

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

POLICY

The Association seeks to carry out its recruitment and selection procedures fairly and efficiently to procure the best person for the post, while leaving all candidates with a favourable impression.

The Association is committed to the principle of equal opportunities in employment and aims, as far as practicable and within the law, for a workforce that reflects the local communities within the area of operation.

The focus of the recruitment process should be about deciding whether the individual candidates would be able to carry out the requirements of the job specification effectively not about choosing subjectively between individuals, every candidate deserves to be regarded as unique and individual and should be assessed as such.

All individuals involved in the recruitment process should endeavour to leave the interviewees with a good impression of the organisation even if they are unsuitable for the post.

The Association is committed to staff development and the use of succession planning. A decision will be taken by a Director and the Chief Executive, that a vacancy for a post at Officer level or below, should only be advertised internally. This would be the case, if there is an existing member of staff, temporary or agency worker suitable and considered capable of carrying out the work. The recruitment and selection process will not change except for an internal advert replacing an external one, shortened papers, etc.

The Association will comply with the requirements of external funding agencies for vacancies to be advertised externally, as well as internally, regardless of level.

Exceptions to internal advertisements and open competition; it is only in certain circumstances that it is necessary to post current staff directly into vacant posts without advertising internally and externally. Such exceptions are necessary for reasons of employment law, good employment practice, or to manage the business of the Association effectively in unexpected circumstances. A number of positions are filled in this way would only constitute a very small proportion of vacancies.

Review date: April 11

Next review: April 14

PROCEDURE

1. PRE-RECRUITMENT

New job descriptions will be drawn up by the departmental director and/or line manager and a person specification be drawn up for posts as they are created or become vacant. The specification will change from time to time depending on the balance of the staff team at the time. The person specification will consist of objective criteria related solely to the requirements of the job. When deciding the person specification for a post the Association will avoid including arbitrary qualifiers for the post for example age, qualifications, experience or physical attributes that are not essential for the role.

Each candidate will receive a pack consisting of:

Application form.

Job description.

Person specification.

Terms and conditions form.

Equal opportunities monitoring form.

Equal opportunities policy.

Disability requirements form.

Monitoring form.

Acknowledgement of receipt postcard.

An accompanying letter which will refer to closing date and time for applications, how unsuccessful candidates will be notified and a note that application forms will be kept for 6 months.

All short-listed candidates will receive annual reports.

The above list may vary according to the post e.g. all candidates for managerial posts will be sent copies of the corporate plan and the accounts.

2. ADVERTISING

The Director/Line manager will discuss the various methods of recruitment with the Corporate Services Manager, and decide on the most appropriate method to attract the most suitable applicant.

All posts will be advertised in accordance with the equal opportunities policy – “as widely as possible”.

The Association will adopt an open and accessible recruitment process and will avoid advertising posts using only methods which may be less accessible to under represented groups. Vacancies will be filled by open competition following public advertisement for all posts above Officer level. However, if posts at Officer level and below cannot be filled internally, these will then be advertised externally.

When constructing advertisements the Association will endeavour to portray an image of a mixed workforce with a balance of all groups and ages.

3. APPLICATIONS AND SHORTLISTING

To ensure equality to all applicants, applications will be made through the completion of an application form. The Association will not consider applications made by means of CV only, CV's contain personal data which should not be considered when short listing candidates.

Candidates who are unable to complete an application form in the requested format because of a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 should contact the Corporate Services Manager who will agree a more suitable way for them to apply and, in special circumstances, extend the application deadline appropriately.

The E.O.P monitoring form will be separated from application form on receipt by the Corporate Services Assistant, who will also make the necessary arrangements for any disabled interviewees. The Association wishes to take positive action for people with disabilities to ensure that appropriate access and/or facilities are provided for anyone called to interview who, according to the Act, has a disability. Consequently if any candidate with a disability requires any facilities to enable them to compete on equal terms with other short-listed candidates a tear-off slip is provided to return with the completed application form which will be retained by personnel staff before the application is forwarded for short listing.

The content of any questions asked in the application form or at any point during the recruitment process should centre around the essential elements of the person specification and job description rather than around aspects which the interviewer may think it would be nice to know about. The candidates should be questioned and tested only on competencies that will have a direct bearing on the successful performance of the role.

Short-listing should be carried out by a minimum of two people, one from the Corporate Services department, and preferably by all members of the interview panel. The interview panel should include one person from the Corporate Services department. The final short-listing will be at one sitting to achieve consistency. The short-listing process will focus on the acquired knowledge, skills and experience of the applicants that are pertinent to the role, this will be done by scoring the candidates against the essential and desirable requirements in the person specification. Each candidate should be compared to the job specification for the role rather than to other candidates. All the members of the interview panel should be conversant with good practice on recruitment and selection procedures.

Where possible the Association will ensure that at least three candidates will be short listed for interviewing and testing to enable a reasonable choice to be made.

Where substantial numbers apply, an initial trawl will be done by the relevant manager and one other member of the interview panel to remove applications which significantly fail to match the person specification.

4. INTERVIEWS

Interviews should be by small panel. The panel will meet beforehand to discuss the following:

- The structure of the interview
- The order of the questions and who is asking them
- The detail of any tests to be set

The interview panel should include the line manager or the person senior to the post recruited for. In cases of a senior post where there may not be a person senior to the post a Board member will always be on the interview panel and the Association may also consider it appropriate to include an external independent representative as a member of the interview panel.

Where possible the interview panel will consist of a reasonable balance of gender and ethnic background.

No member of staff shall be appointed to an interview panel unless they have received suitable training.

The usual format for an interview will be as follows:

An appointed member of staff will introduce the panel, describe the interview process and give some background information on the Association and the post involved. After the list of prepared questions has been exhausted the candidate will be asked if he/she has any questions and then the date and method of informing candidates of the panel's decision will be discussed. The candidates should be given clear guidance on what is to happen next and when they can be expected to hear from the organisation. The panel should be prepared to answer questions about the organisation or the terms and conditions of the post. The panel should take care not to create an expectation that cannot be delivered e.g. give the impression that a company car/pay rise could be arranged.

A member of staff will be appointed on the day of interviews to deal with incoming interviewees, show them around the offices, make coffee, deal with expenses etc.

It is sensible on occasion to ask the informal "minder" above if they have any comments on particular candidates. Sometimes with very nervous candidates the minder will have a very different impression.

5. TESTS

Where candidates are being asked to carry out any tests a suitable, private room to be provided and the tests explained to candidates by a member of the interviewing panel, treating each candidate in a similar fashion. All candidates should be informed that they will be expected to carry out a test(s) before attending the selection process and will be informed of the approximate duration of the selection process. The minder will supervise the candidate and inform them when any time limits set have expired. The minder will then collect any scripts and prepare the room for the next candidate. The Association will only test for abilities that are relevant or essential to the post applied for.

Certain roles will require candidates to complete relevant competencies tests held by an external consultant. Candidates will be informed of the requirement to sit any tests prior to the interview and the likely duration of the testing sessions. Where possible detailed feedback will be given to each candidate required to undergo tests by an external consultant.

6. EXPENSES

Travel expenses to and from interviews will be paid at the lowest essential user rate or the train fare which ever is the less. Where it has been agreed that an overnight stay for candidates is needed, this will be arranged by the Association.

Candidates will be given expense claim forms after the interview.

7. REFERENCES

Applicants should be asked to provide at least two references with one usually being their current or most recent employer unless it is felt that they would not be able to adequately confirm the applicant's ability to fulfil the functions of the position, in which case the employer should ask the applicant to provide the most recent relevant employer.

Job descriptions and person specifications will be sent to all referees and questions will be based around areas of particular importance such as length of service, previous employment, reasons for leaving, demonstrated ability and disciplinary offences.

References will be followed up by a phone call to the nominated referees asking the standard questions to those supplying an employer's reference. This is to be followed by with a request for a written reference.

All references will be reviewed by a person or persons who are in a position to make a reasonable assessment of the candidate's suitability.

Any areas of concern or ambiguity arising from a reference must be followed up. Any substantive additional information offered as an explanation must be confirmed in writing.

The permission of the applicant must always be obtained before taking up references.

8. ADMINISTRATION

It is very important to the image of the Association that the administration of applications is done well. The information packs to be sent out promptly once the post is advertised. Short-listing and interviews to be arranged quickly and those not successful informed immediately in a polite and sympathetic manner. Poor handling of these issues leave a very poor impression.

9. DOCUMENTATION

Discussions leading to whether a candidate has been successful or unsuccessful should be documented and kept along with all of the documents and notes collated on all shortlisted candidates.

10. JOB OFFER

When a job offer is made to the successful candidate the member of staff making the offer should ensure that the candidate clearly understands that the offer of employment is conditional subject to satisfactory references and health checks being obtained and if relevant, documents to ensure that the candidate can legally work in the UK being checked.

The interviewing panel should try to avoid informing unsuccessful candidates of the final decision until acceptance has been secured from the successful candidate. This will allow an offer of the post to be made to the second choice of candidate if necessary, without making them feel like a second choice.

11. POST APPOINTMENT

The appointment letter to clearly state details such as:

- Conditions of the offer, i.e. whether subject to references, health checks etc
- The salary scale or range and the starting salary
- Any other benefits e.g. company car, accommodation,
- Length of probationary period

All new staff should undergo an induction course on the work of the Association.

Regular reports should be kept by each manager so that at the end of the probationary period a serious review can take place of the new employee's performance.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES :- EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The panel should take care to avoid asking questions that may amount to discrimination or invasion of privacy including questions relating to the candidates' family life or marital status.

The interviewing panel should attempt to ensure that questions are not framed in a way that assumes a 'western' education or lifestyle or a predominantly male or female disposition.

Questions based on stereotypical assumptions relating to a personal attribute of the candidate should be avoided.

Interviewers should avoid posing possible obstacles to disabled candidates, if the question that the interviewer is asking is not one they would have asked an able bodied candidate then the question should not be asked at all.

A basic rule relating to the acceptability of interview questions is that if the question is one that you would not have felt the need to ask all of the candidates then it is not a question that you should ask of any candidate.

If a check is needed on the candidate's documents to ensure that the candidate can validly take work in the UK then this should be made after the offer stage rather than during the interview to prevent the candidate perceiving feelings of negativity.

Interviewers should endeavour to take detailed notes during the interview with each candidate and notes should be kept on file. This will not only assist with the selection process but will be essential to validate the panels decision should an unsuccessful candidate claim that discrimination has occurred.

Prejudice can occur consciously and unconsciously and can be against age, disability, social background or any personal attribute. Interviewers should make a conscious effort not to let personal prejudice influence their decision and should base all decisions on the candidate's compatibility with the job specification.

The interview panel should agree a defined set of questions before interviewing to ensure that each applicant is treated equitably and consistently.

Where possible the candidate will be questioned about specific examples from their past experience and their role in certain situations, this method is more effective than asking the candidate to put themselves in a hypothetical situation and is less likely to lead to unfair discrimination.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES: - GENERAL

Interviewers should ask clear, open ended questions trying to avoid leading the candidate or suggesting the answer required. The application form can be consulted to decide where the emphasis of the interview should lie for the individual.

It is useful to have a supplementary question ready in case the candidate does not give the extent of information you require in answer to your first question. The interviewers should ask probing questions to clarify examples given by the applicant.

It should not be assumed that the candidate is the right person for the post merely because they have a lot of employment experience. Employment experience must be good and relevant to the post to count in favour of the candidate. The candidate's qualifications should also be relevant and appropriate for the position.

Candidates should be questioned about any periods unaccounted for in the current and previous employment section of the application form to confirm what candidates were doing during these periods.

It is not advisable to attempt to evaluate the candidate during the interview; interviewers should take notes and some time to evaluate in between interviews.

At the end of the interview each candidate should be asked if they are still interested in taking the job if offered, an interview is a two way process and the applicant might change their view about working for the organisation.

Where an internal candidate has applied for a position but has not been successful the candidate should be dealt with sensitively. Detailed feedback should be provided to the candidate explaining why they were not offered the position and the appropriate line manager should address any temporary negative effects such as lack of motivation. If possible relevant training should be offered to assist the candidate should any further vacancies arise.

Things to avoid:

Snap Judgements

Judgements can be formed far too hastily and the interview process turned into a means by which evidence is gathered to reinforce that initial judgement.

Losing Concentration:

Taking notes during the interview is crucial as the concentration span can plummet during the main part of the interview.

Stereotyping:

There is a danger of stereotyping both good and bad groups. A candidate may have superb skills to offer for the post that should not be overlooked because they are not perceived as the usual type of person working in the role in question.

Mirroring:

There is a danger of subjectivity influencing the assessment of an interview and for the candidates to be judged positively or negatively according to whether they are similar or dissimilar to the interviewer. This can often be a subconscious process and the risk is decreased if there is an interview panel using pre considered questions.

Halo Effect:

Positive first impressions can lead to the interviewer taking a liking to a candidate and to leading the interview along an optimistic path. A particular virtue of the candidate is allowed to obscure or downplay negative factors, the candidate's positive answers may not be probed for any negative examples failing to uncover any weaknesses in the candidate's suitability for the post. It may also be possible for the interviewer to take an immediate dislike to a candidate resulting in the failure to give them a fair hearing because the interviewer does not want to discover the strengths of the individual.