



## **Recruitment and Selection Policy**

## **CONTENTS**

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 2. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION STATEMENT**
- 3. SAFER PRACTICE IN RECRUITMENT**
  - I. ELEMENTS OF SAFER RECRUITMENT**
- 4. PLANNING AND ADVERTISING**
  - II. ADVERTISEMENTS**
- 5. APPLICATION FORMS**
- 6. JOB DESCRIPTIONS**
- 7. PERSON SPECIFICATIONS**
- 8. INFORMATION PACKS FOR APPLICANTS**
- 9. SHORTLISTING**
- 10. REFERENCES**
  - I. OPEN REFERENCES**
  - II. OBTAINING REFERENCES PRIOR TO INTERVIEW**
  - III. OBTAINING REFERENCES POST INTERVIEW**
  - IV. DISCREPANCIES WITH REFERENCES**
  - V. DISCLOSURES OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION OR ALLEGATIONS**
  - VI. ADDITIONAL PRE-INTERVIEW CHECKS**
- 11. INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**
- 12. INTERVIEWS**
  - i. INVITATION TO INTERVIEW**
  - ii. CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS**
  - iii. SCOPE OF THE INTERVIEW**
- 13. CONDITIONAL OFFER OF APPOINTMENT**
- 14. DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CHECKS (DBS)**
  - I. APPLICANTS STARTING PRIOR TO COMPLETING A DBS**
  - II. DISCLOSURES OF DISQUALIFICATIONS**
  - III. UPDATE SERVICE**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- I. This policy has been developed to support managers and those involved in recruitment and selection procedures.
- II. Current practice is constantly reviewed against current legislation and practice in order to develop a safer recruitment policy which conforms to this guidance.
- III. This document is intended to be used as a guideline, it is not a comprehensive guide to recruitment and selection or employment issues. It does not cover all the issues relevant to that subject. It is not a substitute for training in those areas, or in interviewing and assessment techniques.

## **2. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION STATEMENT**

- I. Metadata has an explicit written recruitment and selection policy statement and procedures that comply with national and local guidance. The statement details all aspects of the process and links to their vulnerable adult protection policy and procedures.
- II. The policy statement incorporates an explicit statement about the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults.
- III. Metadata is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and potentially vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
- IV. This statement should be included in:
  - Publicity materials

- Recruitment websites
- Advertisements
- Learner information packs
- Person specifications
- Job descriptions
- Induction training

### **3. SAFER PRACTICE IN RECRUITMENT**

- I. Safer practice in recruitment means thinking about and including issues to do with the protection of children and other potentially vulnerable individuals and safeguarding and promoting their welfare at every stage of the process.
- II. Safer recruitment starts with planning the recruitment exercise and, where the post is advertised, ensuring that the advertisement makes clear the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting good practice.
- III. It also requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants.

#### **3.1 Elements of safer recruitment**

- I. The main elements of Metadata's safer recruitment process include:
  - Ensuring the job description makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
  - Ensuring that all material include specific reference to suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults
  - Obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants
  - Taking up and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies with applicants

- Obtaining independent professional and character references that answer specific questions to help assess an applicant's suitability to work with the client groups and following up any concerns
  - A face to face interview that explores the learner's suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults as well as his/her suitability for the post
  - Verifying the successful applicant's identity through photographic identification e.g birth certificate plus driving licence/passport or passport size photograph
  - Obtaining documentary evidence of the applicant's home address
  - Verifying that the successful applicant has any academic or vocational qualifications claimed through presentation of original certificates/documents where necessary
  - Checking applicant's previous employment history and experience
  - Verifying that the applicant has suitable health and physical capacity for the job
  - Undertaking an Enhanced DBS disclosure application.
- II. Whilst Metadata recognises the importance of obtaining Enhanced DBS checks for applicants, we will not rely solely on the result of DBS checks to screen out unsuitable applicants. DBS checks are an essential safeguard, but they will only identify individuals who have been convicted, will only be able to disclose other information where it is available, or identify those listed as unsuitable to work with vulnerable clients.
- III. There will be some individuals who are unsuited to working with our client groups who will not have any previous convictions or be listed on the DBS as being a risk. The robust safer recruitment processes listed above will help Metadata ensure that only suitable applicants are selected.

## 4. PLANNING AND ADVERTISING

- I. Planning is vital to successful recruitment. It is important to be clear about what mix of qualities, qualifications and experience a successful candidate will need to demonstrate, and whether there are any particular matters that need to be mentioned in the advertisement for the post in order to prevent unsuitable applications.
- II. It is also essential to plan the recruitment exercise itself, identifying who should be involved, assigning responsibilities and setting aside sufficient time for the work needed at each stage to be completed so that safeguards are not skimmed or overlooked.
- III. The person specification will need careful thought and drafting. It is also good practice to make sure at the outset that all the other material, e.g. the application form, job description, and information/guidance for applicants that will form part of the pack to be sent to prospective applicants is up-to-date, and clearly sets out the extent of the relationships/contact with client groups and the degree of responsibility that the person will have in the position to be filled.

### 4.1 Advertisements

When a vacancy is advertised, the advertisement should include;

- A statement about the employer's commitment to safeguarding
- A statement regarding the need for Metadata to obtain two references, including one from the applicant's current or most recent employer
- The need for the successful applicant to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure check via the Disclosure and Barring Service
- The usual details of the post and salary, qualifications required, etc

## 5. APPLICATION FORMS

- I. Whilst curriculum vitae may be used in the initial stages of recruitment all interviewed applicants must complete an application form to obtain a common set of core data from all applicants.
- II. For applicants for all types of posts the form should obtain the following information:
  - Full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names
  - Date of Birth (For identification purposes only. This information must not be used as a basis for recruitment.)
  - Current address
  - National Insurance Number
  - Statement of any academic and/or vocational qualifications the applicant has obtained that are relevant to the position for which they are applying for with details of the awarding body and date of award
  - A full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any postsecondary education/training, any part-time/voluntary work as well as full time employment
  - Start and end dates should be given in each case with explanations for periods not in employment or education/training, and reasons for leaving employment
  - A declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers
  - Details of two referees - one referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer (the form should make it clear that references will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends)
  - If the applicant is currently working with children or vulnerable adults, on either a paid or voluntary basis, his/her current employer will be asked about disciplinary offences relating to these client groups, including any in which the penalty is "time expired" (that is where a warning could no longer be taken into account in any new disciplinary hearing)
  - Whether the applicant has been the subject of any child protection concerns, and if so, the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure
  - If the applicant is not currently working with the target client group but has done so in the past, that previous employer will be asked about the above issues

- A statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to his/her suitability for the post advertised and how s/he meets the person specification.
- An explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore that all convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as 'spent', must be declared
- A signed statement that the person is not disqualified from working with the relevant client group, or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body, and either has no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs, or has securely attached to the application form such detail in a sealed envelope marked confidential
- It should indicate that the successful applicant will be required to submit a DBS Disclosure application for an Enhanced check of criminal record

## **6. JOB DESCRIPTION**

The job description should clearly state:

- The main duties of the post
- The responsibilities assigned to the postholder
- The individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children, young persons and vulnerable adults s/he is responsible for, or comes into contact with

## **7. PERSON SPECIFICATION**

The person specification should include:

- Qualifications and experience necessary to perform the role
- Any requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people, if any
- The competences and qualities that the successful learner should be able to demonstrate explaining, how these requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process



- Explanation that if the applicant is short listed any relevant issues arising from his/her references will be taken up at interview

## **8. INFORMATION PACKS FOR APPLICANTS**

Information packs will be distributed to potential applicants upon request, the pack should include a copy of:

- The application form, and explanatory notes about completing the form
- The job description, and person specification
- Any relevant information about the Company and the recruitment process, and statements of relevant policies such as equal opportunities, the recruitment of ex-offenders, etc. the organisation's Safeguarding Children Policy
- A statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post
- Guidance about the DBS Disclosure process
- Statement on the organisation's Policy on the Recruitment of Offenders

## **9. SHORTLISTING**

- I. All applications should be scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed; that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies, and to identify any gaps in employment.
- II. Incomplete applications should not be accepted and should be returned to the applicant for completion. Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment identified by the scrutiny should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to shortlist the applicant.
- III. As well as reasons for obvious gaps in employment, the reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid career move for example, from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work, also needs to be explored and verified.

- IV. All applicants should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

## **10. REFERENCES**

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee.

### **10.1 Open references**

Metadata will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant, or on open references and testimonials, i.e. those sent to “To Whom It May Concern”. There have been instances of applicants forging references, therefore, open references/testimonials might be the result of a “compromise agreement” and are unlikely to include any adverse comments.

### **10.2 Obtaining references prior to interview**

- I. Ideally, references should be sought on all shortlisted applicants, including internal ones, and should be obtained before the interview so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the applicant at interview.
- II. It is sometimes not be possible to obtain references prior to interview, either because of delay on the part of the referee, or because an applicant strongly objects to their current employer being approached at that stage, but that should be the aim in all cases. If an applicant does not wish their current employer to be approached for a reference prior to interview, then their 2nd or 3rd reference should be approached.

### **10.3 Obtaining references post interview**

Where a reference has not been obtained on the preferred applicant before interview, every effort must be made to obtain a reference and any concerns are resolved satisfactorily, before the person's appointment is confirmed.

All appointments remain subject to satisfactory references even where an appointment has been made.

### **10.4 Discrepancies with references**

- I.
- II. All requests for references should seek objective verifiable information and not subjective opinion. The use of reference proformas can help achieve that. Where there are discrepancies, references should be verified by a follow up phone call and checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily.
- III. If all questions have not been answered or the reference is vague or unspecific, the referee should be telephoned and asked to provide written answers or amplification as appropriate. The information given should also be compared with the application form to ensure that the information provided about the learner and his/her previous employment by the referee is consistent with the information provided by the applicant on the form.
- IV. Any discrepancy in the factual information should be taken up with the applicant.

### **10.5 Disclosures of disciplinary action or allegations**

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago, where an allegation was determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and in which no further issues have been raised, are less likely to cause concern than more serious or recent concerns, or where issues that were not resolved satisfactorily. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

## **10.6 Additional pre-interview checks**

- I. If a shortlisted applicant claims to have a specific qualification or previous experience that is particularly relevant to the post for which they are applying that will not be verified by a reference, it is good practice to verify the facts before interview so that any discrepancy can be explored at interview.
- II. The qualification or experience can usually be verified quickly by telephoning the relevant previous employer and asking for written confirmation of the facts.

## **11. INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

- I. Involving children and young people in the recruitment and selection process is common, and recognises as good practice. There are different ways of achieving this. For example, young people might form part of an interview panel; applicants might be asked to engage in an interactive exercise with young people e.g. teaching a class.
- II. Metadata may involve young people at its discretion if necessary, for the role. When planning young people involvement, care must be taken to consider risks and implement strategies to minimise them.

## **12. INTERVIEWS**

- I. The interview process should help Metadata assess the merits of each applicant against the job requirements and explore their suitability to work with children. Issues identified within the individual's reference must be discussed.
- II. The selection process will always include a face-to-face interview even if there is only one applicant.

## 12.1 Invitation to interview

- I. In addition to the arrangements for interviews - time and place, directions to the venue, membership of the interview panel – the invitation should remind applicants about how the interview will be conducted and the areas it will explore including suitability to work with the client group.
- II. The invitation should also stress that the identity of the successful applicant will need to be checked thoroughly to ensure the person is who they claim to be, and that an enhanced DBS disclosure will be required.
- III. Consequently, where an appointment decision cannot be made immediately following interviews, all applicants may be asked to complete a DBS Disclosure application and should, therefore, bring with them documentary evidence of their identity that will satisfy DBS Disclose application requirements.
- IV. In any event all interviewees are asked to bring confirmation of their identity consistent with the Asylum and Immigration Act and the interview will not proceed unless this is produced.
- V. Applicants should also be asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post, e.g. the original or a certified copy of a certificate, or diploma, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body. If the successful applicant cannot produce original documents or certified copies, written confirmation of his/her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body. A copy of the documents used to verify the successful applicant's identity and qualifications must be kept for the personnel file.

## 12.2 Conducting interviews

Although it is possible for interviews to be conducted by a single person this is not recommended. It is better to have a minimum of two interviewers, and in some cases, e.g. for senior or specialist posts, a larger panel might be appropriate. A panel of at least two people allows one member to observe and assess the learner and make notes, while the learner is talking to the other. It also reduces the possibility of any dispute about what was said or asked during the interview. One member of the panel should have received training in recruitment practices and have completed safer recruitment training.

## 12.3 Scope of the interview

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel should also explore:

- The applicant's attitude toward the client groups
- His/her ability to support the company's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Gaps in the applicant's employment history
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the applicant and/or a referee (it is acceptable to ask individual issues relating to information contained within references)
- If the applicant wished to declare anything in light of the requirement for a DBS disclosure. If, for whatever reason, references are not obtained before the interview, the applicant should also be asked at interview if there is anything they wish to declare or discuss in light of the questions that have been (or will be) put to their referees.

### **13.CONDITIONAL OFFER OF APPOINTMENT**

An offer of appointment to the successful applicant will be conditional upon the following pre-employment checks:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references
- Verification of the learner's identity
- A satisfactory Enhanced DBS Disclosure
- Verification of the learner's medical fitness
- Verification of original qualifications
- Verification of professional status where required

Human Resources will bring to the recruiting manager's attention issuers where a Disclosure reveals information that an applicant has not disclosed in the course of the selection process.

All checks should be confirmed in writing, documented, retained on the personnel file, and, followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

### **14.DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CHECKS (DBS)**

Ideally a DBS disclosure should be obtained before an individual start work.

#### **14.1 Applicants starting prior to completing a DBS**

- I. Where it is necessary to engage a member of staff/volunteer where the DBS disclosure is outstanding a written risk assessment must be undertaken and the manager must ensure that the employee is appropriately supervised at all times. Arrangements must be put in place to ensure the individual will have no unsupervised contact with vulnerable

groups or individuals until such time as clearance has been obtained via the Disclosure Certificate and confirmed to the Senior Manager.

- II. Appropriate supervision for staff who start work prior to the result of a DBS disclosure being known needs to reflect what is known about the person concerned, their experience, the nature of their duties and the level of responsibility they will carry. For those with limited experience and where references have provided limited information the level of supervision required may be high.
- III. For those with more experience and where the references are detailed and provided strong evidence of good conduct in previous work a lower level of supervision could be appropriate. For all staff without completed checks it should be made clear that they are subject to this additional supervision.
- IV. The nature of the supervision should be specified and the roles of staff undertaking the supervision spelt out. The arrangement should be reviewed regularly, at least every two weeks until the DBS disclosure is received.

## **14.2 Disclosures of disqualifications**

Where the learner's DBS Disclosure shows they have been disqualified from working with children by a Court; or, an applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his/her application; or there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with the client groups, the facts should be reported to the police and to any relevant Professional Body if appropriate.