed into it like me who were doing interviews boards the next week, other people felt they needed it as part of their CV as they were doing it regularly, but certainly from my own point of view again if I was sitting on an interview again in the morning I would have to revisit my notes, because you do get out of the habit of doing it.</p> <p>The other thing that I noticed here, where we were having lots of interviews over the last year or 2, I know it's all halted now, is that we tend to have very good chair persons who are very competent and would guide you through it and again having someone like that is very useful, but it still doesn't negate your own responsibility to do your own piece right ,you know</p>
<p>So would you have changed your attitude to the whole interviewing after doing the 2 day course</p>	<p>Yes I think I would have, mainly because I realised that if we don't do it right the risk is we lose our licence, which is a key issue there is a process, there is an appeals system, there is a system there, if you don't do it right you know you're not doing the candidate justice, not doing the HSE justice, not doing recruitment justice, so yes certainly I would think I have changed my approach, I would always tend to been fair but you have to be more structured in your fairness now and you have to document it more, your documentation almost has to show how fair you are rather than saying "I'm a fair person by nature and I'll always be fair with everybody", that's no good anymore now, you have to show through your documentation that everybody got the same crack of the whip, everybody was asked generally the same area of questioning and that the interview was structured by the each member of the interview panel having their own area of responsibility, and the timing again is another piece – where in the past you got somebody on an interview board who dominated the board it could take up ¾ of your time, but now</p>

	<p>the timing is much more structured because you have to divide your competencies into the time you have allowed and the review afterward again, which wasn't always done in the past you tended to leave 5 or 6 people and then do the marking, you can't do that anymore you have to be a lot more disciplined about it. So I suppose the big thing I would have learned was the need to be disciplined, I picked up some of this by doing the interview board the following week anyway, the practice and the theory came together when I did the interview board.</p>
<p>So it is important that there is not a big gap between the training and the interviewing</p>	<p>I think there has to be some way of picking up what you require to so every time you do an interview board, you can't just sit in and do an interview board, if I was to do it in the morning I would have to revisit my notes and chat some of yourselves but again a good chairperson is very important</p>
<p>Yeah we do the bit on the side of practice before every interview board</p>	<p>The other piece is the fact that we get the applications beforehand now you have the opportunity to review them, but not discuss them, I remember, that's one thing that stuck in my mind as well, years ago when you sat in as an interview board the whole panel how many have we in, well we have 44 in and that person looks good or bad, you have your own taught but you don't share them nothing comes out before you mark them</p>
<p>So what does competency style interview mean to you</p>	<p>There's predefined competencies for each post Well, it just dividing them up between the panel and linking to job description to the competencies – that's hard, when you're not doing it every day you need to revisit it, if I say one thing else to you I'd say you need to revisit these things and understand what you are going, again a strong chairperson will guide you</p>
<p>Do you see a real need in the training in having the module on the training on job description and how it comes to pass,</p>	<p>Oh yeah, absolutely in, Well when I do up job descriptions we just did up one recently with I think someone from the acute hospitals and yourselves, around a geriatrician post, certainly look at those job descriptions a lot more closely now and put yourself in the place of the interview board in 6 months time to be interviewing for that job and I think it's linking the job description and the competencies is a huge piece of work and it needs to be done right and I don't think people understand, people who go in on interview boards really didn't see the connection between the 2 things but we do now.</p>
<p>Do you think that anyone that has attended that interview training can sit on an interview board</p>	<p>Pause.... I think there is some people who shouldn't sit on interview boards at all, that's the bottom line some people are not made for interview boards, some people are more nervous at interview boards as interviewers than the candidates are ,so they're actually not doing the candidate any justice at all, some people are far too, I think, too structured, I know you have to be structured around , I'm saying now you have to be structured around your questioning but there is bit of capacity there, you know the edges to make people feel comfortable</p>

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	<p>while asking the same questions, so no I don't think that anyone can sit on an interview board, you have to know what you are trying to do and then you have to be in a position to make the candidate feel comfortable so the answer is I don't think everybody can sit on an interview board</p>
<p>Have you sat on interview boards with people that shouldn't sit on interview boards</p>	<p>Yea defiantly</p>
<p>And how can you stop that from happening</p>	<p>Well I think when HR set out to pick an interview board they should know in advance that these people are experienced, if you don't sit on an interview board you can't get the experience so that' the other side... I think sometimes we force some people into sitting on an interview board, we should actually be more discriminating about ask and don't ask who we put on the interview board, if someone says they hate sitting on interview boards, I just don't want to do it, well then we should take it that they don't want to do it, rather than sticking someone in because they're they are the named expert, you could be the best expert in the country but not be good at interviewing, it defeats the whole purpose then of getting the best candidate then I think</p>
<p>Have you had experience from people that you have interviewed and have come through the competency process and did very well at interview and doesn't translate to job performance</p>	<p>Yes you will always get that, more so in the old days not so much nowadays because you now really draw from people the competencies and get a good feel for what you're doing. I can't say in recent times that we've had any bad experiences in that regard. In comparing the old and new system you have a better chance of getting the right candidate I think</p>
<p>Do you feel they are better assessed at interview and would be happier to take someone through the new process</p>	<p>Yea, I defiantly think in the older process you were looking at what you taught of somebody in the past, what you heard about them or maybe come across on a day-to-day basis. This is really on the day they candidates have to show through their work experience that they have the competencies, they have to use their work experience to demonstrate, which is good that is better</p>
<p>Do you feel you get the real story from them</p>	<p>As much as you can, I mean sometimes your time is limited, you use the form you've agreed on the competencies you know the job description and you're linking all those pieces together there is an art in this as well</p>
<p>There are some candidates that are good at interview</p>	<p>Defiantly, candidates, Yes I think, that if you are around a while experienced and are you know the right questions to ask, you will be able to evaluate that, you are always going to get people who get through the system and are no good on the day or on the job but that's part of</p>

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	<p>life, that's why you have probation and all of that</p>
<p>While we are talking about probation for new people, for people who get promoted there is no system in place, any suggestions around that</p>	<p>It's difficult, but I do know in a lot of places in the public sector they have fixed term contracts, what the proper definition, most of those big jobs have limited to 7 years, some would say 7 years is a long time to have someone around that is no good, now it may mean you have to keep interviewing but you need some little thing</p>
<p>Something similar to probation</p>	<p>What you would be saying is you may have been suitable for your past job, so we're not going to fire you, but you're not suitable for your current job, now it's to get some kind of fair mechanism there, something along the lines of the local authorities who only interview county managers for 7 years, they have to be re-interviewed for it again, now 7 years is too long back to 3 years maybe, I don't know but you probably need something,</p>
<p>Does the induction assist through probation</p>	<p>Yea, I've been at some of those in the past and done some talks, they are helpful but it depends on what grade you are bringing people in at, it's very hard to ... if you have a number of foreign people coming in... I know this is going to be happening less now so it's not as relevant now, and less but 5 years ago we had nurses and therapists coming for everywhere I think the induction does help and it does set a benchmark or a standard around a whole range of things, discipline, employee assistance, taxation system, PRSI system, it does help, yet if you don't say something to someone at induction chances are if they don't perform they will come back in a year's time and say I wasn't told that, so it really is important at induction to cover almost everything. Candidates or new employees want more advice around bullying or employee assistance or hours of working they can always get it from their immediate supervisor but I think at induction it is really important to hit on the high notes, I think what would be really good is to look at exit interviews when people leave or looking at if we have to discipline someone for any issue to see were the issues raised at the exit interviews were they covered adequately at the inductions because if they weren't I've seen situations where staff represented by their unions can say my member didn't hear that at induction so you have to get the induction piece right</p>
<p>Setting targets and goals for people while they are learning to adopt to a new job, manager are very tied for time</p>	<p>My experience is the more time you spend at it at the beginning the better it pays off you can actually spot someone who is not performing in 2/3 months, set their targets and they could fly through probation in a year's time or fly into the system, if you go back through the disciplinary issues or cases that I would have had over the years, one of the things you will always be asked is if you set targets for this person, did you review the targets, did you amend the targets, did you consult with the person involved were they part of contributing to making and</p>

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	<p>setting the targets so certainly my approach would be the more time you spend on this at the beginning the better it is</p>
<p>So is this an extension of recruitment process?</p>	<p>When I get handed a new person... which is becoming very rare...(laugh) there is an onus on me to follow up on the work that the interview board actually started, so that means follow through with someone right through, quarterly, six months, all of these things fall back on you if someone is being disciplined or doesn't perform well unless you have gone through the whole gambit of the proper interview process, the proper induction, the local induction, the performance review, unless you've gone through that your hand us weakened if you go to let someone go, so you have to it's part of a chain if you're weak in any part the whole thing falls apart</p>
<p>So just going back to the training again, generally we do refresher training every 2 years as a matter of course for people that interview frequently – is that sufficient</p>	<p>Probable but nowadays because we are having such few interview, I think it's something that should be mandatory in relation to people sitting on interview board, I wouldn't just blanket retrain everybody, so if you called me to sit on an interview in a month's time then I would have to sit on half day training but I would only arrange it around particular interview boards. You need to spend a couple of hours looking at your notes and it will all come back to you</p>
<p>Is there any suggestions or comments from your experiences you would like to add</p>	<p>No, on reflection it was worthwhile, it was needed, taught it was going to be too long, actually wasn't too long, there was one piece – there was nobody from recruitment brought in on the day, either yourself or <Respondent 1> and there was a gap, maybe there was nobody was available on the day do I think a little bit more input by yourselves – even if it was only for an hour and even from employee relations as well – if you ask a lot of people they don't know what you do, well not yourselves they know ye recruit people so even a half hour from yourselves, or <Respondent 1> or <Employee Relations Manager named></p>
<p>Yes we now send someone from Recruitment if we can at all, and that was from your and other feedback, so that's fairly well it <Respondent 5> unless you want to add anything else</p>	<p>No, no. I enjoyed it, it was worthwhile I would need some refresher if I was going it again</p>
<p>Thanks <Respondent 5> that's brilliant</p>	<p>No problem</p>

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Appendix 7. Transcript of Interview conducted on Respondent 6

Interviewer (Introduction):		OK
<p>Hi <Respondent 6> as you know I am doing my dissertation based on an evaluation on the interview skills training programme and how effective it is. So the competency style of interviews that has been adopted nationally is not under review and we have accepted that this is what we are using at the moment and what I am looking at is evaluating the actual training programme and how effective it is as in interviewer sitting on an board so I will be looking at how they translate the skills from training into sitting on an actual interview board and to see if there is anything that needs to be changed around this or what opinions you have around this.</p>		
Interviewer	Respondent	
Have you undertaken the 2 day interview skills training programme as provided by Training and Development	Yes I did	
When did you partake in this course?	A few years ago	
Did you do any other training outside of the HSE on interview skills?	No	
How long after training did you sit on an interview board was it fairly quickly afterwards?	It was soon enough after the course	
Was the course done in anticipation of the upcoming interviews?	It was yes	
Did you find this training useful?	I did I found it very useful in that I think it focused you more on the interviews coming up and I felt it was very important as you trained to interview and you got the required skills and this gave you the confidence to do the interview and also to be confident about the decisions you made during the interview.	
Can you remember any of the areas you covered during the course?	It is a while since I did it. I know we covered the area of competency-based interviews, which was a big change for me. Along with answering questions it was based on the experience you had as opposed to what you had done and I found it very interesting and a better approach to	

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	selecting a candidate
Did you find that you were getting better quality answers from people when asking them about their experience rather than asking them what they would do in a certain situation?	Well I think what happened in the beginning was even for the interviewee there was a lot of learning there because a lot of them were geared towards looking at what they would do and there was learning in it for them as well so you came to a whole scenario where by the interviewee was also looking for training as well and looking for what kind of person the HSE was looking for. So all around this became good in the work place too because people were now looking at what they were doing and why they were doing it.
So it had a positive impact in that sense?	Yes it had.
Do you think that getting that training affected your judgement of candidates?	Well it did because the candidates were judged on the experiences to determine whether they had the skills to do the jobs that they were being interviewed for.
What does competency mean to you?	Competency means that the person being interviewed can demonstrate that they have the skills to undertake the duties of the post.
Do you see that translating from the job description into what they do on a day-to-day basis?	It is kind of interesting in a way that I couldn't as it was a struggle for me to learn the whole competency framework as well but when you sit down during the training with a group of people it does and when you ensure that everything is covered that is required and you spend the time doing this then you know you are going to get the right candidate for the position.
You sat on the recent Grade IV interviews that we did the candidate feedback on which was quite positive from the candidates and we had a very high return rate on that questionnaire. From that process how has the feedback been from here from candidates that went for those interviews?	Well in one department here there was a lot of disappointment and I can see how that happened as well it was really at the skills level but I think there was also an understanding and it is kind of settling down now as that is the process and you had to be able to demonstrate.
During the interviews did you see people that had a higher quality skill than those that were	Yes I did. I seen a lot of that and it was very difficult really.

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<p>going for their own jobs per say?</p>	
<p>So for the purposes of this, this is where people had been acting into the grade that they were going for interview for and they weren't successful enough to be placed high enough on the panel to get the job. I am aware that there were similar difficulties across the boards in that regard but you followed the competency style interviews?</p>	<p>It was tough but we had to do that, we followed the competency style and with 3 individuals on the board that were trained the very same and had gone through the very same training process. All you could do is mark the candidate on the answers based on the competency that you were looking for and it seemed disappointing but it was the facts of it and in fact I would have loved to have worked with a lot of those people that came high up on those panels as I could see a lot of potential in them especially the grade III's I could see they had huge potential and I could see where they were coming from they had gained an awful lot of experience.</p>
<p>Just on the constitution of the interview board, the Chairperson's role do you see that as important in the process?</p>	<p>I see that as one of the most important roles of the whole thing I think the other two persons are concentrating mainly on two competencies each. The chairperson must be there on time and has to lead and drive the interview and has to keep it within time and has to ensure that everyone is prepared for the interview because. You have to stay on time as it's not fair to the candidates waiting and I know what it is like to be on the other side. You are giving a fair chance to all by not rushing so it is vital for the Chairperson to be on time. I noticed at one that did that one person did not have any questions prepared at all and read the cv after the previous candidate had left the room and I felt that this was not fair to the candidate and I also noted to the person during it that I felt they hadn't actually covered the competency at all with the questions that were asked. I</p>
<p>And did you find yourself backtracking to cover the competency areas</p>	<p>I did yeah you had to go back</p>
<p>The role of the chairperson – how important is it</p>	<p>I think the chairperson role is vital, you have to stay on time, first of all it's not fair to the candidates to be waiting, cause I know what it's like on the other side you know and you know I feel that you're not rushing then up to lunch time or not rushing in the evening and everyone gets a fair go</p>
<p>It is covered in the training allowing time</p>	<p>It was all covered in the training, Everything was covered in the training and it was just to abide by this. I do feel this is the most important role the chairperson</p>

<p>Do you think that anyone that attends a 2-day training course can do interviews?</p>	<p>I think they should be able to because it is an excellent course. It is very focused. I think when you come away from the work place and go to participate in a course, as it is so detailed and focused you straight away want to participate in an interview as you have got the knowledge. There is no reason why they shouldn't.</p>
<p>Who do you think should decide who attends the training course?</p>	<p>I think if anyone is asked they really should have the commitment and foresight to participate in it. They should also have an interest in this field. It cannot be an expense which one may wonder about because they can run for up to 2 weeks. It has to be someone that is prepared to give the time and do it properly.</p>
<p>So do you feel recommendations from managers that are looking for the jobs to be filled are important in that regards that they recommend people to sit on the board</p>	<p>I think so</p>
<p>Have you ever been assessed post training on your skills or has anyone ever spoken to you regarding your interviewing skills?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Would you feel comfortable doing an interview in the morning if I asked you to sit on an interview board?</p>	<p>Yes I would feel confident to do this. I like doing interviews actually because I think it is a very important thing that we do because I remember the time that we couldn't recruit and we ended up with a lot of people that might not make it through the process now. I feel it is vitally important that this organisation selects the right candidates because your Grade IV's is you potential Grade V and your grade V is your potential Grade VI.</p>
<p>Speaking of this as a manager who takes candidates from a process like the grade IV, and I know we can't take them now because of the situation but maybe you could think back to a previous competition do those who perform best at interview always</p>	<p>Pause..... am..... I don't know about that, wait 'til I see now, I'm very lucky here really because we have a very big department and I can tend to move people to meet the roles for example , I have front line staff who meets the people and that takes a certain calibre of person and there are people who are quite happy to type all day and there are people who can work to deadlines and those that don't there are over 40 people in <dept name> so I have an opportunity to .. if people don't work out in one particular area and even to move them outside of the <department> because I have a good relationship with other managers and it would be a matter of the skills, but can I just give you one instance, we got a person here from the panel and she as dyslexic but that wasn't noted during the interview skills obviously and we had her on the main</p>

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<p>perform best in the workplace</p>	<p>reception and she couldn't spell address, and it causes awful problems, but she actually, we discovered that she had other skills, she had very good skills with figures so we spoke to someone in the Finance dept and she transferred over there and is actually doing really well there , but the interview process I suppose being in a specific area where spelling was very important on a generic system that wouldn't be taking into account, but it would be with a typing test, so this girl came to us and hadn't done the typing test, it was very difficult for the girl, she actually was under a lot of pressure, she was under nearly more pressure than we were, it also takes a while for things to be obvious</p>
<p>Was she a new appointment or a promotion</p>	<p>A new appointment</p>
<p>So you had the probationary period</p>	<p>Yes and that's when she moved to Finance</p>
<p>Induction for someone like that where their skills didn't match does it help</p>	<p>It does, Now you have to be very careful you have to be applied you have to have if you know... a line manager that is going to manage and you have to have regular appraisal and monitor that person and initially you have to give them all the proper training and support and in this dept that can take some time because you have loads of different systems and modules and you have all your paper trail as well and you teaming and a multi-disciplinary and a front line driven service as well because you have the public, I can only talk really for her you get to know somebody.. they either like it or they don't</p>
<p>So you have scope to transfer</p>	<p>Now I wouldn't transfer someone who weren't going to meet the standard</p>
<p>Is anyone ever have anyone who didn't pass the probation</p>	<p>Yes we did and we also had someone who only very recently we had to move in a completely different area completely and is managing a lot better in the other area and we have also had other who we sent to occupational health, and we also had someone that we very nearly through working with them found sometimes very difficult to let somebody go.. I have a file there... the person walked out in the end and I don't know if it's worth it or not</p>
<p>Is that something that you could have identified at interview after doing the competency style training...to alleviate these problems</p>	<p>I think it is in the depth of the answer, it's in... I don't have difficulty with people being nervous or quiet but you're actually looking for depth of experience and quality answers and I think you have to be very careful about that</p>
<p>And do you think that is</p>	<p>Yes I would and people will say time and time again, how did she get on</p>

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<p>the responsibility of the interview board, are they responsible for that person being put on the panel</p>	<p>a panel, it has to stop at the interview process, it has to be of the right standard, if they don't reach that standard they shouldn't be on the panel, not putting them at the end of it like we were doing for a while but we coped that on... it's very dangerous thing to do</p>
<p>Would you if you were going to re-organise the 2 day course</p>	<p>I suppose all the legislation that you really, I have lots of stuff that I have to read as part of my job and I don't think there is any reason that they can't read that and sign of that they understand, and maybe just mentioned a synopsis and it becomes a little bit, even the people delivering it are rambling through it, the punch is gone on it, and you find that if you are talking about the same thing a lot that does happen</p>
<p>So perhaps something like this is what happens when you don't do it right...this is what happens</p>	<p>Yeah and these things have cropped up and this is what happened</p>
<p>Have you any other suggestions you would like to add</p>	<p>I think would it be useful if the three people on the interview board could have maybe one or two mock interviews or an example of CV's and maybe a HR person sits the other side of the table with the CV and the framework and we could get the feedback so the interview board would know how they were gelling as well, 2 or 3 so you're getting your timings right as well</p>
<p>That could be done maybe after you have completed the interview framework</p>	<p>Yeah I think so, that would be important and then feedback for the interview board – on that day as well</p>
<p>So you would know if you are doing something wrong if it's not being pointed out to you</p>	<p>Yeah and another thing as well, you are relying on your other 2 colleagues on the interview board as well, everyone says to the others – well how did you think I did, did I ask pertinent questions did I cover anything, and we got to the stage where we were saying well you really need to be looking at planning in more detail because we can't mark it if you don't you know we don't have the answers to mark on, so that gives the interview board then the opportunity to kind of feed off one another</p>
<p>So I suppose to summarise the role of the chairperson and some practice as interview boards with feedback would be some suggestions</p>	<p>Yeah, just to day that when I came back to work and having worked with a good group of people that were being interviewed I felt that the interview board didn't take the blame if they didn't succeed and it was their own answering, the amount of people who said to me I know I didn't answer that right, they knew it was a competency and I was kind of happy about that because it is difficult to come back to work because one or 2 people here would have lost their jobs and that would have been difficult and it's more transparent and everyone knows that you answer</p>

	the questions on the competency
Yes, I found that with the questionnaires as well, there are only one or two negative comment on the questionnaires only	And the opportunity for the candidate for the candidate to get feedback as well was great and I was really pleased to do it, I feel the candidates should look for it because one or two really did have all the experience I knew it but didn't answer the question so I could only mark on what they said but it was a pity but when we got to meet them 2 of them and they were delighted to get that and felt that they could do another interview now one of them were still annoyed and I think we felt that we were bias towards us, we were very near calling you in, she was still angry. You find now that people are preparing better for interviews and they are trying to fill out the competencies in relation to their work and it's making them look at their jobs differently, I know they have to be of that standard and I can expect them to do the work because that's what they will be expected to give as their experience at interview, and very interesting I have invited people to get involved in projects and they do it because they know they can use it at interview and it's very interesting people and to get on in their jobs and managing teams or whatever, the whole process very very good, even when preparing for my own interview.....
Anything else you would like to add	Well something that was very interesting was the level of badly prepared CV's one person her four competencies were the same, not having looked it over, spelling and grammar because it's very important here, so straight away people are not giving themselves a chance because I would look at communications in the written format and I taught that was just a pity that people would go through without being properly prepared and they were the people who came back for feedback... isn't that interesting, I found that very interesting and nobody wants them on their team if they can't put the effort into filling their CV
Thanks <Respondent 6> that's great	

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Appendix 8.

Transcript of Interview conducted on Respondent 7

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<p><u>Interviewer (Introduction):</u></p> <p>Thanks for doing the interview <Respondent 7>. As you know I'm doing my dissertation and the topic that I have chosen is the evaluation of our interview skills training programme and how effective it is. The competency style interview is not under review it has been adapted nationally, so I am not trying to evaluate it so what I am trying to assess is if the training programme is effective in teaching the skills needed to be a good interviewer, and if so in or not what can we do to change it or amend it.</p>		<p>OK fair enough</p>
<p>Interviewer</p>	<p>Respondent</p>	
<p>So have you undertaken interview skills training</p>	<p>I Have Over the last few years I would have done training via the IPA at the outset <name> would have been the trainer on interviewing skills and equally working alongside that was the actual legislation that interviewers would have to be aware of within the context of the interviewing primarily the freedom of information act and the equality legislation, obviously since then we have had more training when we got out licence to recruit on the 1st April 05 with the CPSA and the public appointments service, so I got training on that as well through HSE corporate and I did training back a few years ago with a consultant that came in here that we employed to do interview training with</p>	
<p>You also did a refresher programme recently</p>	<p>Yes, February/March because I was involved in the grade IV campaign and there was three or four days and there was a one day programme which was very good</p>	
<p>Ok so you sat very quickly after the last refresher training on your interview board</p>	<p>Yes, the interview training was focused specifically on the grade 4 interviews</p>	
<p>Did you find that useful tool in getting people together that were going to sit on the same board</p>	<p>, absolutely, it was actually critical... I probably wouldn't have sat on the interview board if that wasn't facilitated prior to the interviews because based on my experience , in terms of consistency and standardisation to ensure that everyone that is sitting on the board is singing from the same hymn sheet in terms of the competencies being interviewed for, the standard of questioning, the job spec, the post being advertised that everyone knew the finer details and area of competencies and questions so yes, I probably would have been reluctant to sit on the interview board if that training had not been provided</p>	
<p>Do you think there was a change in your own attitude as a result of doing he training</p>	<p>Well not specifically that one because in fairness over the years I have sat on a good few interview boards for different grades and I've done it probably the old style semi-competency and based on the generic application form, however in more recent times it really has been competency based and I suppose I have worked on both sides and I've seen the good and the bad and I actually do think that a competency</p>	

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	<p>based interview is very good but it does go back to the training, if people are trained and know what they can ask it is actually workable</p>
<p>Just going on from that do you think that anyone who has attended the training is capable of interviewing</p>	<p>On the rector scale if I go back and look at generically from clerical management/admin scale if I am to be grade V, VI, VII I should be capable I should have the skills to interview, however there are specific skills required and maybe perception or personality or actual skills in terms of objectivity or maybe having actually enough knowledge, having worked in a range of jobs or range of experience to actually be able to probe and that you're allowed to question areas on the application form. I would have fears sometimes as to whether that person is suitable to sit on an interview board, and now maybe too if I was asked to put that on paper what are the skills required to sit on an interview board, or why I think that someone like <name> might not be suitable to sit on an interview board, it's very difficult, in terms of being tangible I'm not sure but yes I would say there are people who are not the most appropriate to sit on an interview board</p>
<p>To evaluate those people because they have gone through the training, where would you start</p>	<p>It's a difficult one in terms of evaluation, because we'd all like to think that after doing interview and training and have x amount of experience we should be able, I suppose on an individual basis if someone was to do an evaluation... again you're going to ask them, if I was being asked individually and so an evaluation, you sat down and interviewed lately... and you ask them individually so you seen the job spec and the profile and you seen what the competencies that are required and maybe too its maybe me been asked, what kind of questions did you ask and around planning and organisation or analytical skills and getting 360 degree feedback</p>
<p>is it too late as that stage maybe after selecting the wrong candidate or not the best one</p>	<p>Well is always going to be a learning process, and I suppose a continuous process and we're always trying to get it better, and I think we have come a long way ... because I have had bad experiences going back 4/5 years ago in terms of competency based training and the skills required and maybe the inconsistencies and working here as a line manager in employee relations, I've had queries from managers saying how did x get the job, he doesn't have the competencies to be a grade IV, and it comes back then that Nellie is sitting in a job and it looks like there is a perception that she didn't have the competencies to do the job that was advertised</p>
<p>So how did she get the job in your experience because you've sat on a number of these interviews</p>	<p>Well again too, at the time, going back a few years ago I would say it was the actual training at the time and the people sitting on the interview boards and again too we've moved forward in terms of how, number one the training beforehand and equally too people being more aware of competency based training is about and the probing. I feel in the beginning there wasn't enough probing done and everyone was asked the same questions</p>

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<p>So it was over structured, So have we learned?</p>	<p>Yes, but again too you can't just put someone into a job unless there is continuous training, your induction process comes in we have our probation, however until we get to a stage where we have continuous individual performance management, that has to be the way forward</p>
<p>So, you've both received people from the process and been involved in the interview process, how would you rate it's integrity overall, the whole process</p>	<p>I think to be fair to the whole process, there's integrity to the system, there's accountability to the system, we adhere to compliance with FOI , equality legislation and on paper every competition and processes used is quite open in line with our codes of practice and everything else and transparent but the reality it is like everything with the best will in the world no matter how you actually interview it's all down to you, we are dealing with humans, there is no exact science, we've looked tests, at aptitude testing, team based interviews and various assessment and they will still come out and say that the actual interview system is still the best system but it's always going to be at the end of the day down to humans and a 30 minute process and mistakes can be made however again because we are continuously reviewing the process and people are continually being trained pre sitting on the interview boards we would hope that those deficits are becoming less.</p>
<p>The current programme is 2 days is that enough or too much</p>	<p>2 days is enough, I don't think I would need a 2 day if I was sitting on an interview board, however we all need to refresh or skill we have e-learning and continuous learning and we should be keeping ourselves up to date</p> <p>However a 2 day formal programme is not the b all and end all, again too it's making sure that people have the skills and know what the actual interview is about and have the spec and the application forms</p>
<p>Do you use the on line tools</p>	<p>I know they are there but I haven't used them, to be honest I should be using them and again in terms f myself and refreshing, I would actually endorse and use them</p>
<p>Do you know there is a module on it on interview skills and have you done that self assessment</p>	<p>I know it's there but I actually haven't used it, it's all about time as well and again too is I was sitting on an interview board in the morning and I taught I needed my skills updated I would go on it</p>
<p>Would it be a good idea to have it mandatory</p>	<p>Probably If we want to have complete integrity and maybe to ensure that people that sit on interview boards are being updated with the skills if interviewing</p>
<p>Have you anything else you would like to add</p>	<p>I think overall in terms of the old vs. new system this area has been quite good in term of their interviewing skills even after the FOI act coming out we were probably one of the first old health Boards to send people out their results, we were always kind of customer friendly if anyone ever had an issue we were always willing, we were never anti-meeting</p>

	anybody and we were probably doing it informally and now it's structured and it's more open and transparent
Because we don't evaluate, we send out candidate questionnaire so even by doing the questionnaire on the day of the interviews the results were much higher so hopefully we will be able to take something out of that, if you think of anything else please feel free to add	Absolutely, ok fair play to you, I'm glad you're doing your dissertation on this and at least it will be something that we can all learn from because it's only by reviewing something and evaluating it that we can actually learn from it
Thanks <Respondent 7>	

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Appendix 9.

Transcript of Interview conducted on Respondent 8

Interviewer (Introduction):		OK
<p>Hi <Respondent 8> thanks for doing this. As you know I'm doing my dissertation and the topic that I chose is the evaluation of our interview skills training programme and how effective it is. The competency style interview is not under review as that has been adapted nationally, so I am not trying to look at is if the training programme is effective in teaching the skills needed to be a good interviewer, and if it needs any changes....</p>		
Interviewer	Respondent	
So you undertook the interview skills training programme didn't you	Yes I did, the first programme I did was with the IPA and then with the former MHB and then with the HSE DML and an updated one as well	
So you're well trained	Well if you want to put it that way	
Did you do the 2 day course with Performance and Development	I did,	
And how did you find it	I found it good initially and then when you had to do it again, like being interviewing on an ongoing basis I found the second time a bit long, but you're suppose to refresh every 2 years and then I welcomed the idea of a refresher half day in which I did in April, no just at the end of March ,the week before the moratorium and I found that very beneficial and it wasn't that long	
So you think it's a good idea to have the 2 year refresher and I the half day enough	I felt personally the half day was plenty	
Well in a general context or specific to a competition that you were going to sit on	General context, half day was fine	
Just in general can you remember what the key areas that were looked at	Well we went through the role of the chair and each members role and that was all reiterated, the part you had to play, what you were suppose to do, and the type of question you were to give and not to and the marking and I didn't do any role play on that day but some others did that wouldn't have as much experience or training as I attended, what I did on the day was fine	
Did you learn anything new on that refresher	I wouldn't say I learned anything new but it reiterated first of all the importance of each board member, what each members role was and you're there to do a job and you have to do it right	
Do you think it had a	I would, I would, yeah because you know historically in my view in the	

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<p>positive effect on the group that was there doing the training</p>	<p>past people felt that I am only her to ask a few questions and didn't think that they had a huge part to play and they have a huge part to play in fairness and equity to each candidate</p>
<p>Absolutely, the competency style of interview did you find that very different say moving from the old style into the new</p>	<p>In the beginning I did but I will say that the competency style interview gets you very much focussed on getting the best out of the candidate and to be fair in the past, am... the way the marks were allotted for qualification you were a bit wavered towards somebody with a lot of qualifications, it has taken that away and in my view I think it's fairer</p>
<p>On the part where it's not competency based where you are asking about their clinical skills and knowledge do you ask that through a competency style of question</p>	<p>Everybody has knowledge and clinical knowledge you either know it or you don't know it and you can pull the wool there if somebody is waffling especially when you say well give me a situation that you dealt with, what did you do, a lot of people talk about WE but it's not the WE we are interested in, it's the person that you're interviewing and what I find there is people flummox and can't explain what they did and then you get a sense that they don't have the clinical knowledge</p>
<p>So you think that using the open questions, competency style you get a better quality answer</p>	<p>Yes I think you do yeah</p>
<p>Do you think there are certain attributes that are needed as an interviewer</p>	<p>I do , first of all I think you need to be courteous and you need to be respectful and you need to be fair and have a warm personality and welcoming and calm and make someone feel relaxed</p>
<p>Can anyone who attends the training be an interviewer</p>	<p>Well you can get different types of interviewer, people have to learn interviewing skills and I suppose to be fair to people if you never interviewed you can become an interviewer but you will have better interviewers than others and some of that comes with experience as well</p>
<p>So to get the right balance is important</p>	<p>Very important oh I would say so yes</p>
<p>And do you think it's important that other people apart from yourself as DON would sit on an interview board to learn those skills</p>	<p>Oh yes I would advocate for Clinical nurse managers and assistant directors of nursing you know I think it's important that people interview people that are going to be working with them if they have the training and skills</p>
<p>Would you balance it then with a DON sitting with them?</p>	<p>It depends on the job like more managerial jobs I would say certainly yes but staff nurses and health care assistants you necessarily have to have a DON in my view CNM's are very well capable and trained, they should be well able to interview for staff nurses</p>

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	should be well able to interview for staff nurses
Have you ever been assessed on your interviewing style or techniques	No
Do you think that would be valuable	There is always something one could learn or improve on
And what do you think would be the best way of doing that	I suppose a scribe sitting in, an independent
You wouldn't find that intrusive or anything	No, no
Would you feel comfortable sitting on an interview board tomorrow based on the training you've received and your experience to date	I would and I would interviewed in other areas around the country and I would feel the training in the midlands was excellent and it makes you really aware, to make sure everything is in order before you receive the candidate at all and that's why I always ask for the CV's and the file beforehand and read gone through , checked off with the essential criteria because when they come to interview it's very difficult and I have been at interviews boards where candidates don't meet the essential criteria and shouldn't have been called at all
And that makes your job very difficult	Oh it does now in one interview they had to explain to the candidates something was wrong and they all had to be re-interviewed again will all the proper criteria, it should never get to that stage so I think when the midlands brought in the eligibility criteria a few years ago it was excellent and you get someone there when you get to sign off on it and stopped that from happening
From your experience, because you would sit on interview boards quite a lot, from people being placed on a panel does the position on the panel translate in their work performance, did you have good people and bad people that came in on number one	I would have experienced, no disrespect to anyone else it can be difficult, I would have had a process here, I wasn't on the board someone came in as number one and it didn't work out but I would always say to people you have a probationary period and that's the most important period, and if things are not right you don't sign off, there's no point after the year because your hands are tied and that would have happened and I didn't sign off on the probation, it didn't work out for the person, to be fair for them, you're trying to get the best person for the job and you can't have someone under stress because it's not good for them either, you're trying to get the best person for the job
For promotions then say for someone going from a nurse to a manager	Anyone who is currently there we don't normally have an appraisals, I think appraisals would be there all the time for everyone, structured appraisal there all the time and people no matter how long they are in the

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<p>post what kind of assessment post interview do you have local, probation is great for new people but...</p>	<p>organisation should have one done on a yearly basis</p>
<p>So that should form an integral part of the process</p>	<p>Of their contract as well, yeah I do yeah</p>
<p>So say for someone who had done well at the interview and was assigned say as a CNM1 but didn't work out in a managerial role but was excellent in the clinical role</p>	<p>What would I do, well I'd have to look at that and put an action plan in place and we'd have to look at getting some training in relation to managerial role for the person and you'd have to get buy in from them and you'd have to sit down and tell them look we expect this, this is your job description and we'll put the supports in help you along but you have to work with us</p>
<p>And if they didn't end up being suited to the post</p>	<p>Well you need to discuss it with them and ask them would they like to revert back to their previous position, it may end up as an IR issue but you have to look at these things</p>
<p>Induction then have you experiences.</p>	<p>yes I would have gone to corporate induction and we have local induction here when new people start with the induction pack and go through the relevant things but I think there's huge room for improvement in induction, there is too much in it everything – every new code we'll talk about that at induction it's not humanly possible, I think it should be tailored , do some every three months and leave the pack there and let people read through it</p>
<p>I know you mentioned that 2 days is too long, you did the half day, training would prefer to do a full day</p>	<p>From my own perspective a half day was fine but for other it may need a full day</p>
<p>Is there any pieces at the training that could have been done differently</p>	<p>I'd say you would get fed up of doing role play</p>
<p>Probably more important for new interviewers</p>	<p>Absolutely I know that yeah, I think it's important that everyone's role is clearly defined and your job is... you know and the importance of zoning in on that instead of having somebody who is laid back because at the end of the day when it comes to feedback you have to have proper documentation to be able to feed back and give information back, and more so over the last number of years people are coming back for feedback and want the whole board there to support you and give it back</p>

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	and everybody' role is very important, but in my experience some people take it seriously and some don't
What I'm trying to do is evaluate the programme as a whole and see where we can make improvements to it so it's more appropriate to yourselves, have you any suggestions	Well it's always good to get a new ideas from people and a god mix I actually like somebody from outside our own area because you always pick up something new even if it's a speciality in the job, so I think it's always a good idea to have someone from outside... but I do think we get our information out in time, nothing annoys me as much as someone coming in with a file under their arm – I never got to read this they'd say, because they're doing a disservice to the candidates, really it's not fair
So how do we find out about that	Well you don't really unless they don't pick up their files in time and give themselves ample notice to read them, I'm only taking about the nursing ones I don't know about medical ones or admin ones, to give the candidate the best opportunity – maybe if they sign or e-mail us back to confirm they have read the files
Should we allow them time to read them in work	No I think that's too cumbersome, from my perspective I always read them at home and I find that people would read them in their own time, you have less interruption, preparation in my book is everything for an interview, I will not go to an interview without having the preparation done I will look at the competencies and worked out my questions and have the competencies covered because on the day when it's decided who's going to do what, I don't want it to be left, I like to have it well thought out and that's why I like to have the information before hand and sometimes you often would give, help someone else, you might want to ask them this, this should be covered what do you think
The role of the chairperson I	Is key, he sets the pace, the code of the interview, what's to happen, what's not to happen, he will tell you what her expects , who's taking who's notes and how we decide on the marking or weighting if that's applicable and then sum up then afterwards and then explain about the competencies in relation to comments. He'll be very careful that nobody steps out of line which is correct
And has your experiences with chair people always been positive	I would have experienced where a chair person left it to the other two board member, that odd time but not that much and I would have experienced meticulous chair person and if asked me which I prefer the meticulous, because it keeps each and every one of us on our toes
A lot of our chair people are paid to do a specific role so you'd expect them to be working	Yes, and also too I've experienced where a board member might have said something and the chair person has said that is not relevant and cannot be considered in this interview process, and you would have the height of respect for someone like that who would stand up. I was at on an interview where it was border line confrontational and I had to speak to the chairman when the other board member went out and I had to day to the chairperson I am not happy with this I won't stand for it and the

	<p>chair person did listen to me, but it shouldn't have been up to me, he should have been in control, you know</p>
<p>Without mentioning the post, where you sat on a board here for us where we had an interview, we don't want to record the specifics, you're were on a board her for us where we had an issue, your experience of that</p>	<p>Well I'll tell you how I handled that, I had all my preparation work done, all the questions done up and the whole lot and I had the guidelines for that particular post and I picked up the cards and said now you are the expert in this and your expertise would be best in those competencies and these are questions that I have done up that may be of helpful if you think they are beneficial , took off in a tangent and I didn't have a bit of bother, but you know no matter where you are you don't know everything</p>
<p>Was it a positive experience for the candidates or did the negativity translate to the candidates</p>	<p>No it didn't translate to the candidate, but it was very negative on the staff in HR, which I taught was totally inappropriate and wrong</p>
<p>We did the briefing session that morning</p>	<p>In my view that wouldn't be unusual in that speciality and you know in general with that grade of staff, down the years they would be on a pedestal</p>
<p>When we know something is going on we can intervene</p>	<p>Oh yes and I'd say it was a good learning curve for that individual it wouldn't happen again</p>
<p>Well I outlined on the day that I would not be happy to engage with her again</p>	<p>Yes and I think in my view that was right, we need people with specialist competencies on a board, but to be fair I knew what I was dealing with as I had engaged before not at interview but at meetings, but you wouldn't expect that type of reaction</p>
<p>The whole thing again about training is that you so it again and there are requirements under the code that everyone does the training</p>	<p>Well that's back to my point, they don't understand it should happen to everyone that a board they sat on has been challenged and they have been taken over the coals</p>
<p>You see the benefit then</p>	<p>Absolutely, and I hate giving feedback, I shouldn't say hate it but I am reluctant because at interviews there is always people disappointed but if you have board that didn't gel well or work well then I hate giving the feedback then, so you have to have people who are prepared to work together and give the feedback and you to be awful careful and it's only when something happens and people realise that this could end up ... and there is where your code comes in an your interview training comes in and that's when you really benefit that's when you benefit your good</p>

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	<p>chairperson and you value the people that were with you then</p>
<p>So overall then <Respondent 8>, your experiences would have been positive on the training</p>	<p>Overall yea, and when they changed to the competency style it was a bit threatening in the beginning because we were familiar with it and I have to say in the former MHB I think you were one of the first health boards that started it because I did go to boards that hadn't introduced the competency training after that and they didn't understand what I was talking about and it is easier and it is fairer when you get use to it to base your interview on competency and you can do, you can plan you can do your work and for the candidate then no one is going to throw something that has absolutely no relevance, out of the sky at them</p>
<p>So they are well prepared going in</p>	<p>Yes, well the first thing I did noticed when we changed was it was very apparent that people never read job description because you'd ask a very simple question for example "tell me what this role of this post, tell me what it entails, what is difference between it and your previous role they'd look at you as if you had ten heads, and you know it' the first paragraph in the job description... you know.. very simple things that people just didn't read the job description, something very basic as that , but very important</p>
<p>The cost of hiring somebody in the HSE is huge, do you think we undervalue our training</p>	<p>That's right but apart from that if you're a manager you want to get someone who is able to manage because it makes life easier for you, your management team is your team you can't run everything yourself, they are your champions</p>
<p>So the whole area of evaluation, different levels, when you should evaluate, do you think it's worthwhile evaluating each competition</p>	<p>In light of the current climate, (laugh) I think a random selection of different grades otherwise you'd be doing it all the time</p>
<p>OK thanks for that <Respondent 8></p>	<p>Are we finished? Great thanks</p>

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Appendix 10. Candidate Feedback Questionnaires (on cd)

This data is available on enclosed cd

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Appendix 11. E-mail circulated to qualitative research participants

Catriona Daly

08878293

BA (Hons) HRM

Copy of e-mail distributed to qualitative research participants:

Dear participant,

As you know, I am currently working on my dissertation and as discussed previously, I am doing research on the effectiveness of Interview Skills Training.

Would you be available at any stage next week for a 30-minute interview on the topic?

The interview has to be recorded so it can be transcribed for the dissertation, but your name will be changed in order to keep the process as confidential as possible, however it may be necessary to release your job title if that is ok with you.

Many Thanks in advance

Kind Regards

Catriona Daly

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