



Safer Recruitment Policy



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1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy sets out the company's rules and procedures in relation to recruitment.
- 1.2. This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all employees of the organisation except the following:
 - 1.2.1. Consultant appointments
 - 1.2.2. Board appointments
 - 1.2.3. Contract for services appointments/contractors
 - 1.2.4. Volunteers
 - 1.2.5. Agency workers recruitment

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Ensuring we attract and retain the highest quality of employees with the right values and behaviours is critical to enabling our organisation to achieve its objectives. Appointing the right people will ensure high turnover, performance and conduct issues will be minimised and we provide the best service possible to our customers.
- 2.2. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and standards to enable recruiting managers to attract, recruit and retain the best candidates in accordance with employment legislation and best practice. The organisation will ensure that its recruitment, selection and promotion practices provide equal opportunity for all persons and are free from unfair or unlawful forms of discrimination. This policy applies to all potential employees and staff employed by AJM Healthcare irrespective of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, colour, ethnic or national origin and nationality, including citizenship. In the context of recruitment and selection, this means equitable and fair recruitment and selection of people according to their ability to do the job.
- 2.3. The organisation has signed up as a 'Disability Confident Employer'. This demonstrates our commitment to:
 - 2.3.1. inclusive and accessible recruitment
 - 2.3.2. guarantee an interview to all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria in the person specification
 - 2.3.3. providing reasonable adjustments
 - 2.3.4. supporting existing employees and
 - 2.3.5. ensure that all criteria in the person specification are relevant to the job – review and revise job descriptions where necessary
- 2.4. The organisation is committed to providing a working environment and culture which treats all staff and potential employees fairly and equitably. The application of this policy and guidance will apply equally to all staff including those on full-time, part-time and fixed-term contracts.

3. Policy objectives

- 3.1. This policy aims to ensure a fair and consistent approach to the Recruitment and Selection process when recruiting new staff into the organisation. The purpose of the policy is to set standards for recruitment and selection which support high quality patient care, comply with employment legislation and best practice, and contribute to effective risk management.

4. Duties and responsibilities

Recruiting managers

- 4.1. Recruiting managers are responsible for implementing the Safer Recruitment Policy. This includes:
 - 4.1.1. Analyse and review all vacant jobs, taking into account skills, competencies and experience required for the post.
 - 4.1.2. Ensure the current job description and person specification are still relevant for the post
 - 4.1.3. Ensure all applications are assessed fairly, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, and that appointments are made on the merits of the individual candidates.
 - 4.1.4. Ensure they have received training in safer recruitment and selection processes.
 - 4.1.5. Ensure interview notes are factual, clear and legible.
 - 4.1.6. Ensure that new staff receive local induction and attend at mandatory training programmes as part of the corporate induction process.

Human resources

- 4.2. The Human resources department is responsible for managing the end-to-end recruitment process, from placing the advert until the employee starts in post.
- 4.3. The HR department can provide advice and guidance to any manager involved in the process and in addition, provides regular formal training on recruitment and selection.
- 4.4. It is the role of the HR department to provide an efficient, professional and responsive approach to recruitment to enable vacancies to be filled as soon as possible.

5. Safer recruitment process

- 5.1. The organisation operates a safer recruitment process. This process ensures that staff are recruited safely and fairly, and that vulnerable adult's and children's safety is being considered at every stage of the process.

The organisation has a consistent approach every time a new staff member is recruited.

6. Defining the role

- 6.1. For any role working with children and young people, both the job description and the person specification highlight the importance of understanding safeguarding issues.
- 6.2. All roles have a job description and person specification. Job descriptions are an important part of the recruitment and selection process. A job description will ensure that recruiting managers are clear about the nature of the job to be filled and that employees/applicants understand the duties and responsibilities of the job. It also provides a basis for measurement of job performance.
- 6.3. A person specification is an essential part of the recruitment process and specifies the skills and personal characteristics which are needed to perform the duties identified in the job description. The person specification helps to ensure that the recruitment and selection process is objective and does not become subject to personal bias. The person specification includes how each of the criteria will be assessed.
- 6.4. All roles require a DBS check at differing levels and are detailed in the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy**. This policy also outlines the organisations DBS procedure.
- 6.5. Managers are responsible for reviewing the need for a post when it becomes vacant, taking into account whether the role is needed in the same format or whether the job could be done more effectively if the duties and responsibilities were redesigned.
- 6.6. Before making a decision to recruit, the job description and person specification should be reviewed and updated if required. If this results in alterations, the job description will be reviewed and amended by the HR Department.
- 6.7. Managers are required to complete a 'Request to Recruit Form' which is available on the company intranet. It will then be signed off by their regional manager or department director for approval who will also obtain approval from finance. Once all relevant approval has been provided, the regional manager or department director will pass the complete form to the HR department to process the vacancy.

7. Advertising the role

- 7.1. The job advertisement is the first opportunity to send out a clear safeguarding message. It includes the right information to attract high quality candidates and deter unsuitable applicants such as those who may present a risk to children.

- 7.2. Where it is anticipated there are appropriately qualified candidates within the organisation, the post can be advertised internally via the company intranet, internal bulletins and notice boards.
- 7.3. The HR department are responsible for advertising roles. No other individual should advertise a job role.

8. Application process

- 8.1. Candidates are encouraged to complete an application form. An application form ensures that people interested in applying for a job have all the information they need about the organisation and the advertised role. When advertising through NHS jobs website the standard NHS application form will be used. The NHS application form is separated into Parts A (containing personal information) and B (application information). Under the Department of Health guidelines, in conjunction with the Data Protection Act and Equal Opportunities Act, recruiting managers will not see part A until successful candidates have been chosen in order to promote fairness and equality.
- 8.2. The recruiting manager and HR will agree a closing date for the vacancy, which will be included in the job advert. There is no set time scale for a vacancy to be open, although 2 weeks is a standard period. Due to the high number of applications often received through e-recruitment it is possible to close a vacancy early.

9. Shortlisting

- 9.1. Shortlisting is the process of identifying those candidates to be invited for interview; this is done by assessing individuals against the person specification. All applications will be received by the HR department and HR will conduct the initial shortlisting ensuring shortlisted candidates meet the essential criteria for the role set out in the job description and person specification. Further shortlisting should be conducted by a member of the interview panel; this panel should remain the same for all applicants. Panel members are responsible for declaring if they have a relationship (business or personal) with an applicant. In this situation, they should not sit on the panel for interview.
- 9.2. The NHS jobs website has the ability to filter unsuitable applications prior to shortlisting for example filtering out candidates who do not have the required qualification.
- 9.3. When the advert has closed the recruiting managers will receive an email listing all candidates who have been shortlisted for the vacancy. All candidates who meet the essential criteria of the person specification should be shortlisted. However, in a situation where it is impractical to interview all of those shortlisted, desirable rated criteria should be used as a means of further selection. The person specification

should not be altered in any way to fit any candidate's application. The recruiting manager will notify the HR department of the candidates they would like to invite for an interview.

10. The interview

- 10.1. The HR department will book the interviews at the date and times communicated by the recruiting manager. Where the candidate has a disability, the HR department will confirm with them if they have any special requirements at interview.
- 10.2. The interview panel should consist of a minimum of two members, with at least one member having received training in safer recruitment and selection. The panel should ideally include the person to whom the successful candidate will be immediately accountable. Trained HR staff may be available to sit on interview panels to support managers where necessary.
- 10.3. All interviews should be structured, with applicants being asked broadly the same questions specific to the role they have applied for. A mixture of questions relating to the organisation's core values and competency-based questions should be used, which relate to the job description and person specification. The panel members are required to provide detailed notes of the candidate's responses to the questions and will send completed versions through to the HR department. Decisions must be recorded as well as reasons for selection/rejection of candidates. Copies of all confidential documentation relating to the unsuccessful candidates will be retained in HR for six months.
- 10.4. Line managers must complete and attach interview notes to each candidate interviewed on the ATS.
- 10.5. Where it is identified that a selection interview will not sufficiently confirm the skills and abilities detailed in the person specification, managers are expected to seek the advice of the HR Department on other selection methods such as assessment centres, presentations, psychometric tests or written exercises.
- 10.6. The interview is an opportunity to provide candidates with information about the job, department and organisation, the terms and conditions of employment, including any special circumstances such as on-call requirements etc. and opportunities for training and career development. Whilst managers should aim to portray a positive image of the organisation at all times, they should not make guarantees to candidates at interview which are outside of their jurisdiction.

11. Identity, qualifications and registrations checks

- 11.1. The recruiting manager is required to check identification (e.g., Passport, Biometric Resident Card, etc) of candidates at interview.

- 11.2. All successful candidates who claim possession of qualifications relevant to the appointment are required to produce documentary evidence of the qualifications concerned at interview. Copies must be retained on file. The necessary documentation in relation to the professional requirement of certain posts must be checked and validated prior to appointment by HR. False claims regarding qualifications held will be treated seriously and may result in the withdrawal of the offer of employment.
- 11.3. All successful candidates who have a professional registration with a licensing or regulatory body in the UK or another country, relevant to their role are required to provide evidence of the registration at interview. If verification is only available online a check will be conducted online. The human resources link will check with the relevant regulatory body (e.g. HCPC, IPEM etc) to determine that the registration is valid.

12. References

- 12.1. All offers of employment are subject to receiving satisfactory references. References will be taken up for the first-choice candidate after interview by the HR department covering the candidate's five-year work history and any employment within a health and social care role. The HR department will liaise with the recruiting manager informing them of the content of the references. If the first-choice candidate's references are unsatisfactory, references will then be sought for the second-choice candidate and so on. Personal references from friends or family should not be accepted.
- 12.2. Information contained in references is given in confidence and should not be discussed with the candidate, unless consent is provided.

Employment References – Missing or Unavailable

- 12.3. While employment references are an important part of our recruitment process, we recognise that there may be circumstances where references cannot be obtained. In such cases, alternative measures will be taken to verify the candidate's suitability for employment.
- 12.4. Below is the procedure we will follow when employment references for a candidate or employee cannot be obtained, ensuring compliance with UK employment law and maintaining fair, consistent recruitment practices.

Procedure

1. Attempts to Obtain References

- HR will make at least **two documented attempts** to contact previous employers.

- If unsuccessful, HR will record the reason (e.g., company closure, policy of no references, inability to contact).

2. Candidate Notification

- HR will Inform the candidate and their line manager that references could not be obtained and explain the alternative verification process.

3. Alternative Checks

- Accept **character references** from individuals who know the candidate professionally or personally.
- References from **other employers**, colleagues, or clients.
- Request **evidence of previous employment**, such as:
 - Payslips
 - P45/P60
 - Employment contracts
 - Copies of performance reviews or appraisals from previous roles.
 - Conduct **additional background checks** where appropriate

4. Conditional Offer & Probation

- Employment may proceed on a **conditional basis**, and may be subject to a probationary period extension to allow us to complete additional checks and during which performance and conduct will be closely monitored.
- Line managers should note on the probationary review form that references could not be obtained and what other actions have been taken as a result.

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5. Documentation

- HR will keep a clear record of:
 - Attempts to obtain references
 - Reasons for unavailability
 - Alternative checks completed

13. Making the appointment

- 13.1. When contacting the successful candidate, it is made clear that the offer is still subject to satisfactory completion of all the vetting processes. The successful candidate will be unable to commence employment until full compliance is completed.
- 13.2. Please also see the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check Policy**.

14. Contract of employment

- 14.1. It is a legal requirement to ensure that a new member of staff receives a written Statement of Terms and Conditions of Service (Contract of Employment). This will be sent out by the HR Department along with their offer letter prior to the new member of staff commencing their employment.

15. Induction

- 15.1. Every new employee, including temporary, agency workers, will be required to complete the organisations HR corporate induction and have a local induction delivered by their manager. A checklist for the local induction will be given to the employee on their first day by HR.
- 15.2. A consistent induction process makes sure everyone in our organisation fully understands and knows how to follow your safeguarding policies and procedures.

16. Disability Confident Employer

- 16.1. As a Disability Confident Employer, we ensure our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible. We accept applications in alternative formats such electronically or paper, ensure against discrimination and provide information in accessible formats such as large print.
- 16.2. We advertise vacancies through a range of communication channels and regularly review our current recruitment processes.
- 16.3. We encourage applications from disabled people by offering them an interview if they meet the minimum criteria for the job (this is the description of the job set by the employer).
- 16.4. We anticipate and provide reasonable adjustments as required to make sure disabled people aren't disadvantaged when applying for and doing their jobs.

- 16.5. We support any existing employee who acquires a disability or long-term health condition to stay in work.

17. Data protection

- 17.1. When managing a candidate's application, the organisation processes personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected as part of the safer recruitment policy is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing their application and compliance with the law. Inappropriate access or disclosure of personal data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.