

How bad job ads are failing job-hunters and recruiters

In April 2015, a team of Citizens Advice research volunteers from across the country analysed over 800 employment adverts on three public job search websites.¹ We looked at four different occupation types in ten local job markets across England and found that only 12% of ads had all the information recommended by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

Work around the clock?



2 in 5

ads were unclear about whether the job was full or part time



2 in 5

ads were unclear about whether the job was temporary or permanent

Of the job listings that said they included variable shift work, only 8% explained how the rota would work.

Who's the boss?



1 in 10

job listings did not specify either an employer or an agency



21%

of adverts suggested that the job might be self-employed

Show me the money



1 in 3

adverts didn't mention how much you could expect to be paid



1 in 5

adverts didn't mention pay at all

With so little information, job applicants don't know enough about the job they are applying for and recruiters are less likely to get the best candidates for the job. Lack of information on both sides is preventing the job market from running smoothly and contributes to badly matched candidates moving into jobs that are not well suited to their needs. The whole cycle of recruitment must then begin again, wasting time and money on both sides.

Hugh Stickland

Chief Economist, Citizens Advice



¹ 824 job adverts were accessed through sites which did not require sign-up. One site was free to use, one charged for advertising and one was government-run. Ten local authority areas were used with different rates of employment and different profiles. We searched for jobs in four ONS occupational classifications (Elementary, Sales and Customer Service, Care and Leisure and Professional). Details of each advert was recorded by our volunteers as it was accessed, looking at what details were given for each.

Where are the good ads?

The government's own job portal fared the best, though less than a quarter of jobs met the ASA standard.

The worst was a free to list job site, in which only 8% of the adverts were clear.

Across the ten local job markets we studied, ads in most places were pretty poor. Eastleigh fared best, with 27% of vacancies giving enough information. However, nearby in Chichester, only 11% of adverts came up to scratch.



33%

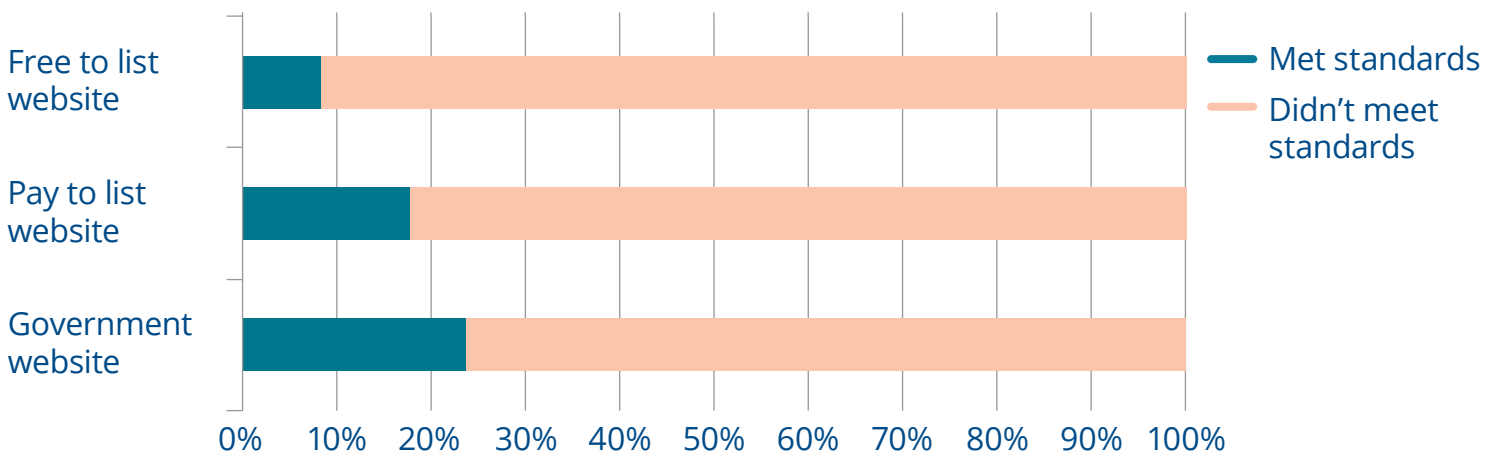
of listings for elementary occupations, such as cleaners or drivers, gave the information that jobseekers needed



7%

of listings for professional occupations, such as engineers, gave the information that jobseekers needed

How many job ads met the ASA standard?



What makes a 'good ad'?²



Location of the work



Name of recruiter



Permanent, temporary or fixed term contract



Specific salary



Number of working hours



Whether there is shift work involved



Whether the job is employed or self-employed

Four things that could be done now to make this better:

1. Recruiters should include a minimum standard of basic information in all job adverts.
2. Job advert oversight should be reviewed to make sure it is fit for purpose.
3. Job websites should have clear reporting mechanisms for any advert that does not meet the basic standard.
4. Job websites need to improve their search functions so that job seekers can effectively filter jobs to their requirements.

² ASA Guidelines accessed on 2/6/15 at https://www.asa.org.uk/News-resources/Hot-Topics/~/_media/Files/ASA/Hot%20Topics/Employment%20opportunities%20-%20Hot%20topic.ashx