



# Shapinsay Development Trust

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## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### Introduction

This document does not form part of your contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements, and to ensure that business needs are met. You 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 statute

This Shapinsay Development Trust recognises that achievement of its goals and the securing of its values are dependent on the recruitment and the retention of a skilled and committed workforce. This policy and procedure sets out our approach to this.

### Policy Statement

All recruitment and selection activities will be carried out in a fair, consistent, effective and professional manner. An effective recruitment process contributes directly to the continuing success of the organisation and in addition, it is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that this policy and procedure complies with all relevant legislative and other related policy requirements.

The organisation is committed to applying its equal opportunities policy at all stages of recruitment and selection. Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without regard to gender, sexual orientation, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age or trade union membership, unless lawfully allowed for certain specific posts.

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

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

It is the organisation's practice to seek the successful candidate's consent for it to seek two written references and to ask for documentary proof of qualifications. Any offer of employment will be conditional on both of these being satisfactory to the organisation.

### Aims

The purpose of the following procedural guide is to inform managers and employees of the aims and design of the recruitment, selection and appointment policy. It is designed as an aid to assist managers, employees [and Human Resources] to carry out the process in a fair, effective, efficient and systematic manner.

This will ensure that:

- The best candidate is appointed for the vacant post, with regard to objective criteria, which includes qualifications, skills, knowledge and quality of experience.
- Vacancies are filled within agreed timescales and in the most cost-effective manner.
- Our recruitment procedure does not unlawfully discriminate at any stage of the process.
- All recruitment and selection is standardised for audit purposes.

## **New Jobs and Job Vacancies**

The occurrence of 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 from the Chairperson / staffing sub group of the appropriate grade for the post.

When a vacancy arises, consideration must be given, prior to open advertising, to any staff for whom redeployment is being sought on the grounds of redundancy or disability.

When employing temporary or casual staff on a short-term basis the principles of good practice outlined in this policy should be followed. For vacancies of less than 3 months the Chair may choose to fill the post by means other than advertising, for example by word of mouth.

## **Job Description**

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps. It must include:

- the job title (which must be gender neutral)
- the location of the job
- grade or salary scale of the post
- the line manager to whom the post holder is responsible
- any posts reporting to the post holder
- main purpose of the job
- main duties and responsibilities
- any special working conditions (e.g. evening or weekend work) Items that should be included in job descriptions are:
- A note that indicates that, as duties and responsibilities change, the job description will be reviewed and amended in consultation with the post holder
- An indication that the post holder will carry out any other duties as are within the broad scope and purpose of the job as requested by the line manager or Chair.

## **Person Specification**

The person specification is of crucial importance and informs the selection decision. The person specification details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. It should be drawn up after the job description and, with the job description, should inform the content of the advert. The person specification 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 that applicants have a full picture of what the job entails. The person specification 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. The person specification forms the basis of the selection decision and enables the selection panel to ensure objectivity.

The person specification details the:

- knowledge (including necessary qualifications)
- skills and abilities
- experience
- aptitudes

required to do the job, specifying which are essential and which are desirable. Note that these may be different from the attributes of the previous post holder.

Essential criteria are those without which an appointee would be unable to adequately perform the job; desirable criteria are those that 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. Simply specifying a set number of years' experience (e.g. "must have 5 years' experience") may be contrary to age discrimination legislation and should be avoided. It is preferable to describe the type of skills and knowledge that a person would be expected to have accumulated over such a period and would be able to demonstrate.

Required abilities should be expressed in terms of the standards required, not just in terms of the task to be undertaken, and should be as specific as possible. For example, avoid statements such as 'Ability to write reports'; instead, indicate the expected standard, such as 'Ability to write detailed financial reports that encompass departmental budgeting, annual variances, and forecasting'.

Great care must be taken if physical requirements are specified. The Disability Discrimination Act requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to jobs to make them suitable for people with a disability. It is therefore important that any physical requirement is stated in terms of the job that needs to be done. For example a job may require that 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.

## **Publicising the Vacancy**

All posts will normally be advertised internally, unless it is under 3 months duration, or the Chair has designated a particular post as potentially suitable for a person for whom the organisation is seeking redeployment.

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

## **The Application Pack**

Applicants will be able to request a recruitment pack by phone or e-mail. A log of the names and addresses of all individuals requesting an application pack will be taken for tracking and monitoring purposes.

The application pack will always include:

- Applicant cover letter – includes closing date
- Application Form
- [Guidance notes for completing the application form]
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form
- Equal Opportunities policy / statement
- Criminal Convictions declaration form
- Job Description
- Person Specification

The pack may also include further information relevant to the particular post – e.g. annual report, organisational structure chart as appropriate.

## **Processing Applications**

Staff must be aware that when dealing with enquiries about vacancies it is unlawful to state or imply that applications from one gender or from a particular racial group, age group, sexual orientation, marital status 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 that all applicants are treated in the same way, for example with regard to invitations to visit the department, informal meetings to discuss the vacancy, and provision of information. However, it is acceptable to respond to requests from individual candidates who demonstrate initiative in their preparation.

The confidentiality of applications must be respected by all of those involved in the selection process.

## **Selecting the Panel**

All shortlisting and interviews must be conducted by a panel. The Chair, Director and AFSSO will select interview panel members prior to the closing date. This allows panel members to carry out the shortlisting process.

Panels must:

- consist of a minimum of two people including the immediate line manager of the vacant post;
- reflect a sex and ethnicity balance wherever possible;
- be willing and able to attend shortlisting and all interviews for the duration of the recruitment process, to maintain consistency and to ensure fair treatment of all candidates.

## **Shortlisting**

After the closing date has passed the interview panel should individually assess the applications to determine which applicants are to be called for interview. The panel should then meet to discuss and agree the shortlist. Where the panel has an external member, that person should take part in the shortlisting wherever practicable. Shortlisting decisions should be based on evidence that 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 6 months from the date that an appointment decision is notified, in case of complaint to an Employment Tribunal. They will thereafter be destroyed. All photocopies of application forms must be shredded.

## **Criminal conviction declaration forms**

Criminal declaration forms belonging to candidates who have not been shortlisted for interview will remain sealed and will be shredded. Short-listed candidates' forms will be opened and checked for relevant convictions. If it is deemed that a conviction is relevant to the post, the candidate may be withdrawn from the list of interviewees. Further guidance on this can be found in the Rehabilitation of Offenders policy.

## **Arrangements for Interviews**

Letters or e-mails to shortlisted candidates should include:

- date, time and place of their interview;
- travel directions to the interview venue;
- a request that 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 do, or anything that they should bring with them (e.g., examples of work or proof of qualifications that are essential to the post).

It is best practice to write to candidates who have not been shortlisted but if this is not possible due to limited resources, the application pack should make clear that if not notified after a certain date or period, applicants should consider themselves not to have been shortlisted.

## **Interviewing**

Interviews should be scheduled as soon after the closing date as reasonably possible.

The structure of interviews should be decided in advance by determining who will chair the panel and what areas of questioning are required to cover all of the elements of the person specification. The question areas to be explored by each panel member should be agreed in advance to avoid overlap or repetition.

The same areas of questioning should be covered with all candidates. Interview questions should be phrased so that they do not favour any one candidate and should be designed to seek evidence of how the interviewee meets the criteria on the person specification. Supplementary questions should be used to probe for further information or clarification where answers are incomplete or ambiguous. Care must be taken to avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory (e.g., questions about personal circumstances that are unrelated to the job).

Interview panels act for the organisation in making selection decisions and are accountable for them. Interview notes must be taken to help the panel to make an informed decision based on the content of the interviews. Such notes must relate to how candidates demonstrate their knowledge, skills, experience and abilities in relation to the person specification. The Data Protection Act allows applicants to request disclosure of such notes in the event of a complaint. Obviously any inappropriate or personally derogatory comments contained within the notes could be considered discriminatory and are unacceptable.

### ***Disabled applicants***

Where the candidate being interviewed has a disability for which adjustments may need to be considered, the candidate's requirements should be discussed with him/her once the planned questioning is complete. The outcome of these discussions must not influence the consideration of the candidate's application. If the disabled candidate best meets the person specification, consideration must be made regarding what would be 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate the needs of the person in question. On considering these, if it is considered that the adaptations needed would not be deemed to be 'reasonable' under the Disability Discrimination Act, the Manager will draft a letter 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, and must be documented.

### **Making a Decision after Interview**

The information obtained in the application, the interview, and in any selection tests will allow candidates to be assessed against the person specification and a selection decision to be made. The Chair of the panel must ensure that a written note of the reasons for selecting the successful candidate and rejecting others is made and placed on the recruitment file, together with the original applications and notes of all panel members, for a minimum of 6 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.

### **Feedback**

It is good practice to offer applicants feedback after interviews and it is our policy to respond if requested. Feedback should be specific and honest. Panel members giving feedback must ensure that any feedback they give relates to the selection criteria for the post and that the words that they use could not be taken to infer unlawful discrimination.

### **Pre-employment checks**

A number of employment checks require to be undertaken before a formal offer of employment can be made. It must be ensured that any offer of employment given, is a 'provisional' one, subject to receipt of documentation as shown below.

## **References**

References should only be used after interview to confirm, but not influence, a decision. Candidates' permission must be sought prior to seeking references.

Appropriate referees are those who have direct experience of a candidate's work, education or training, preferably in a supervisory capacity and a reference must be obtained from the current or previous employer.

References are confidential and must be sought 'in confidence'. Panel members must return all copies of any references with the application forms and their interview notes to the Manager on completion of the recruitment process. References must only be kept in the personal file.

## **Asylum and Immigration**

Under this act it is a criminal offence to employ someone who does not have the permission to work in the UK. All external candidates at interview must therefore be asked to provide proof of citizenship, through a document showing the person's name and NI number; e.g. P45, a payslip, P60, an NI card, a passport or birth certificate. Note that it will be unlawful racial discrimination to carry out checks only on potential employees who by their appearance or accent seem to be other than British. Checks must be carried out on all external applicants.

## **Criminal Conviction Information**

The organisation will seek a Disclosure (police check) for all posts that are exempt under the Exemption Order of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. A Disclosure request will only be undertaken for the successful candidate, and all candidates will be informed of this process in the invitation to interview. It should be noted that this may delay the offer a position until the disclosure process is complete.

## **Pre-Employment Health Check**

The organisation requires certain information prior to an individual commencing employment, to ensure that they will be able to perform the requirements of the job and give reliable service, and to ensure compliance with relevant Health and Safety regulations. The information is also required in order to establish whether any reasonable adjustments may need to be made to assist them in performing their duties, in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Further advice on this (if applicable) would be obtained through an occupational health report. A pre-employment health check questionnaire is sent to the successful candidate along with the provisional offer of employment.

## **Qualifications**

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

## **Appointment**

Only the Manager issues letters of appointment and places individuals on the payroll.

## **Induction [and Probation]**

An induction programme will be set out which covers information about the organisation and their post.

## **Record Keeping**

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, all records relating to the recruitment and selection procedure will be retained only for as long as is necessary (generally 6 months), and will be securely destroyed thereafter.

## **Related Policies and Procedures**

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Rehabilitation of Offenders and Disclosures Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Implementation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(for and on behalf of the Management Committee)