

Safer Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy

1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Warwickshire Vision Support is committed to best safeguarding practice and to uphold the rights of all adults to live a life free from harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect. This will be clearly stated on all advertisements, candidate information, job descriptions and person specifications.
- 1.2 We take all reasonable steps to ensure that the people that we appoint have the appropriate values, experience, skills and approach to work effectively with our clients. This includes a commitment to safer recruitment processes.
- 1.3 Warwickshire Vision Support is committed to recruiting and retaining the best staff to provide services directly to adults with a visual impairment, their carers and families; and to ensure the smooth and effective running of the organisation.
- 1.4 Warwickshire Vision Support, as an employer and service provider, has a part to play in reducing the disadvantages which certain people and groups have experienced, both now and in the past. We also want our staff and volunteers to be truly representative of the community they serve. Please refer to our Diversity Policy.
- 1.5 This policy aims to set out the recruitment process so that applicants understand what is required from them and what can expect Warwickshire Vision to do.
- 1.6 The selection process will be carried out appropriately with written evidence relating to the recruitment and selection process held on file.
- 1.7 All staff involved in the recruitment and selection process will receive appropriate guidance in fair interviewing and selection procedures.
- 1.8 All candidates will be informed of the outcome of their interview within 1 week of the interview taking place.
- 1.9 Any applicant (internal or external) who feels that they have not been treated fairly in the recruitment and selection process should contact the Board of Trustees who will investigate the matter.

2 Recruitment and selection process

2.1 Before advertising

2.1.1 Review the need for the position

The recruitment and selection process starts with the resignation or temporary absence of an existing employee, or when a new post is established.

The following questions need to be asked by the Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the appropriate CEO, in filling an existing post.

- Does the job need to continue in exactly the same manner? Is it fulfilling its purpose?
- Has the job changed from what was originally envisaged?

- Is there the budget to pay for the post?
- Is the existing job title, role specification and person specification appropriate for the post?
- Does any information from an exit interview need to be taken into account?

Where a new post is being established, the following areas need to be considered with the CEO/Board of Trustees.

- If it is a new post, has it been evaluated and funding agreed?
- What is the source of funding?
- Has the funding been secured?
- Has a job and person specification been drawn up?

2.1.2 Employee Feedback

Where a vacancy occurs through the resignation of an existing member of staff, the member of staff should be encouraged to give feedback on their role, responsibilities, and other associated issues in order that useful information can be obtained and taken into account in any revision of the job or person specification.

When an employee resigns they will be given the option of having an exit interview with a member of the Management before they leave, or completing an exit questionnaire within 3 months of their leaving the organisation.

2.1.3 How should the vacancy be filled?

Vacancies may be advertised internally where appropriate but substantive posts will normally be advertised externally.

This will enable both external and internal applicants to apply for the post and will create a fairly selected pool of applicants from which the most appropriate can be selected.

If the need to fill the post is immediate it may be deemed necessary to use temporary staff until the role is filled through the standard recruitment procedure. At this stage, consideration needs to be given to any budgetary control measures and to the financial and staffing implication of any temporary arrangements considered.

If temporary arrangements are required for a short period of time whilst the recruitment process is under way, the CEO can consider;

- Offering additional hours of part time staff
- Cover arrangements offering development opportunities with existing staff
- Employment of agency staff

A post may be held from external advertising if there is a suitable existing employee seeking redeployment.

2.1.4 Role specification

What should be in it?

The responsibility for reviewing/drafting/confirming the role specification rests with the CEO with consultation from the Personnel Sub Committee.

The role specification should represent a statement of what a person is expected to do.

It should contain;

- An accurate job title.
- The main purpose of the job, and this should clearly relate to the purpose and objectives of the service.
- Reference to responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults at risk. *Adult at risk: An adult at risk is 'any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support' (Care Act 2014 [England])*
- The statement 'any other duties commensurate with the post' is not acceptable under the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, unless accompanied with a clause stating that any adjustments would be made in line with the Disability Discrimination Act, i.e. *"commensurate with the grade of the job and with regard to the Guidelines contained in the Code of Practice for the elimination of discrimination in the field of employment against disabled persons or persons who have a disability."*
- The main duties and responsibilities. These should be comprehensive and meaningful and should be appropriate to the perceived grade of the post. It will also be helpful to have considered what the previous post holder did/what they should have done/what new developments need to be added or whether any of the existing responsibilities and duties could be better carried out elsewhere.
- The date the role specification was approved.
- If there is staff management responsibility, the number of staff involved.
- The duties and responsibilities as specified should be strictly relevant to the requirements of the job.

2.1.5. Person Specification

What is a person specification?

Having established the duties of a job through the process of drawing up a role specification, it is necessary to clearly establish what attributes a person needs to be able to fulfil the duties of the job.

The person specification is a statement which describes the knowledge, skills, abilities, experience and qualifications needed by the individual to carry out the duties of the job, as described in the role specification.

The criteria specified under these headings should be measurable and justifiable, as they will form the basis of the selection process.

The person specification should only stipulate the necessary requirements to fulfil the duties of the job. The person specification must give regard to the provisions of Equal Opportunities legislation, and the Disabilities Discrimination Act.

The person specification must also include specific reference to suitability to work with adults at risk, mainly due to their disability or age, where appropriate.

Measuring how well the candidates meet the criteria

It is important that any attributes included in the person specification are measurable in as objective a way as possible.

The most common way of identifying attributes possessed by the candidates is the use of information on their CV which is then tested out or further explored at interview.

3. Advertising

Preparing the advertisement

Adverts are drafted using the information from the job and person specifications.

Advertising process

Careful consideration should be given to where to place the advertisement. The placement of the advertisement is influenced by the type of post, the financial investment involved, the need to attract applicants from disadvantaged groups, the potential market area and the necessity to have with regard to cost effectiveness.

The advertisement will include a statement of Warwickshire Vision's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults at risk. Reference must also be made to the fact that successful candidates will be required to undertake a DBS check of a level dependant upon the role. All applicants will be required to provide evidence of identity, Right to Work in the UK and qualifications.

Information pack

An information pack will be sent to all enquirers and will include:

- covering letter stipulating closing date for applications
- Role and Person Specifications
- Conditions of Service to include appropriate level of DBS check required for the role.
- corporate information
- any additional information sheets
- Safeguarding statement
- A copy of our Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy.

Certain posts at Warwickshire Vision are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and this will be set out clearly in the application pack. If a post is exempted from the Act, the candidate will be required to declare

- All unspent convictions and conditional cautions
- All spent convictions and adult cautions that are not protected (i.e. that are not filtered out) as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2020)

4. The selection panel

Size and composition of panel

It is Warwickshire Visions intention to ensure that all Line Managers and staff involved in the recruitment and selection process receive training.

The panel should consist of a minimum two people. One person will be designated the Chair and will have overall responsibility and accountability for the whole process and should ensure that

the recruitment process is planned and conducted properly. The Chair will also be deemed to be the appointing officer. The Chair should have undertaken training in recruitment and selection.

The panel should, except in exceptional circumstances, remain consistent throughout the recruitment and selection process.

The panels' role

As soon as the membership of the Panel is identified they should meet to plan and set dates for the whole recruitment process.

The Panel should:

- decide how each item on the person specification will be assessed
- agree recruitment and selection methods
- shortlist applications
- plan the selection process and develop interview techniques
- agree the questions
- conduct the interviews and other selection methods
- make the decision.

5. Shortlisting

The process

The selection process has to be conducted in a systematic and objective manner. In order to ensure this, all applicants must be evaluated against the selection criteria.

All members of the interview panel should be involved in the shortlisting process. The shortlisting panel (same as the interview panel) will be accountable for all their shortlisting decisions.

At least two people must be involved in the shortlisting process.

All candidate CVs or application forms will be checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, that the information provided is consistent, does not contain any discrepancies and to ensure that any gaps in employment are identified. Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified will be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to shortlist the applicant.

People with disabilities who meet the essential minimum job requirements as outlined in the person specification will be guaranteed an interview. A shortlisting proforma will record their individual views in each applicant, which must be kept as a written record of the decisions taken.

The panel should then discuss the final shortlist.

On completion of all the documentation the appropriate forms along with the applications should be returned to the Administration Officer so that Interview packs can be prepared for the panel before the interview date.

Quality and quantity

Where there are insufficient applicants who meet the essential criteria, the panel should diagnose the reason for this and make a decision about how to resolve the problem i.e.

consideration may need to be given to the media selected, the time of placing the advert, what information was given, the closing date, the grade of the post. This will inform the panels decision on how they wish to proceed with the process.

The panel will need to determine whether they would accept late applications. The shortlisting process should be based on the information contained in the application form. At this stage assessment can only be made on the basis of the evidence provided by the candidate in the application form.

If only one candidate meets the essential requirements, the panel should consider whether or not the job requirements or method of advertising have excluded other suitable applicants. If this is the case the Panel may wish to re-advertise and carry forward the shortlisted applicant.

If however, the panel are satisfied that this is not the case, the panel can interview the one candidate.

If the panel are unable to appoint, the post should be re-advertised.

Application forms from applicants not shortlisted, along with those who were unsuccessful at interview stage, will be kept for one year by the Admin Officer.

Internal candidates should be offered the opportunity to receive feedback on their application.

6. Informing the candidates

Once the shortlisting has been agreed, candidates will be informed by letter, email, and/or telephone that they are invited for interview. Wherever possible, at least 10 working day's notice should be given.

The following information should be sent to the shortlisted candidates:

- Date, time and venue for interview (including directions and car parking access if relevant).
- Questions to candidates on whether they have any particular needs to enable them to participate in the interview process.
- Contact person (for interview arrangements or informal discussion).
- Candidates will be required to bring evidence of their identity to the interview – a driving licence, passport or other photo card will be acceptable.
- Certain roles require a signed statement that the individual is not disqualified from working with vulnerable people or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory or professional body and has no convictions, cautions or bind overs. – Full and honest disclosure is encouraged; a disclosure does not necessarily mean that the individual will be denied an interview or will not be successful in getting the role. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- Unless the nature of the position allows WVS to disclose spent convictions which are not protected we only ask about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Any shortlisted candidate who has indicated on the application form that they have a past criminal conviction will be asked to provide the interview panel with brief written details in an envelope marked confidential and for the attention of the chair of the interviewing panel. If considered relevant, this may be explored further at interview.

- If not included on the application form, the candidate will also be asked for reference information. A minimum of two, one of which must be the individual's most recent employer and when the reference may be taken up.

7. The interview

7.1 Planning

Planning for the interview is crucial. It not only ensures that all candidates are treated in a fair and equitable manner, but are also left with a positive and professional image of the organisation. The panel should therefore determine how the interview will be structured, the nature and the scope of the questions and who will be asking which ones.

When planning for the interview, the panel needs to consider:

- the time required to notify candidates
- an appropriate and accessible venue
- candidates may have particular needs i.e. mobility/communication, which should be met to enable them to participate fully in the interview process. The timetable is devised so that each panel member and the candidates know the timing, purpose and content of each stage of the process. The same amount of time is allocated to each candidates interview.
- Panel members should remain consistent throughout the selection process.
- Panel members should include questions that also consider the candidate's
 - attitude towards adults at risk (those with a disability and those who may be elderly and frail), including their motivation and reason.
 - perceptions about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour towards adults at risk.
 - Ability to form and maintain professional relationships
 - General understanding of safeguarding and their ability to support WVS's agenda for safeguarding
- If required, the panel should also ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for an Enhanced DBS Disclosure.

7.2 Selection methods

Whilst the interview process will form the basis of the selection decisions, there may be other selection methods that might enhance the decision making.

The selection process may be a combination of the following:

- written exercises
- presentation
- group exercises

Any additional selection methods used should clearly be related to the person and role specification and be capable of assessing a candidate's competencies in performing the particular job.

7.3 Preparing questions

The purpose of the interview is to assess candidate's suitability through fair and efficient questioning techniques which are focused on obtaining relevant evidence on which to make a decision.

All candidates should be questioned about the same matters, although it is not necessary to ask precisely the same questions. Supplementary questions are reasonable to ask on the contents of the candidate's application and exploring areas of concern.

It is important before the interview the panel determine the areas of questioning to be covered during the interview and allocate each panel member a clear role. Areas of questioning should be developed to cover the criteria on the person specification, divided up according to expertise and knowledge among the panel members.

Panel members should consider the information and evidence that they are looking for in a candidate's response.

7.4 The interview

One panel member must have some awareness of the good practice guidelines for recruitment and selection.

The purpose of the interview is:

- to provide the selection panel with relevant information beyond that already contained in the application form and about the candidate's suitability for appointment
- to allow the candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and abilities against the person specification
- to provide the candidate with more information about the job and the organisation
- to identify any areas of weakness/training and development needs

Panel members should not ask disabled candidates about the nature of their disability and how it will affect their ability to undertake the job (Disability Discrimination Act 1995). Any information needed to facilitate the employment of a disabled person should be followed through after the appointment has been offered. All questioning should be relevant to the skills, abilities and experience required in the post. Candidates of either gender should not be asked questions relating to their personal lives, child care arrangements etc. Panel members should also be careful that questions do not unfairly advantage internal candidates.

Each panel member should have an assessment sheet for each candidate which will be retained as a record of the interview, and should clearly illustrate the personal assessment of each interview in detail.

The interview is part of the decision-making process. The selection panel need to keep an open mind on all candidates and a decision only made after all candidates have been interviewed and assessed against the person specification.

The panel needs to be clear about why candidates were not selected and ensure that their notes reflect the decision making process.

7.5 Procedure to be followed after the interview

The procedure is as follows:

- A conditional offer is made to the successful candidate (by email), clearly stating this is subject to
 - receipt of two satisfactory references
 - A satisfactory DBS Disclosure
 - Verification of qualifications where they are a requirement of the post (originals, not copies, must be viewed)
 - proof of the candidate's identity (originals, not copies must be viewed).
 - proof of the candidates right to work in the UK. In accordance with the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, employers have a duty to check whether job applicants are entitled to live and work in the UK. Therefore documentary evidence of identity e.g. British Passport and National Insurance Number. Proof that this has been verified should be held securely on the personnel file.
 - Completion of any probationary period where applicable
- References are sought only for the successful applicant after the conditional offer has been made and accepted.
- References should always be obtained in writing (this may be via email from an appropriate 'work' email address) and telephone contact must be made with at least one referee in order to verify the reference. A written record should be kept of any telephone conversations.
- Referees should be asked to comment on work and professional competence and personal qualities, although it should be borne in mind that comments on 'personal qualities' can be highly subjective.
- References should also specifically request information on the applicant's suitability to work with adults at risk, details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to, including those where the sanction has expired. All reference requests should contain a copy of the job description and person specification.
- References which are 'testimonials' or are written as a "To Whom It May Concern" are not acceptable.
- Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.
- Where a 'factual only' reference is received, or the reference is incomplete or vague, the line manager will follow up with a phone call to the referee for further clarification. Any issues of concern or discrepancies with information provided by the candidate will be discussed with the candidate and resolved before the formal offer or employment is confirmed.
- A DBS check will be run on all those who are offered employment, the type of check dependent upon the type of work the individual is undertaking. A positive result does not necessarily preclude an individual from working with WVS and a Risk Assessment will be performed by the Line Manager and signed off by the CEO. Where the individual is precluded from working with WVS, we undertake to discuss the matter with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

- The decision will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the applicant's offences. A small subgroup, to include the CEO and at least one trustee, will be designated by the Board of Trustees to review any positive disclosures and decide if the offer of employment is withdrawn. Judgement will be made with regard to the nature of the conviction, how long ago it happened, and the role the person will be taking up and how open and honest they were in disclosure. We are then obliged to inform our insurance company of any unspent criminal convictions that are disclosed during this process.
- All checks are confirmed in writing and copies retained on the personnel file. The DBS Certificate is not copied, but the disclosure number is recorded, together with the date, the level of disclosure obtained and any relevant information if the disclosure is positive.
(see our DBS Policy for further information)
- Admin Officer to inform unsuccessful candidates of outcome within 7 working days of the interview
- The Chair or Line Manager to offer feedback to unsuccessful candidates where requested
- The Chair to securely file the panel assessment sheets so that access is only open to WVS Senior Leadership Team.

8. Starting salary

All checks, including DBS, references, qualifications, and confirmation of starting salary details should be undertaken before a final offer is made.

9. Offer of appointment

Once identity and address is confirmed, references have been received and DBS checks completed. The Admin Officer will formally issue an offer letter, contract of employment and other pertinent details including notification of the probationary period to the successful.

Unsuccessful candidates will be notified as soon as possible, either by telephone, email or letter.

10. Induction

All new members of staff, will receive an induction. The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff. The programme needs to be tailored to the individuals and planned prior to the successful candidate arriving for work.

As far as safeguarding adults with a visual impairment is concerned, the induction programme will include information about:

- Any written statements of policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and whistleblowing
- Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff in the organisation

- How and with whom any concerns about those issues should be raised; and other relevant personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, data protection, code of conduct, lone working and whistle-blowing.
- Provide opportunities for a new member of staff to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities.
- Enable the person's line manager to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.
- The programme should also include completion of adult safeguarding training as appropriate to the person's role. A record of this training is to be maintained.

The programme should enable new members of staff to have a clear understanding of the Association's aims and objectives as well as a clear understanding of their role and feel an integral part of the organisation.

The programme should also aim to:

- ensure that new members of staff settle into their jobs as quickly as possible and that any training and development needs are identified and acted upon.
- build motivation and confidence in members of staff joining the organisation or moving to new roles within the organisation.

11. Probationary period

All contracts for a duration of 12 months and beyond will be subject to a satisfactory completion of probationary period of 6 months.

The probationary period will enable the Line Manager to:

- assess/review the initial performance of the appointed candidate and determine their suitability to do the job
- give some initial consideration for the employee's potential and possible development within the job

It is policy that probationary reviews be undertaken after 6 months, of commencing employment. This will provide an ideal opportunity for any performance issues to be highlighted (within 6 months) and offers an opportunity to assess the employee's potential.

If at the 6 month review it has been identified that some areas require development /improvements, this should be made clear to the post holder.

12. Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants suitability to undertake work with adults at risk, WVS complies with DBS guidance in order to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

WVS is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, volunteers and users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

This written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

A disclosure is only requested after an assessment has indicated that the role falls within DBS guidelines. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all job adverts, application forms and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Version control

The table below shows the history of the document:

Version Number	Author & Job Title	Date
V.1		April 2017
V.2	Deborah Kerrison Finance & Admin Manager	June 2022
V.3	Rebecca Bourton Community Services Manager	June 2023