

# Recruitment and Selection Policy

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 Healthwatch Worcestershire is committed to a fair and transparent Recruitment and Selection procedure which attracts, recruits and retains the highest quality candidates.

The policy will apply to all employee appointments. The same broad principles of fair and transparent recruitment and selection will be applied to the recruitment of volunteers (as detailed in the Healthwatch Worcestershire Volunteers Policy).

- 1.2 All candidates will receive fair consideration on the basis of individual merit and no candidate will be unfairly excluded. Candidate selection will be dependent upon a candidate's ability to do the job, based upon their experience, qualifications, past performance and/or potential for the job.
- 1.3 Internal applicants (including Agency staff) and external applicants will be assessed in the same way.
- 1.4 Selection methods will be used which are timely, cost effective and free from discriminatory practices.
- 1.6 This policy is underpinned by The Equality Act 2010 and Healthwatch Worcestershire's Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

## 2 Fairness

- 2.1 Healthwatch Worcestershire will ensure that all stages of the Recruitment and Selection procedure are administered fairly and objectively. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- objective selection criteria are defined in advance for all vacancies;
- all vacancies have a Job Description and Person Specification;
- selection methods are reliable, objective, appropriate to the requirements of the post and applied consistently;
- all members of recruitment panels have received guidance/briefing on recruitment and selection techniques and best practice, in particular with regard to diversity and inclusion;
- equal opportunities monitoring is carried out and the results used to inform future practices;
- newly appointed staff are properly inducted to ensure they become effective as quickly as possible;
- staff are regularly reviewed during their Probationary Period to ensure that they receive the support, training and guidance they need to be confirmed in the post.

- 2.2 Where an applicant advises of their disability, reasonable adjustments will be made, as required, at every stage of the Recruitment and Selection procedure to ensure no disadvantage. Successful disabled candidates will be invited to discuss their requirements for reasonable adjustments to support them to do the job, including, but not limited to, premises, equipment and work duties.
- 2.3 Speculative Applications (ie applications made before a vacancy is advertised) will not be considered, ensuring that no-one receives preferential treatment by association, eg family and friends of existing members of staff. Applicants will be signposted to where vacancies are advertised and requested to apply in the conventional way.
- 2.4 When arranging interviews, some flexibility will be applied, where possible, to accommodate requests for timeslots that fit with travel considerations (eg public transport times) or caring responsibilities (eg school start/finish times).
- 2.5 To ensure that candidates can perform to the best of their ability, they will be advised of what to expect at interview, eg they will be told in advance if they will be required to do a presentation or other exercise. This will also assist those with disabilities in knowing if they need to request reasonable adjustments.

### **3 Equal Opportunities Monitoring**

- 3.1 In order to identify groups that may be under-represented or disadvantaged, Healthwatch Worcestershire will monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the Recruitment and Selection procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment.
- 3.2 The information will be removed from applications before shortlisting and kept in an anonymous format. It will be used solely for monitoring purposes and to help the organisation take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve Diversity and Inclusion.

### **4 Audit and Review**

- 4.1 A review of this policy will take place annually unless legal, contractual, specific business requirements, operational changes or events necessitate an earlier review.
- 4.2 This policy will be subject to Equality Impact Assessment under the Public Sector Equality Duty Act 2010.

## **Recruitment and Selection Procedure**

### **1 Managing a vacancy**

- 1.1 When a vacancy arises, management will take the opportunity to review current staffing and to consider all options, eg whether the post should be filled at all, whether the duties can be re-organised amongst other staff or whether the Job Description and/or Person Specification needs to be changed to meet current requirements.
- 1.2 Authority to recruit will always be subject to Healthwatch Worcestershire Board approval.

### **2 Job Description/Person Specification**

- 2.1 No recruitment process should be started until the Job Description and Person Specification are agreed and the salary has been benchmarked against comparative posts within the sector/locality and other Healthwatch Worcestershire posts.
- 2.2 The Job Description/Person Specification will be clear, concisely written, up to date and accurate. The Person Specification will detail all Essential Criteria which are measurable and open to assessment. Desirable criteria will only be used where there is objective justification to do so.
- 2.3 Selection criteria will not be at a higher level than is actually needed to do the job as this may result in indirect discrimination, ie a disproportionate adverse effect on one particular group with a protected characteristic.
- 2.4 Decisions will be reached in advance about how Essential Criteria will be measured, ie from Application Form, Certificate, Presentation, Test or Interview.

### **3 Advertising a vacancy**

- 3.1 All approved vacancies will be advertised both internally and externally to ensure the widest pool of candidates from a diversity of backgrounds and experience.
- 3.2 Consideration will be given to where vacancies are advertised to ensure all parts of the community are reached but this will include Healthwatch Worcestershire website, local media and 'Find a Job' service (Jobcentre Plus – GOV.UK).
- 3.3 Staff who are away on maternity leave or long-term sick will be made aware of vacancies through their regular contact with their manager.
- 3.4 All adverts will include a deadline date for applications and the interview date(s).

3.5 For some vacancies (in particular short-term temporary), it may be more cost-effective to use a recruitment agency and this will be at the discretion of the Healthwatch Worcestershire Board.

#### **4 Applications**

4.1 Applications, whether from internal or external applicants, will only be considered where received on a standard Application Form, ie curriculum vitae will not be accepted.

4.2 To comply with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, all applicants will be required to confirm their eligibility to work in the UK and will be required to present for examination at interview:

- i) their UK passport, or
- ii) an official letter or document from a Government Agency showing their National Insurance number, and their full birth, adoption or naturalisation certificate.

4.3 Applications received after the deadline date will not be considered

4.4 Applications will be treated as confidential and will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

#### **5 Shortlisting**

5.1 Equal opportunity forms will be detached from the Application Form in advance of shortlisting and will be retained for monitoring purposes.

5.2 Wherever possible, shortlisting will be carried out by more than one person. Shortlisting will be carried out by assessing the Application Form against the Person Specification.

5.3 A shortlisting form will be used to ensure consistency and recording of decision making.

5.4 The following scores will be consistently applied:

<b>Score</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
5	Significantly exceeds the required standard
4	Moderately exceeds the required standard
3	Meets the required standard
2	Generally acceptable in most areas, but some shortcomings
1	Falls well below the required standard

Applicants scoring '1' (falls well below the required standard) against any of the essential criteria will not be invited to interview.

- 5.5 A minimum acceptable total score will be agreed in advance. Following shortlisting, the scores of all candidates will be ranked and 'top sliced' according to the number agreed as reasonable to interview.
- 5.6 Where Desirable criteria have been justified, these will only be used in a 'tie-breaker' to reduce the number of candidates to a more manageable number.
- 5.7 Where two candidates have applied for a vacancy on a job-share basis, their applications will be considered in relation to the criteria for the post in the same way as other applicants. The candidates will be considered jointly and both should meet the requirements for the post to be shortlisted.

## **6 Interviews and other assessment**

- 6.1 All interviews for the same vacancy will be carried out by the same panel and where possible on the same day. Where there are more candidates than can be interviewed on the same day, usually consecutive days will be arranged.
- 6.2 Recruitment panels will include at least two people, one of whom will be appointed as chair. Recruitment panels will be carefully considered and appropriate to the seniority of the post. Where possible, composition will follow the principles of equal opportunity, eg gender mix, but bearing in mind the size of resource.
- 6.3 All interviews will have a set time limit, usually at least 40 minutes with additional time if the applicants are required to give a presentation or complete a test.
- 6.4 Interviews will be scheduled to allow for 'writing-up time' at the end of each interview to ensure all relevant information is captured before moving on to the next candidate.
- 6.5 Using the Job Description and Person Specification, the panel chair will oversee the drafting of interview questions. The questions will test knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) and will be identical for all candidates (although probing and follow-up questions are encouraged to assist in assessing individual candidates).
- 6.6 Consideration will be given in advance to which KSA's are most critical as this may affect who is appointed when scores are otherwise identical. In some instances, it may be appropriate to apply a 'weighting' to the most critical KSA's.
- 6.7 The selection process will usually be improved by seeking evidence of candidates' knowledge, skills and abilities by the inclusion of exercises, tests or a presentation.

- 6.8 Care will be taken to ensure that the selection methods chosen are as reliable and valid as possible. This means they should:
- operate consistently for all candidates;
  - minimise the possibility of bias or unfair advantage;
  - assess candidates' suitability for the role, by gathering direct evidence of knowledge, skills and abilities (eg through a test) or indirectly through questioning.
- 6.9 Panel members will individually record their views on the performance of each candidate on a Candidate Assessment Form.

## **7 Post Interview**

- 7.1 When all interviews are completed, the panel should discuss their individual assessments and where possible reach a consensus score using the scoring tool in 5.4 above. Where a consensus cannot be achieved, the chair will determine the score having considered the views of other panel members.
- 7.2 The chair will ensure that a summary score sheet is written up for each candidate with appropriate comments and justification as to how the score was achieved. This will assist with audit and any challenge and also support giving feedback to candidates.
- 7.3 When determining which candidate has the best score, it will not be appropriate to add up a total score for all of the KSA's, as this could conceal a low score in a critical area. In particular, where a candidate has scored '1' against any KSA (ie little/no evidence), they should not be appointed even where their total score is higher than other candidates.
- 7.4 If more than one candidate achieves an identical total score, scores against the critical KSA's should be compared with the candidate scoring highest in critical areas being selected.
- 7.5 Where the panel decides that none of the candidates are suitable, it is better not to appoint.

## **8 Advising the 'Preferred Candidate'**

- 8.1 The successful candidate should be advised as soon as possible, usually by telephone followed up with a short confirmation letter, that they are the 'Preferred Candidate' and subject to their agreement, references and other checks can now be carried out. It is important that the candidate is discouraged from giving notice on their current position as no job offer will be made until satisfactory checks have been completed and this may take some weeks, or on occasions even longer.

## **9 Unsuccessful candidates**

- 9.1 Following interviews, unsuccessful external applicants should be advised in writing.
- 9.2 Unsuccessful internal candidates should be advised as promptly as possible and offered feedback to support their development.

## **10 References and Checking**

- 10.1 Before a 'Preferred Candidate' is made a formal job offer, the following standard checks will be carried out:
  - i) References will be taken out to cover a period of five years prior to application and obtained from employers or educational establishments as appropriate (it is recognised that references may not be returned by some employers but a minimum of 2 satisfactory references must be received);
  - ii) Verification of essential qualifications;
  - iii) Medical questionnaire (where appropriate followed up by writing to the candidate's GP for further information);
  - iv) Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, where appropriate
- 10.2 Where a Preferred Candidate fails the referencing and checking procedure, consideration should be given to whether to fall back to the second choice candidate.

## **11 Confirmation of Job Offer**

- 11.1 No job offer should be confirmed before the minimum requirement of references and all checks have been approved as satisfactory.
- 11.2 The job offer should then be made promptly agreeing a start date.
- 11.3 Normally, the first point in the salary range will be offered, unless the candidate's skills and experience warrant a higher salary point.
- 11.4 Once the candidate has indicated their acceptance, a formal offer should be made. A Written Statement of Particulars will be issued confirming the terms and conditions of appointment.

## **12 Appeals by candidates**

- 12.1 There is no legal obligation to consider appeals from unsuccessful candidates but following interview, feedback will be given upon request.

- 12.2 However, where a candidate considers that they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against they should be advised to put their complaint in writing to the Healthwatch Worcestershire Chairman within one month of the decision. Written complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly. Complaints from internal candidates should be managed through the Grievance Procedure. This does not affect candidates' legal rights.

### **13 Induction**

- 13.1 The manager will ensure that all arrangements are made in advance of the new starter's arrival, eg desk, chair, PC set up, buildings and systems access.
- 13.2 The manager will ensure that a tailored induction programme is arranged with an induction checklist to include all relevant policies, procedures and guidance. The manager will be responsible for ensuring that the individual is guided through the relevant documents with opportunity to ask questions and clarify understanding.
- 13.3 In particular, the manager will ensure that the new starter is trained with regard to Healthwatch Worcestershire's expectations in terms of Diversity and Inclusion, Confidentiality and Data Protection.
- 13.3 The duration of the induction programme may vary dependent upon the role and may extend from several days to several weeks. The manager will be responsible for 'signing off' the induction as complete with the new starter as this will form an important part of their Probationary Period.

### **14 Probationary Period**

- 14.1 The appointment of new employees will be subject to a six-month Probationary Period; during this period the employee will be expected to establish his/her suitability for the job.
- 14.2 Managers will be responsible for setting performance objectives and ensuring that progress is reviewed at regular intervals. The manager will raise any concerns at the earliest opportunity providing support as needed; this may include advice, coaching, counselling or additional training and the manager will specify a timeframe for improvement and set a date for review.
- 14.3 Where the required improvement is not made, a formal Probation review will take place and the employee may be issued with a Final Written Warning stating that if they are unable to achieve the required standard within 4 weeks, their probation will be terminated, with contractual notice. This may bring their employment to an end before the six-month Probation has elapsed.
- 14.4 In any event, a formal Probation review will take place no later than 4 months from the date of commencement so that any areas for improvement can be addressed before the end of the Probationary period.

- 14.5 Where progress is made but the required standard is not yet achieved, consideration may be given to extending the Probation Period for not longer than 8 weeks to give the employee every opportunity to reach standard.
- 14.6 Employees will be advised in writing when they have passed their Probationary Period and their employment is confirmed. Whilst every effort will be made to confirm on time, employees should not assume that their Probation is satisfactorily completed until they have received written confirmation.