

Recruitment & Selection Policy

1. Introduction

The organisation recognises achievement of its goals and the securing of its values is dependent on the recruitment and the retention of a skilled and committed workforce

Normally, appointments must be made in accordance with this policy and must, therefore, be subject to advertisement and interview. The Board must approve any exceptions in advance of formal appointment.

When employing temporary or casual staff on a short-term basis the principles of good practice outlined in this policy should be followed.

Financial approval from the appropriate person for the establishment of a new post or the filling of a vacancy must be obtained before recruitment commences.

Where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting under this procedure, the process will be conducted remotely. The organisation will ensure staff and their representatives have access to the necessary technology for participating. Staff rights will not be affected, and the organisation will ensure the procedure remains fair and reasonable.

This document does not form part of a contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements, and to ensure business needs are met. Staff will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by law.

2. New Jobs and Job Vacancies

A vacancy is an opportunity to review the necessity for the post and its duties, responsibilities and grade.

Where the duties of a post have changed significantly the manager must seek confirmation of the appropriate grade for the post.

3. Job Description

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must include:-

- Job title
- Location of the job
- Grade or salary scale of the post
- Line manager to whom the postholder is responsible
- Any posts reporting to the postholder
- Main purpose of the job
- Main duties and responsibilities
- Any special working conditions (e.g. evening or weekend work)
- A note which indicates as duties and responsibilities change, the job description will be reviewed and amended in consultation with the postholder
- An indication the postholder will carry out any other duties as are within the scope and purpose of the job.

4. Person Specification

The person specification informs the shortlisting selection criteria. This details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise required to do the job. It should be specific, related to the job, and not unnecessarily restrictive – for example only qualifications strictly needed to do the job should be specified.

The person specification must form part of the further particulars of a vacancy along with the job description in order for applicants to have a full understanding of the post. It enables potential applicants to make an informed decision about whether to apply and those who do apply, to give sufficient relevant detail of their skills and experience in their application.

It should detail the knowledge (including necessary qualifications), skills, ability and experience required to do the job, specifying which are essential and which are desirable.

Essential criteria are those without which an appointee would be unable to adequately perform the job; desirable criteria are those which may enable the candidate to perform better.

Knowledge can be derived in a number of ways, for example through education, training, or experience.

- For some jobs a particular qualification(s) may be essential, while for others no single qualification may be appropriate and a particular type of experience may be just as relevant as a formal qualification. Where qualifications are deemed essential these should reflect the minimum requirements necessary to carry out the job to an acceptable standard
- The type of experience required of applicants should be specified. It is also important to remember experience is sometimes transferable from one area of work to another, in which case specifying skills is likely to be more effective than specifying a narrow definition of experience. Note – a specified period of experience cannot be requested as this could be indirect age discrimination.

The Equality Act 2010 requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to jobs to make them suitable for people with a physical or mental condition. It is therefore important any physical requirement is stated in terms of the job which need to be done. For example, a job may require the appointee 'must be able to travel to a number of different locations'. In this instance, it will be necessary to consider if an ability to drive is required or whether or not reasonable adjustments can be made for non-drivers.

5. Advertising the Vacancy

All posts must be advertised internally. The majority of posts will also be advertised externally to maximise attracting the best candidate. Consideration should also be given to advertising in locations/publications likely to increase diversity in the workforce.

Adverts should detail:

- Job title
- Salary
- When funding for project ends (if applicable)
- Closing date
- Interview date

- The need for an enhanced Protection of Vulnerable group (PVG) membership check or appropriate level of Disclosure check
- Two satisfactory references from their most recent employers, where possible.
- If the post requires the holder to register with an external organisation such as The Scottish Social Services Council
- Contact details
- Website address

6. Processing Applications

Staff must be aware when dealing with enquiries about vacancies it is unlawful to state or imply applications from one sex or from a particular racial group, sexual orientation or religion/belief would be preferred, (unless a Genuine Occupational Qualification or Requirement applies) and to do so may lead to a complaint of unlawful discrimination.

Care must also be taken to ensure all applicants are treated in the same way and confidentiality of applications must be respected by all of those involved in the selection process.

Details of requests for application packs should be taken in the office and should include:

- Name, address, phone number
- Which format they would like the application pack: electronic, hard copy, large print, Braille, moon, audiotape, etc.

Application packs should contain:

- Standard applicant letter, confirming closing date, interview date and need for a satisfactory PVG and two satisfactory references, and end date if applicable.
- Job description, which contain person specification
- Application Form
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form.
- General information on Deafblind Scotland.

When applications are received in the office, the date received should be clearly marked. The completed application and the equal opportunities monitoring form should be given to HR for filing.

7. Selecting the Interview Panel

All interviews must be conducted by a panel. The manager and Board will select appropriate interview panel members prior to the closing date. Those appointed to interview should carry out the shortlisting process.

Panels must:

- Consist of a minimum of two people including the immediate line manager of the vacant post.
- Reflect diversity balance wherever possible or appropriate.
- Declare if they already know a candidate.
- Be willing and able to attend shortlisting and all interviews for the duration of the recruitment process, to maintain consistency and to ensure fair and equal treatment of all candidates.

8. Shortlisting

Once the closing date has passed, the interview panel should individually assess the applications received by that date to determine which applicants are to be called for interview. The panel should then meet to discuss and agree the shortlist. Shortlisting decisions should be based on evidence the applicant has met the requirements of the person specification.

The original applications for all applicants, together with a written note of reasons for shortlisting or rejection must be retained for a minimum of six months from the date an appointment decision is notified, in case of complaint to an Employment Tribunal.

All applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy will be interviewed and considered on their abilities.

9. Arrangements for Interviews

Letters or e-mails to shortlisted candidates should include:

- The date, time and place of interview
- Travel directions to the interview venue
- A request they contact the author of the letter/message if they have any special requirements in relation to the interview (related to access to the venue or any other special need related to a disability)
- if appropriate, details of any test or presentation they will be required to take or anything they should bring with them.
- Candidates should be reminded again of the need for a satisfactory PVG, a registration status check with the SSSC and two satisfactory references from previous employers.
- Candidates should be asked to confirm their attendance.

It is best practice to write to candidates who have not been shortlisted however, if this is not possible due to limited resources, the advert particulars should clearly state if a candidate has not been notified after a certain period, applicants should consider themselves to have been unsuccessful.

10. Interviewing

Interviews should be scheduled as soon after the closing date as reasonably practicable. The structure of interviews should be decided in advance including who will chair the panel, what questions will be asked and by whom. No less than two people should be on the interview panel.

The same questions should be asked of all candidates. Additional questions can be used for further information or clarification where answers are incomplete or ambiguous. Care must be taken to avoid questions which could be construed as discriminatory (questions about personal circumstances which are unrelated to the job).

Interview notes must be taken to help the panel to make an informed decision based on the content of the interviews. Notes must relate to how candidates demonstrate their knowledge, skills, experience and abilities in relation to the person specification. The Data Protection Act 2018 allows applicants to submit a Subject Access Request (SAR) of all notes in the event of a complaint. Any inappropriate or personally derogatory comments contained within the notes could be considered discriminatory and are unacceptable.

Where the candidate being interviewed has a disability for which adjustments may need to be considered, the candidate's requirements should be discussed with them once the planned questioning is complete. The outcome of these discussions must not influence the consideration of the candidate's application.

Consideration must be made as to what would be "reasonable". If the requested adaptations are deemed unreasonable, a letter should be sent to the applicant explaining why the adaptations cannot be made. Reasons for not making adjustments to the working environment must be both material and substantial.

It is good practice to offer applicants verbal feedback after interviews and it is policy to respond if requested. Feedback should be specific and honest.

11. Making A Decision After Interview

The information obtained in the application, interview and tests will allow candidates to be assessed against the person specification and for an appointment to be made. The Chair must ensure there is a written note of the reasons for selecting the successful candidate and rejecting others together with the original applications and notes of all panel members, for a minimum of six months after the appointment decision has been notified to the candidates.

Interview proceedings are confidential and interviewers are free to divulge to others the decision reached only once the appointee has accepted the post.

The manager will make a provisional offer to the preferred candidate subject to satisfactory references and Disclosures (if appropriate) being received.

12. Appointment

Proof of academic qualifications and any others considered essential for the post must be verified.

The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act makes it an offence to employ anyone who does not have permission to be in, or work in, the UK. To avoid making assumptions about such permission, it is the manager's responsibility to ask all appointees for evidence of eligibility to work in the UK. It is unlawful racial discrimination to carry out checks only on potential staff who by their appearance, name or accent may be considered to be any nationality other than British.

If a decision was made to appoint:

Verbal Offer: The successful candidate should be informed verbally that you would like to offer them the job, subject to satisfactory references, their satisfying the Asylum & Immigration Act, a registration status check with the SSSC and receipt of a satisfactory PVG check. You should ask the candidate at this stage, if possible, to confirm their acceptance verbally.

A written offer should be done as soon as possible after the interview in order that letters can be sent. Copies of all application forms and assessment forms should be returned to HR for filing. You should also notify of any reserve candidates, in the event that the panel's first choice cannot be taken on for any reason.

For unsuccessful candidates, brief reason(s) for not appointing should be noted and passed the panel chair-person so feedback can be provided if required. In the event of an internal candidate not being successful, again reason(s) should be noted for the file. It is important that you are prepared to talk to unsuccessful candidates who require some feedback, particularly where your comments may help the candidate do better next time. Unsuccessful applicants details should be stored for no more than 6 months then destroyed unless their consent is given for their application to be held and considered for an alternative position. (all in compliance with GDPR 2015 regulations)

13. Unsuccessful candidates

HR should be informed as quickly as possible to allow appropriate letters to be sent to the candidates. All copies of application forms, together with assessment forms and reason(s) for not appointing, should be sent to HR. It will then be the decision of the Chief Executive to adopt a strategy for re-advertising.

NB: If ever in any doubt with regards to an appointment, please seek further advice/guidance from the Chief Executive.

14. References

Verbal Reference: this should be taken up, by the employing Line Manager if there is a short time scale between the interview and the applicant commencing work. Please note verbal references will always be followed up by a request for written reference from HR. If a verbal reference is requested, the line manager should ensure the referee is asked the questions on the reference request form and make notes of the conversation. These notes should then be sent to HR for filing.

Two Written References: HR will usually take up requests for written references. A standard reference request form is sent to referees and on receipt of these they will be copied to the employing Line Manager. The original references will be filed in the staff member's personal file. At least one should be from the most recent employer where possible.

Please note a candidate should not commence work unless references have been received, either verbal or written.

If an unsatisfactory reference is received, depending on the content, this would be discussed with the candidate and advise if the offer of employment is to be withdrawn. The Chief Executive will provide advice in these circumstances.

15. PVG or Disclosure Check

These will be carried out by the appointed person within the organisation. Checks will be carried out on any person doing regulated work, paid or unpaid, this can include:

- Front line staff in a regulated service
- Supervisors and managers of front line staff in a regulated service
- Staff involved in the delivery of regulated services
- Trustees involved in the governance of regulated work

Protected Adults are defined as an individual aged 16 or over who is provided with (and thus receives) a type of registered care, health, support or welfare service. Protected adult is

therefore a service based definition and avoids labelling adults on the basis of a condition or disability. Therefore, any person paid or unpaid not working as part of a registered service but involved in working directly with Protected Adults will require a PVG check.

16. Withdrawing a Job Offer

It may on occasion be necessary to withdraw an offer of employment to a candidate who has already accepted it. The reasons for withdrawing a job offer which are directly related to the candidate are:

- Unacceptable references
- Failure to satisfy the Immigration Act 2016
- Unsatisfactory PVG or Disclosure check (i.e. barred from register work)
- Failure to disclose a criminal conviction
- As a result of the registration status check with the SSSC it is found that the individual is barred from working with vulnerable adults and or children.

The Chief Executive will provide advice and support in these circumstances.

17. Data Protection Act 2018

The organisation will treat all personal data in line with obligations under the current data protection regulations.