

Recruitment and Selection Policy

1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Recruitment and selection is the process of finding and appointing the best candidate for a vacancy, through a structured, fair, efficient and transparent assessment process. North Halifax Partnership (NHP) recognises that people are key to the success of our organisation and we aim to recruit diverse, talented and caring people who are committed to our values and ethos.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the minimum requirements of our recruitment and selection processes, including the responsibilities of panel members. Given the nature of our work this policy also sets out how we will take steps to deter (and reject) prospective applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. This policy is supported by forms and templates, which do not form the policy and may be changed from time to time.
- 1.3 Throughout our recruitment processes, this policy aims to ensure all those staff involved in selecting and appointing applicants are consistent, transparent and rigorously apply pre-employment checks. We are committed to undertaking robust vetting and pre-employment checks to support our commitment to safer recruitment.
- 1.4 All staff involved in recruitment processes must take steps to ensure they do not act, or take decisions, that could bring them, or the organisation into disrepute (this includes where they may gain personally, or where their family or friends benefit).
- 1.5 Recruitment processes are not just about the organisation identifying suitable employees of the future, it is also about candidates finding out more about us and deciding whether NHP Ltd is an organisation that they would like to work for, either now, or in the future. The experience of candidates (both successful and unsuccessful) at each stage of the recruitment process will impact on their view of the professionalism of the organisation.
- 1.6 As with any policy, failure to follow the agreed policy and procedure could result in disciplinary action.
- 1.7 A separate Volunteer Policy exists to outline how the organisation recruits and undertakes vetting checks for volunteers who work with us.

2 Recruitment and Equal Opportunities

- 2.1 NHP celebrates the diversity of the communities we serve. We will seek to foster good relations between people of different experiences and backgrounds; who will enrich the experience of service users and employees, through the understanding and promotion of that diversity.
- 2.2 All employees and prospective applicants will be treated fairly and consistently and be given equal opportunity to vacancies. Specifically, this policy will:
- ensure that we attract a wide pool of talented candidates
 - ensure that our processes are 'equality-proof', e.g. ensuring that person specifications do not include unnecessary requirements and that sickness absence data is only requested after an employment offer is made.
 - offer interview training, including safer recruitment training for panel members;
 - make reasonable adjustments so that our recruitment practices do not discriminate or present barriers for candidates; (directly or indirectly).
- 2.3 Recruitment decisions and selection exercises will only be based on the candidates':
- ability to do the job;
 - understanding (and commitment) to our vision and ethos;
 - suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults(if applicable);
 - potential for development.
- 2.4 To support our commitment as an equal opportunities employer, job share arrangements will be considered for full time posts. Job share applications for a full-time position will usually need to cover the whole post, for example two candidates can apply for a full-time post on a job share basis.
- 2.5 NHP Ltd is accredited as a 'Disability Confident Committed' employer. This means that we will guarantee to offer an interview to disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria for a role.
- 2.6 This policy is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.7 NHP carries out criminal record checks, and for that reason we have a policy position on employing ex-offenders. This is shown in **Appendix A** of this policy.

3 Safer recruitment

- 3.1 Safer recruitment practice means considering and including issues related with child protection and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and

vulnerable adults, at every stage of the recruitment process. It starts with the process of planning the recruitment exercise, and, where the post is advertised, ensuring that the advertisement makes clear the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. It also requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants.

- 3.2 Please refer to **Appendix B** for details of the organisation's standard pre-employment checks.

4 Initial planning – when a vacancy arises

- 4.1 Vacancies can arise from a variety of situations (e.g. resignation or retirement, newly created post, temporary cover or a change in the substantive postholder's working pattern).
- 4.2 Before starting a recruitment process a senior manager will evaluate the vacancy. This should consider the work content of the job, the job's purpose, the outputs required from the job holder and how it fits into the organisation's structure. Often positions change over time with new technology, changing needs and other external factors. The Pay Policy should be referred to if there are substantial changes to a role.
- 4.3 When a position becomes vacant, the job description and person specification should be reviewed prior to recruiting, to ensure that these important documents are accurate and reflect current business needs. This includes considering the skills and personal attributes needed to perform the role effectively. This analysis should form the basis of a Job Description and Person Specification.

Planning recruitment timetables

- 4.4 The recruiting manager is responsible for planning the timetable of events, in liaison with Core Services HR, as set out in detailed working practice
- 4.4.1 To ensure consistency and fairness the full recruitment process will be administered by Core Services HR. The team will administer the recruitment process from advertising, preparation of interview and proceed through to the preferred candidate stage sending out all letters, following up references and processing new starters.
- 4.4.2 Usually interviews should be forward planned to ensure an efficient recruitment process. As a guide, short-listing should be completed and returned to Core Services within 1.5 weeks of the post closing and interviews should be conducted within 2-3 weeks of the post closing.

4.5 The recruitment panel

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- 4.5.1 The recruitment panel must consist of at least two panel members, with the chair of the panel usually the line manager for the post. For external candidates, for posts in regulated activity at least one member of panel should have completed safer recruitment training.
- 4.5.2 In addition to safer recruitment training, at least two panel members should have attended internal NHP recruitment training.
- 4.5.3 Ideally there should be three members of the panel, and no more than five. The chair of the panel should also consider the gender balance of the panel. Panel members must be the same grade or above to that of the vacant post. For senior and some middle leader roles a member of the Board could be invited to be a panel member.
- 4.5.4 Wherever possible, people who are close friends or relatives of the applicants should not be involved in any part of the selection process; and they should in no circumstances chair the recruitment panel.

4.6 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

- 4.6.1 The job description and person specification form the foundation of the recruitment process and will be used to inform the criteria to be used to shortlist candidates.

5 Advertising – equality of opportunity

- 5.1 NHP is committed to ensuring that existing employees have opportunity to apply for vacant posts. Internal and external recruitment exercises will be used to attract the best candidate for any vacancy.
- 5.2 There are many ways in which the organisation will advertise posts in order to attract the best candidates. Before agreeing a recruitment method, the Senior Manager will make a decision as to whether the post will be advertised internally or externally. (Internally means internally in the first instance and where posts are advertised externally, internal candidates are able to apply). It is expected that for more senior posts an external recruitment process would be used.
- 5.3 In making this decision, the Senior Manager will consider if there is an internal talent pool suitable to the vacancy. If this is the case the post will be advertised internally in the first instance. By providing opportunities for development and career progression the organisation aims to increase employee engagement and retention, and support succession planning.

- 5.4 For temporary appointments of less than 12 months these will generally be advertised internally in the first instance. Internal adverts usually have a deadline of between 7-14 calendar days.
- 5.5 There are three methods to advertise a role that NHP Ltd will use. These are:
- 5.5.1 **Same post transfer.** This is where a vacancy exists and staff in the same role (determined by the Job Description) can apply to transfer to the vacancy advertised. This method may offer the opportunity to work in a different location, or for different hours. **An expression of interest form is required to apply for a same post transfer.**
 - 5.5.2 **Internal recruitment.** This is where a vacancy exists and the manager has agreed to offer this only to NHP staff in the first instance. In this case, the post presents the opportunity for promotion, or to work in a different role. **A full application form is required to apply for an internal recruitment opportunity.**
 - 5.5.3 **External recruitment.** This is where the vacancy is advertised externally to the organisation. It is open for existing staff to apply unless restrictions are stated in the job vacancy information (e.g. previous applicants need not apply). **A full application form is required to apply for an internal recruitment opportunity.**
- 5.6 This advertising process could be sequential (e.g. Where there is the opportunity for same post transfer we will first seek applicants for a same post transfer, then move onto internal recruitment if there are no applicants, and finally go external if the internal recruitment is not successful).
- 5.7 There is no requirement to follow a sequential process. The recruiting manager is responsible for ensuring that their chosen method of advertising meets the aims of this policy.
- 5.8 For same post and internal recruitment methods supporting information can be found in internal working practices folders that support this policy.
- 5.9 Application packs
- 5.9.1 The information given to candidates is crucial in attracting good quality applications. Application Packs should be planned and prepared prior to advertisements being placed, so that an immediate response may be provided to interested parties. It is important to note that to ensure consistency and safer recruitment practices are followed, this process will be done by Core Service HR.

- 5.9.2 It is made clear in the Application Pack that applications will only be considered using the NHP Application Form. **CVs will ONLY be considered for apprentice opportunities.**

6 Applications

- 6.1 Application forms must be completed in full. This forms part of our safeguarding procedures and ensures that the applicant tailors their application to the job description and person and specification. Failure to complete an application form fully may result in the application not considered at shortlisting stage.
- 6.2 By using application forms this ensures that all required information is presented in a consistent format so the panel can assess the applicant's suitability. All applicants are required to declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS enhanced check. See **Appendix A**.
- 6.3 All completed applications will be dealt with confidentially by the Core Services HR team and will be circulated only to those individuals involved in the recruitment process.
- 6.4 Applicants are asked to complete an equal opportunities monitoring questionnaire as part of their application. Equal opportunities information is collated by Core Services HR for reporting and statistical purposes. All equal opportunities information is treated with the strictest confidentiality and we will abide by all the requirements under the Data Protection provisions.
- 6.5 To ensure that a consistent and equitable approach is adopted for all candidates, late applications will not be accepted unless there are extraordinary circumstances, as agreed by the Chief Executive.

7 Short-listing

- 7.1 Selecting candidates involves two main processes: short-listing and assessing applicants to decide who should be offered the post. The process of short-listing involves reducing the total number of applications received to a short list of candidates you wish to take forward to the more detailed assessment phase of the selection process.
- 7.2 At least two panel members should be involved in the short-listing process in effort to eliminate any bias. Each application should be assessed against all essential criteria outlined in the person specification and reasons for and against selection for interview noted. Core Services HR provide the panel with the shortlisting grid.

- 7.3 Once all applications are read a short-listing grid must be completed. Any notes on candidates or reasons for and against selection, need to be comprehensive and relate directly to the selection criteria so that it may be used to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates.
- 7.4 At short-listing stage, it is important that panel members scrutinise any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in the applicant's employment history. The application should also be checked for any convictions disclosed and any disclosures of working and living outside the UK in the last 10 years for 3 months or more. (In line with safer recruitment).
- 7.5 For some roles the recruiting panel will need to check the qualification level of the applicant to ensure that the qualification meets the requirements of the person specification.
- 7.6 The panel must meet to agree a shortlist of candidates to invite to interview. Generally, candidates who do not meet the essential criteria should not be invited to interview. The panel should be mindful of NHP's Disability Confident commitment.
- 7.7 It is the responsibility of the panel chair to advise short-listing decisions and the format of the interview process to Core Services HR. The purpose of using this process is so all documentation relating to decisions can be used to answer any queries from unsuccessful candidates, following the short-listing process.
- 7.8 It is the responsibility of the panel chair to verbally inform any internal candidates if they have been unsuccessful at short-listing stage. The chair should provide feedback and guidance to support the candidate's professional development.
- 7.9 The panel chair must collate and return all unsuccessful application forms to Core Services HR for confidential storage.
- 7.10 Core Services HR will invite applicants to interview. Applicants will be told what documents, or other information they need to bring to their interview. They will also be advised of any tasks that they need to prepare for. The standard interview invite template will advise candidates who to notify if they need any reasonable adjustments or other special requirements.
- 7.11 In all cases where candidates advise they cannot attend the interview and enquire as to another date, generally this will be declined. If the panel are unable to appoint, they will decide if they would like to reconvene at another date.

8 Interview stage

Planning the interview

- 8.1 Once candidates have been invited to interview the panel must consider the interview and process. This should involve an interview and can include other exercises that test the applicant's skills. Examples are presentations, a written task or observations with children. In deciding the interview questions and other tasks the panel should consider the job requirements, the skills they would like the candidates to evidence and the working environment.
- 8.2 Interviews are the most common form of assessment and enables the panel to find out more about the candidate's suitability and also gives an opportunity for candidates to meet face-to-face and find out more about the organisation and the role. The interview is an opportunity for the line manager to describe the role and its responsibilities in more detail and assess candidates' ability to perform in the role.
- 8.3 The panel must agree on the interview questions in advance of the interview and the questions must be based on the job description and person specification. The chair of the panel will be responsible for developing questions, but Core Services HR can provide a range of previous examples to assist.
- 8.4 Interview questions must focus on the skills and behaviours required for the job and all candidates must be asked the same questions and scored against an agreed criteria. Panel members should use the scoring sheets and other support materials, provided by Core Services HR to record the outcome of interviews.
- 8.5 Interview question should include a question from the BAME tool kit

Interview/Selection day

- 8.6 Panel members must be prepared with all applications to hand. All applicants will bring documents, including ID on the day of their interview. The panel must make arrangements to make copies of the original documents. Panel members should be aware that copies of required documents are not acceptable.
- 8.7 In terms of safeguarding, consistency, rigour and thoroughness in applying the checks and procedures every time is paramount. The panel should ensure that all application forms have been thoroughly checked for inconsistencies, gaps in histories, anomalies and queries, and highlight areas for further investigation. Candidates will always be required to:
- explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment;
 - explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the panel;

- demonstrate their understanding and/or capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children;
- concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee;
- any issues, not already notified, that would become apparent in a background check;
- any periods where they have lived outside the UK.

Assessment Exercises

- 8.8 The panel must agree on an exercise, or test, in advance of the interview and it must be based on the job description and person specification. The chair of the panel will be responsible for agreeing the tasks, and their content.
- 8.9 Assessment exercises must focus on the skills and behaviours required for the job, and all candidates must be given the same tasks and time limits (*subject to reasonable adjustments*). Wherever possible the panel should agree, in advance, what they are looking for from the exercise, and how they will assess candidates. This might include producing answers, or producing a matrix measuring the level of skills or behaviours observed.
- 8.10 When planning the assessment process, in order to make best use of time and staff resources, this may mean running multiple sessions, or using other observers than panel members to support the process (e.g. when running a group exercise).

9 Selection and appointment

- 9.1 The final selection of the preferred candidate should take into consideration the application, interview and any assessment exercises (including relevant scores). All panel members are to agree on the final selection of the preferred candidate and document the reasons why the candidate was selected, and why candidates were unsuccessful. All decisions should be recorded.
- 9.2 The chair of the panel will have the final decision of a recruitment outcome. All documentation relating to the interview should be forwarded to HR for actioning and filing.
- 9.3 Following the interviews there will be a number of outcomes:

9.3.1 Making an offer

In the first instance a conditional offer will be made verbally to the preferred candidate, by the panel chair, or line manager (if

different). This offer is made on the condition of eligibility to work within the UK, at least two satisfactory references and any relevant pre-employment checks, including a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check, if required. A conditional offer letter will be sent by Core Services HR.

9.3.2 Unsuccessful candidates

Unsuccessful candidates should be notified verbally by a member of the panel as soon as possible. If they are unable to contact the candidate in a reasonable time frame, a letter can be sent to them by Core Services HR.

9.3.3 No appointment made

If the panel decide that no candidates are appointable to the position, as none meet the specifications or requirements, then advice should be sought from a Senior Manager as to how to deal with the vacancy.

9.3.4 Potential appointment – additional stage

If the panel decide that an additional stage of the assessment process is required, it is acceptable to invite the candidates for a second stage of the selection process. The second stage should not repeat the first stage.

9.4 Feedback can be offered to interviewed candidates. Any feedback should concentrate on the person specification and the candidate's profile in comparison to the specification and requirements.

9.5 In all cases the full recruitment pack is sent back to Core Services HR.

9.6 If an internal candidate is unsuccessful in securing an interview or at interview, the chair of the panel should advise them in person and provide some constructive feedback. If an internal candidate wishes to appeal against a recruitment decision, they should refer the grievance policy.

10 Pre-employment checks and documentation

10.1 Once the conditional offer letter has been sent to the preferred candidate Core Services HR will undertake pre-employment checks.

10.2 References

10.2.1 Both references will be sought. In line with safer recruitment practices one of these must be from a previous employer.

10.2.2 Open references will not be accepted in any circumstances. Please refer to **Appendix B** for details of NHP's pre-employment checks.

10.2.3 The line manager must verify the reference received is acceptable.

10.3 Commencing employment: Pre employment checks

10.3.1 Employment should not commence until pre-employment checks have been completed.

11 Withdrawing an employment offer

11.1 In exceptional circumstances an offer of employment may be withdrawn. These circumstances would include:

- if a candidate is disqualified from working with children/vulnerable adults. (Established through DBS enhanced check);
- if there are serious concerns regarding the person's suitability to work in the organisation, for reasons other than disqualification. (Established through interviewing the candidate following processing their DBS application);
- if the candidate has provided false information during the assessment and selection process;
- if a candidate cannot provide required, original documentation (qualifications or identity);
- if references are not acceptable;
- if there are concerns about the candidate's suitability to the post.

In all the cases above advice must be sought from a Senior Manager.

11.2 Before withdrawing an offer of employment, it should be explored (as much as possible) that any withdrawal does not contravene the Equalities Act. This may include inviting the candidate in for a discussion about the concerns that have arisen.

11.3 If there are serious concerns regarding the person's suitability to work with children, the facts must be reported to the police and/or Disclosure and Barring Service.

12 Data Protection and Privacy Notices

12.1 Application forms, equal opportunities information, short-listing and interview notes will be retained for up to 6 months. These may be available to candidates in the event of a complaint or query. Core Services HR will securely destroy personal candidate information after this time.

12.2 NHP's Privacy Notice to applicants is displayed on the application form.

Working practices associated with this policy	Applies to
Recruitment and incentive payments	All NHP Staff

Appendix A – Policy on recruiting ex-offenders

- As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), NHP complies fully with the [code of practice](#) and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly;
- NHP undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed;
- NHP can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that NHP are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended);
- NHP can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected;
- NHP is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background;
- This policy is available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process;
- NHP actively promotes 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;
- NHP select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience;
- An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position;
- NHP ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences;
- NHP also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- at interview, or in a separate discussion, NHP ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment;

- NHP makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the [code of practice](#) and makes a copy available on request;
- NHP undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Appendix B – Pre-employment checks

As we are recruiting people to work with vulnerable groups, pre-employment checks must be undertaken. Without satisfactory completion of these checks a firm employment offer should not be made. Checks include:

- verification of identity
- Enhanced DBS check (including barred list check)
- confirmation of the right to work in the UK
- registration with the appropriate professional body (if applicable).
- verification of qualifications
- overseas checks (if required)
- references
- health declaration

We may also include risk assessments (for example, when considering offering employment in cases where the DBS check shows a conviction unrelated to abuse/violence).

Identity checks and DBS checks

Sufficient verification of identity checks must be undertaken to enable a DBS check to be processed. Candidates are advised when invited to interview that we will need to check a range of documents and that they should bring these documents with them. One document **must** evidence their current address.

For applicants who are subscribed to the update service we will check their record online.

The conditional offer of employment letter does include instructions to book an appointment with the Core Services team to complete a DBS check, if this has not already been done at interview.

Right to work in the UK

Before confirming an offer of employment, employers have responsibility for checking that applicants have the right to work in the UK. Every employee is required to prove their eligibility to work in the UK. NHP Ltd will request to see, and take copies, of relevant documentation.

A copy of these documents is placed on personnel files and, if required, logged on the Single Central Record. The ideal document for this is a current UK Passport (this can also be used for the Identity Check).

Registration and qualifications

These details are normally provided on the application form, and the relevant documents will be requested and verified. Copies will be kept on personnel files.

Overseas checks

If candidates have lived, or worked, abroad in the last 10 years for more than 3 months, they will be required to provide an updated criminal records check, or certificate of good character. More information can be found:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

References

As part of our commitment to safeguarding, we will always take up references. All job offers are conditional on obtaining satisfactory references and candidates are informed of the procedure for taking up references on the application form.

At least two satisfactory written references are requested.

- references should be recent and relevant, including a reference from the candidate's current or most recent employer.
- if both referees are from employers, one of these should be from a different organisation.
- open references are not accepted in any circumstances.
- panel members are not to provide references for the preferred candidate. In this case an additional referee needs to be sought.
- internal candidates only need one written reference from their current line manager. The appointment will not be finalised until the line manager produces this reference which is based on the employee's employment record.
- advice should be sought where an agreed reference appears to have been received. In these cases, consideration should be given to the role the candidate is applying for, and the content and context of the reference. Further clarity should be sought from the candidate.

NHP Ltd have a standard reference request form which is used for both requesting and giving references.

Health declaration

This is to be completed by the preferred candidate and must be used in accordance with the guidance of the Equality Act 2010

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3017>. Managers should use the Health Declaration during the induction stage to review support needs. This will be returned to

HR Core Service who will forward to the line manager. A manager should sign the form to acknowledge receipt, record any discussions and sign.

The Health Declaration form should be sent out with the preferred candidate letter.