

## **RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES**

### **1. Policy Statement**

Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) recognises that the recruitment and retention of a diverse, skilled and committed workforce is essential to successfully delivering its strategic goals, objectives and equality of opportunity. CHS's Recruitment and Selection policy, procedures and practices are designed to help achieve this.

CHS undertakes to ensure that the most suitable candidate for each post is selected on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. No employee or job applicant will receive less favourable treatment or consideration on the grounds of gender, marital status, age, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, responsibility for dependants, trade union membership or is disadvantaged by any conditions of employment or requirements which cannot be justified for operational reasons.

### **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

The recruitment process will, excepting appointment to the post of National Convener/Chief Executive, be the responsibility of relevant CHS managers. Board Members will normally be involved in appointments to the posts of Directors.

Training, guidance and advice on all aspects of recruitment and selection is available from the HR Shared Services Team.

CHS management has responsibility for ensuring that the correct procedures are followed. All members of CHS involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are expected to observe these procedures and to ensure their actions are consistent with the principles of best practice which these procedures aim to promote.

### **3. Job sharing**

CHS's general policy is that all full-time posts will be available for job sharing, unless it can be shown, in a particular case, that job sharing is likely to significantly reduce the effectiveness with which the duties of the posts can be carried out, or would impose a severe administrative, managerial or financial burden on the operation of the office or post.

Job sharing can help to retain experienced and trained staff. However, there is a balance to be struck across teams between the flexibility and the benefits for the organisation. As a guide, it may not be practicable for more than 50% of posts within CHS to job share.

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

### 1. Introduction

**1.1** This document outlines the recruitment practices, processes and procedures in CHS. The principles and practices described in this document apply to all permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time and job-share recruitment within CHS.

**1.2** The HR Shared Services Team is the source of professional advice and guidance in all matters pertaining to recruitment and selection within CHS and also provides support to managers at specific stages of the recruitment process. They can be contacted via the Human Resources helpdesk (HR.Helpdesk@CHS.gsi.gov.uk) or by telephone 0300 200 1575.

### 2. Management of a vacancy

**2.1** When a vacancy first arises, whether this is due to the current post holder moving internally or externally, or whether it is a new role, it is important to consider the ongoing purpose and content of the role as well as where it fits into the structure of the organisation. The line manager should undertake this review, taking advice from their HR Business Partner.

#### **2.2 Appointment of Previously Unsuccessful Candidates**

When a vacancy occurs within six months of the same or an identical vacancy having been filled and there are no suitable internal candidates for the post, managers may consider previously shortlisted applicants who met the essential criteria for the post and performed satisfactorily at interview. Appointment will be subject to satisfactory references, Disclosure Scotland clearance and a pre-employment health check.

#### **2.3 Advertise the Post**

CHS is committed to the development of its existing workforce as well as recognising the benefits of open recruitment. All vacancies will be advertised internally. External advertising is encouraged to facilitate an increase in workforce diversity and to ensure competition in cases where the pool of internal candidates is likely to be limited or where there may be no suitable internal candidates. All vacancies will be advertised for a minimum of 10 days.

Externally advertised posts will be placed on CHS's website and appropriate media.

Where posts are advertised internally only in the first instance, anyone currently working for CHS under a contract of employment is eligible to apply, which includes agency staff once they have accrued 12 weeks service.

#### **2.4 Managing the recruitment campaign**

The HR Shared Services Team will develop and manage recruitment campaigns for CHS. Approval from the appropriate CHS manager will be required prior to formal placement of adverts and for budgetary purposes. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services will manage the organisational budget for recruitment advertising.

### 3.0 Managing the Application Process

#### **3.1 Information for Applicants**

Candidates who apply on line or by telephone should be able to download or receive the relevant forms and information to assist with their application within two working days of enquiry.

### **3.2 Method of Application**

All candidates (whether internal or external) should as a general rule, complete CHS's standard job application form. The use of an application form ensures that applicants provide the required information in a consistent and standard way which should help you to assess and compare them systematically. Candidates may also be asked to provide additional information specific to a particular post.

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) will not normally be considered.

A candidate who cannot complete an application form personally (e.g. because of literacy difficulties or disability) should not be excluded from consideration unless this is directly relevant to the job. In such cases, they may get help to complete the form.

### **3.3 Submission of applications**

A candidate may submit a standard application form either by post or by electronic means e.g. e-mail.

If a candidate who submitted their application electronically is shortlisted and invited to interview, they will be required to sign their application form at interview so that they declare to the best of their knowledge and belief that all the information they have provided on the form is complete and true. This is also to ensure that they understand that any false or misleading statement, or any significant omission, may disqualify them from employment and render them liable to dismissal.

All applications should be acknowledged by CHS within a week of their receipt.

Applicants will be required to sign their application form prior to any offer of employment being made.

## **4. SHORTLISTING**

### **4.1 Shortlisting**

Shortlisting of candidates must be carried out by at least two members of the interview panel, one of whom should have line management responsibility for the post to be filled. Managers are encouraged to consider the skills, competencies, knowledge and experience that an applicant may bring to a role in a holistic way when shortlisting candidates for a post. The interview panel must comprise of both male and female panel members to ensure fair and balanced decisions can be made. The aim of CHS is to ensure that all members of an interview panel must have attended recruitment and selection training (full or update sessions) within the previous three years.

### **4.2 Contacting Shortlisted Candidates**

A minimum of one week's notice of interview should be given to shortlisted candidates, although generally more notice is preferable.

Candidates who are not shortlisted for interview will be informed that they have been unsuccessful, normally no later than 4 weeks after the closing date for the post.

### **4.3 References**

#### References for Applicants

References are sought to obtain factual information regarding the applicant and their suitability for the post. CHS requires at least two written references for an applicant or a reference from each employer over the past 3 years.

One **must** be from an applicant's current or most recent employer. A second or subsequent reference should ideally be from a previous employer or educational establishment. Character references may be provided for individuals who have not been in employment.

Ideally references should be obtained prior to interview .

Under the terms of the 'subject access right', the Data Protection Act 1998 states, that an individual can request to view a reference provided to a prospective employer. This right of access is clearly stated on the standard reference request letter in order to inform referees that this condition applies and to aid a referee in making an informed decision as to whether to supply a reference and the nature of its contents.

CHS as an employer is under certain legal obligations in connection with the provision of a reference. There is an obligation for the content of the reference to be accurate and fair, and not to be negligent or misleading by any omission. As an employer, CHS can be held liable for any loss suffered as a result of a breach of this duty of care.

CHS managers would normally be expected to share with the member of staff concerned the contents of any reference supplied. Advice should be taken from the HR Shared Services Team on any proposed departure from this arrangement.

## **5. THE INTERVIEW & ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

- 5.1** The purpose of the interview is to assess, in conjunction with other selection methods, the extent to which the candidate meets the criteria contained in the person specification and to give the candidate information about the job. It is, therefore, a two-way process. Interviews, as the sole assessment method, do not guarantee a successful appointment.
- 5.2** The selection process will be structured in order that it is a professional and valid selection method. Competency based recruitment will form the basis of the selection criteria in line with best practice.
- 5.3** Interviews may include additional assessment techniques where appropriate such as occupational testing assessments and other assessment techniques such as presentations. These will form an appropriate element of the recruitment and selection process but will never be employed as the exclusive method of selection.

## **6. FINAL DECISION PROCESS**

- 6.1** CHS recognises that interviews on their own do not ensure that the best candidate is appointed. Interviews are one part of CHS's recruitment and selection processes which ensure a higher likelihood of appointing a suitable candidate for the post. The various processes which should ensure the appointment of a suitable candidate are good policies and procedures, suitably trained staff involved in the process, clear job descriptions and person specifications, clearly structured interviews and suitable assessment tools (occupational tests, presentations, references etc) which link to predetermined competencies and skills.

## 6.2 Evaluating Candidates

The panel will summarise and agree the performance of each candidate.

Interview questions for each candidate should be individually assessed using a robust scoring mechanism like the 5 point scale below:-

### Scoring:

1. **Below Standard – unacceptable**
2. **Below standard – development required**
3. **Meets Required Standard**
4. **Above Standard**
5. **Exceeds Requirements**

The selection process should provide enough evidence for the interview panel to be able to assess and select an individual who matches the skills, knowledge and experience outlined in the person specification.

An evaluation of each shortlisted candidate should be made summarising the information from all elements of the process, including:

- Interview
- Occupational/ability assessments
- Presentations
- References

Panel members should aim to reach a consensus about each candidate. The chosen candidate should be the one who most closely meets the person specification and is the strongest candidate i.e. has the highest interview scores and best fit in terms of other assessments.

Interviewers should be aware that their reasons for appointing or not appointing a particular candidate may be challenged under discrimination legislation. All interview records and paperwork for non-appointed candidates should be retained for six months and then disposed of confidentially. Those for appointed candidates are kept on their personal file.

## 6.3 Job Share Candidates

In making an appointment, the aim is to select the best candidate(s) for the job(s). Since prospective job-sharers will be considered alongside other candidates, panel members may be required to decide whether to select one full-time post holder or two-job sharers. Initially, all candidates should be evaluated individually. It may then be necessary to compare the overall suitability of two job share candidates with that of a full-time candidate. An offer of employment on a job share basis is conditional on filling both halves of the post.

## 6.4 Pre-employment Health Screening

Only the successful candidate who has been offered the post is required to complete a pre-employment medical questionnaire. The HR Shared Services Team will ensure appropriate assessment of the form by an Occupational Health (OH) Service, who will, if necessary, advise CHS on any reasonable adjustments. OH may contact or arrange to meet an individual if they require any further information. Only conditional offers of appointment can be made to new CHS staff or existing staff until OH has passed the individual as "Fit to work" and CHS has agreed that they can make any reasonable adjustments proposed.

## **6.5 Notifying Candidates**

Both successful and unsuccessful interviewees should be informed in writing of the final outcome of the interview, normally within 2 weeks of the interview date.

## **6.6 Feedback**

Candidates not shortlisted for interview will not normally be given feedback. Where feedback can be given, feedback will usually be by telephone.

Feedback to candidates shortlisted but unsuccessful at interview will be provided by the Chair of the Interview Panel.

## **6.7 Employment Checks**

Conditional offers of employment may be made whilst employment security checks are undertaken. These checks will comply with the Scottish Government guidelines and will include the following:-

1. Identity (3 checks) with the production of;
  - photographic ID usually a passport or photocard driving licence;
  - non photographic ID usually an original birth certificate (dated within 6 weeks of birth) or a suitable alternative;
  - Utility bill (dated within 6 months) for confirmation of home address;
2. Employment history (past three years);
3. Nationality and immigration status; and
4. 'Unspent' criminal record check (Basic Disclosure certificate) dated within 1 year obtained from Disclosure Scotland by the candidate.

## **6.8 Contracts of Employment/Post Interview Correspondence**

Contracts of employment can only be authorised by CHS Senior Management Team. All post interview correspondence, including regret letters, are issued by the HR Shared Services Team.

Forms for the payment of any interview expenses must be submitted for authorisation and payment to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services. In all cases receipts must be provided.

## **7. Appeals**

**7.1** Applicants for posts with CHS have the right to appeal if they consider that they have been unlawfully discriminated against during the selection process.

### **7.2 Appeals Procedure**

- (i) The complaint must be made in writing to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services within 2 weeks after receipt of notification of the outcome of the application.
- (ii) On receipt of the complaint the Director of Finance and Corporate Services will:-
  - if feasible and appropriate, “freeze” the appointment pending the outcome of an investigation; and
  - ask the HR Shared Services Team to investigate the complaint and report back within 2 weeks.
- (iii) In investigating the complaint, the HR Shared Services Team will interview all relevant persons including the complainant and will be given access to all documents used during the selection process.
- (iv) In the light of the investigation report, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services will determine what action, if any, to take.

### **7.3 Remedies**

If the Director of Finance and Corporate Services upholds a complaint, the remedy offered will aim to restore, as far as possible, the complainant's position in the selection process. Thus, for example:-

- (i) Unjustified exclusion from the shortlist may be remedied by reinstatement to the shortlist for the job or for a subsequent appropriate vacancy.
- (ii) If the questions asked at interview are deemed to be unfairly discriminatory, a reassessment of the candidate's suitability may be made and a further interview arranged for that job or a subsequent appropriate vacancy.
- (iii) If it is found that the complainant was the best candidate for the job, then either that job or a subsequent appropriate vacancy may be offered.

## **8. QUALITY CONTROL AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

### **8.1 Equalities Monitoring**

CHS will review on a regular basis the equal opportunities data relating to recruitment to comply with equal opportunities monitoring and the organisational approach to equalities.

All equal opportunities monitoring summary forms will be retained by the HR Shared Services Team to facilitate this process.

Recruitment and selection statistics will be published on CHS's internet and intranet in line with the organisational equalities strategy.

### **8.2 Review**

CHS will periodically review recruitment exercises to help ensure that this policy and procedure is being implemented effectively and to assist in ensuring continuous improvement regarding recruitment and selection.