



Empowering Futures

Safer Recruitment Policy & Procedures

1. POLICY STATEMENT

We are committed to constantly improving the performance and efficiency of the organisation by attracting and recruiting the best candidates available for the job. This Policy and Procedure provides the organisation with a set of recruitment and selection practices for the effective resourcing of employees in an efficient and fair manner and should be read with Appendices 1 (*Safe Recruitment Policy, Procedure & Checklist*) and 2 (*Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy Statement*) in mind. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

2. EQUALITY STATEMENT

We will recruit the best person for each vacancy regardless of age; colour; physical and mental impairment; marital status; health; nationality; ethnic origin; religion; sex; sexuality; HIV; or other grounds of unfair discrimination.

This Recruitment Policy and Procedure is designed to give all sections of the community the opportunity to apply for a vacancy and to ensure that throughout the process, people are judged on merit only, without direct or indirect discrimination. Each applicant's skills, abilities and relevant work experience will be considered.

All staff and young people involved in recruitment must comply with our *Equality and Diversity Policy*.

3. WHO IS COVERED

This Policy applies to all employees (regardless of length of service), Board Members, volunteers, Relief Workers, agency workers and job applicants.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

It is our policy that line managers in conjunction with the Directors are responsible for recruitment. However, all employees concerned with the recruitment and selection of temporary and permanent employees must be familiar with this Policy and Procedure and ensure that they comply with the procedures, whether in a management or specialist role or by providing administrative support to a manager concerned with recruitment.

5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

Managers should carry out the recruitment and selection process in accordance with the *Recruitment Process - Guidance for Managers*.

Empowering Futures

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Job Description and Person Specification

Where the post is new, the Job Description (JD) and the Person Specification (PS) will be drawn up by the line manager of the post, the Director in charge of that function, and HR Advisor, if required. If the post already exists, the JD and PS will be reviewed as and when vacancies arise, if not before. This review will be the responsibility of the line manager for the post. The JD will detail all the responsibilities and tasks that make up the job. The PS will list all the essential skills, knowledge and experience necessary to do the job.

Advertising

All vacancies will be advertised internally and externally simultaneously. The following is a non exhaustive list of example circumstances in which the Chief Executive may waive the need to advertise:

Where a post becomes vacant at short notice, Trustees may make a temporary appointment outside the requirements of this Policy and Procedure.

If short term or temporary work of up to 9 months becomes available, or a vacancy arises as a result of maternity leave, the Chief Executive will consider whether an appointment needs to be made outside the requirements of this Policy and Procedure, removing the need for advertising.

Where a member of staff is employed on a fixed term contract and the post becomes permanent or the temporary contract is extended, the permanent post may be offered to the member of staff or advertised internally. If the post is advertised internally, all applicants will be assessed using the same process as when an external appointment is made.

Where a post becomes vacant within six months of a round of recruitment for the same post and there is a suitable candidate who fulfilled all the essential requirements during the first round of recruitment, the post may be offered to this applicant, subject to satisfactory references and Enhanced DBS check and re-interview (where necessary). All suitable applicants who reached the required standard but were unsuccessful at interview stage (because of a higher scoring candidate) will be notified by letter that their application will be considered should a post become vacant again in the next six months and an offer of employment may be made.

As part of our commitment to staff development and retention, internal secondments and opportunities to act up may be offered to existing staff where appropriate, where there is a clear business case to do so. Before applying for a secondment/acting up role, all applicants should seek release from their current post. Applicants should speak to their line manager who may decide to seek further input from the Director responsible for that

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department before they make their decision. Where staff are seconded or acting up to a permanent vacancy they may be confirmed in post without an external recruitment process taking place if it is in the best interests of the organisation. All such confirmed appointments will require the approval of the Chief Executive.

Where the provision of service would be severely adversely affected if this Policy and Procedure were to be followed.

The advertisement will contain the following information:

- Post title
- Salary
- Hours (if known)
- Holiday entitlement
- Employer's pension contribution
- Place of work
- Brief summary of job purpose and tasks
- Closing date
- Interview date (if known)

Reference to Empowering Futures being an equal opportunities employer/statement of intent to improve under-representation of minority groups.

We will advertise the post as widely as practicable in order to attract candidates from under represented/and disadvantaged groups. All advertised posts will be considered for placement in:

- Bristol Evening Post
- Voluntary Sector newsletters / mailings/web sites
- National Housing publication
- Bristol City Council Jobs Bulletin
- Job Centres
- Big Issue
- Empowering Futures website
- Community points

A job pack will be available to all applicants.

This will include:

We follow the Social Model of Disability. We offer bespoke opportunities to ensure we remain person centred. Our services are firmly embedded with quality and purpose for each individual we work with. Our approach is holistic. We encourage personal responsibility. We aim to increase independence and to empower individuals. We have a proven track record of significant success.

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- Covering Letter
- Job Description
- Application Form
- Person Specification
- Annual Report for senior management posts
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form and envelope
- Summary of Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Equal Opportunities Statement
- Recruitment Policy and Procedure
- Disclosure Policy

Short-listing

Short-listing will always be carried out by at least two people. These may be staff members or Board members. In certain circumstances, we may decide to have an additional person chosen from outside the organisation to assist in the process of short-listing and interviews. Short-listing criteria will be based on the abilities, skills and qualities as detailed in the Person Specification. Where possible the short-listing panel will also be the interviewing panel. Every effort will be made to have a panel that reflects diversity.

Applicants' application forms will be assessed and scored in line with the scoring system (see section 5.5 on page 5). Once the applicants have been assessed, the successful candidates will be notified of the arrangements for the interview. An alternative interview date will only be offered to individuals in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the interview panel. In relation to certain posts (e.g. managerial and above), shortlisted candidates may be required to undertake a psychometric test prior to the interview. In such circumstances, an external consultant will conduct the test and provide a full report on each candidate for the members of the interview panel.

Interviews

Prior to the interviews, the panel will agree relevant questions to be asked and by whom. Each interview will follow the same pattern. All candidates will be given the opportunity to raise questions at the end of the interview and state any needs in advance.

The interview will be a structured competency based interview with questions designed to encourage specific work related responses. Getting specific examples about an

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individual's past behaviours can help to predict future behaviour. This should enable the interviewing panel to gain the necessary information to make a decision on the suitability of the candidate for the position being offered. All the answers given to the questions will be marked on a scale of zero to five; these questions may include relevant weightings. During the interview, the panel will make notes of the answers given by the applicant so that these can be reviewed during the scoring. After the interviews, scores will be noted down. No discussion of candidates will take place until all interviews have been completed. A negotiated decision will then be made using the answers on the above as a guide.

Those interviewing candidates should not create barriers to individuals taking employment with our organisation. We will always positively consider making changes to enable an individual who is successful at an interview to take up employment with the organisation. For instance, if there are existing policies and practices that would make it difficult for someone to accept employment with us, then the organisation will actively consider changing these. If there are changes that need to be made to buildings or equipment that would enable a disabled person to take up an offer of employment, then the organisation will consider positively making such changes.

Presentations/Tests

Where appropriate, presentations or tests (e.g. word processing, proofreading) will form part of the assessment for senior roles. Each candidate asked to attend an interview will be notified in advance of any presentation or test requirement.

Participants / Learner Involvement

All external and internal applicants applying for roles where there is contact with young people will be required to attend either a group exercise or an interview with a panel of our participants/service users.

Alternatively, we may ask a service user to sit in on the interview with the main panel and they will be given the opportunity to ask their own questions under the panel's supervision. The group exercise or interview with the service user panel will normally take place on the same day as the interview with the main panel. We will normally schedule in the group exercise/service user panel interview immediately before or after the main interview. This exercise will normally take between 10 and 30 minutes. All applicants will be informed of the details of the service user involvement in advance of the interview day.

All interviews with external and internal applicants applying for non-client facing roles (e.g. HR Advisor) will include a service user on the interview panel. It is likely that this would replace any group exercise or service user led panel.

At the conclusion of all interviews, the interview panel will meet with the service user panel to obtain their feedback. If the interviews take place over a two-day period or

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longer, the interview panel will meet with the service users at the end of each day. The feedback may be in the form of structured point scoring and/or further comments. The feedback obtained from service users will be taken on board by the interview panel during the decision making process.

Scoring System

5 - Excellent **4** - Very skilled/experienced **3** - Good

2 - Reasonable **1** - Some knowledge/skill **0** - Not at all/unknown/not demonstrated

Where an applicant fails any part of the interview process, they will not be selected for the post. The candidate with the highest score at the interview will be offered the post. The post will always be offered subject to receipt of satisfactory references before the start date. If this requirement is not met, we may postpone the start date and/or rescind the offer.

Payment of Expenses

If the post has not been advertised in a national newspaper, then the organisation is unable to assist candidates with expenses.

6. INTERNAL APPLICATIONS

Internal candidates may apply for vacant posts, but in line with our *Equality and Diversity Policy*, each candidate will be considered on an equal basis - on merit only. Unsuccessful candidates will be given feedback and their line manager will offer support as appropriate in this situation. Where an internal applicant is offered a job with an overlapping pay scale, for reasons of staff retention, the employee will remain on the same level of pay if this is higher than the start of the new pay band and included in the new pay band. Where the job of an existing member of staff is upgraded, the job would normally **not** be advertised.

7. SERVICE USER/EX-SERVICE USER/LEARNERS APPLICATIONS

We have set up a system to encourage more service users and ex-service users into work by providing both peer support roles and assistant/trainee roles. Service users and ex service users who are ready for this step are encouraged and supported to apply for these roles alongside external candidates. If the applicant is a service user, they can only be allowed to apply for a role in a service or section separate from the one providing them with support. This ensures that issues of confidentiality are more easily managed. There are times where it may be considered relevant to not employ an ex-service user in the same service that they have previously received support (for example if they would have contact with others they previously shared with etc).

Where a service user or ex-service user is unsuccessful in getting employment, we will provide swift feedback and support or sign-posting to help them gain the skills and/or

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experience they were lacking for their application. Feedback will always be provided to service users/ex-service users over and above the requirements set out in Section 9 of this Policy.

8. INFORMING CANDIDATES

The candidate being offered the post will be contacted by telephone (preferably on the same day or as soon as the decision has been reached) with an offer of employment. In the event that the decision is delayed, we will try to keep the applicants informed of the likely timescale of when they can expect to hear from us. All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance and any other conditions deemed suitable for the post e.g. driving licence. The successful candidate having accepted will be sent a letter of appointment informing them of the start date, terms and conditions of employment etc.

All other candidates will be notified by post, normally by the following working day or as soon as practically possible. Suitable applicants who reached the required standard but were unsuccessful at interview stage (because of a higher scoring candidate) will be notified by letter that their application will be considered should a post become vacant again in the next six months and an offer of employment may be made. When notifying candidates who are second or third choice, it will be explained that references are yet to be obtained for the person offered the post and that we may contact them again if the first choice does not take up the post.

9. FEEDBACK

With the exception of internal candidates, we are unable to provide feedback to those applicants that have not been invited to interview. When requested, we will provide feedback to candidates who have attended an interview.

If an external applicant disagrees with the process of applying for employment or with the decision made by the organisation, they may use our Complaints Procedure. If already employed by the organisation, the candidate should use the organisation's *Grievance Procedure*.

10. MONITORING

All monitoring forms will remain anonymous and confidential. Any and all information contained therein will be used only to collate statistics for monitoring equal opportunities.

11. PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

Qualifications, Certificates and Licences

If an external applicant is appointed, we will check on relevant qualifications, certificates or licences presented by the applicant during their application and copies of documents

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produced by the applicant will be held on their personnel file. In all instances, we will ask applicants to bring documentary evidence of relevant qualifications, which they have presented in their application form, to the interview.

References

We require all applicants to provide details of two referees in their application. We will follow up written references with a telephone call in all cases.

In addition, any number of previous employers may be contacted in relation to an applicant's employment history as part of the vetting process.

There is no legal requirement for a referee to provide a reference for a prospective employer. In the event that the referee does not respond to our request for a reference within a specified time period, we may withdraw the offer of employment.

In the event that the applicant has commenced employment before the expiry of the specified time period and we do not receive a satisfactory reference or we do not receive a reference at all during the specified time period, we may terminate the employee's employment with one week's notice.

Alternatively, we may inform the employee that their employment will be reviewed on the expiry of their probationary period.

Enhanced DBS - Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

All external applicants who are invited to an interview will be asked to bring their passport or driving licence with them to the interview, a copy of which will be taken for our use.

The applicant will also be asked to fill in a form with the information required for the Enhanced DBS clearance application. Following the appointment of the successful applicant, the organisation will submit an Enhanced DBS application to the Criminal Records Bureau on behalf of the applicant. The organisation will pay for this application.

Documents pertaining to unsuccessful applicants will be destroyed by shredding and composting.



SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Appendix 1

1. INTRODUCTION

Empowering Futures is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Empowering Futures acknowledges that recruitment procedures play a key role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Empowering Futures are committed to ensuring effective planning for the recruitment and selection process, allowing time throughout the process to enable a thorough and robust approach to selection and minimising the risk of making an unsuitable appointment.

2. ADVERTISING

Careful consideration will be given to identify the appropriate qualities, skills and qualifications that are required for every post advertised, and that these are reflected in the person specification and assessment criteria, job description and advertisement.

Applicants will be made aware from the outset, through advertisements and information packs, of Empowering Futures commitment to safeguarding and by ensuring that appropriate vetting checks will be carried out.

Person Specifications and Job Descriptions will include specific requirements relating to the safeguarding of children and young people. A statement about Empowering Futures' commitment to safeguarding will be included in all recruitment and selection materials.

3. SELECTION

Empowering Futures uses standardised application forms and does not accept CVs. Application forms will require full personal details, the full employment history of applicants, and qualifications, including gaps. Any gaps or inconsistencies in employment histories will be followed up.

HR Resources will be allocated to ensure the effective co-ordination and collation of candidate information.

Careful consideration will be given to ensure that staff with the appropriate skills, experience, roles and responsibilities are involved in shortlisting and interview panels,

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including the use of external expertise when recruiting for specialist posts.

Each application received will be scrutinised in a systematic way based on the person specification by the shortlisting panel, in line with our *Recruitment Policy and Procedure*, in order to agree a shortlist before sending invitations to interview.

4. INTERVIEWS

All short-listed applicants for paid or voluntary work must undergo a formal interview.

In line with our *Recruitment Policy and Procedure* we will ensure that a face-to-face interview is conducted for all shortlisted candidates based on an objective assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the person specification and job description.

We will ensure that specific questions are used to gain the information required about each candidate's suitability, including their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and addressing any gaps in information supplied in the application form.

Safeguarding interview questions will be used to draw out candidates' actual experience of working with children and young people and gain a picture of the appropriateness of a candidate's attitudes and future behaviour.

If the answers given by a candidate do not demonstrate the positive behaviours and attributes required, an appointment will not be made.

5. OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate will always be conditional on all pre-employment checks having been satisfactorily completed, including the receipt of at least two satisfactory references, verification of the candidate's identity, receipt of Enhanced DBS checks (including checks against the ISA barred list) and checks on qualifications and certificates.

6. USE OF AGENCY FOR RECRUITMENT

Where Empowering Futures is using any agency to provide staff or volunteers, we will ensure that the agencies concerned use the same safer recruitment standards and apply them rigorously. (As of this policy, we do not need or wish to use agencies, however, should we need to use an agency for a specialist role, these procedures will be followed)

7. SERVICE USER / PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

Empowering Futures may from time to time involve our service users in the recruitment and selection process, including involvement in interview panels.

We follow the Social Model of Disability. We offer bespoke opportunities to ensure we remain person centred. Our services are firmly embedded with quality and purpose for each individual we work with. Our approach is holistic. We encourage personal responsibility. We aim to increase independence and to empower individuals. We have a proven track record of significant success.

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Service users are provided with appropriate training to play an active and meaningful part in the recruitment process.

8. CHECKS GENERAL

Empowering Futures will ensure that arrangements are in place for appropriate checks on new staff and volunteers and the adoption of best practices in the recruitment of new staff and volunteers. Verification of relevant qualification documents will be carried out.

9. Enhanced DBS CHECKS

All Empowering Futures posts are risk assessed with regard to the level of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check required.

All applicants shortlisted for interview are required to complete a criminal record declaration. Applicants must declare all past convictions or pending cases against them, including spent convictions. Empowering Futures will treat this information in a confidential manner, and only offences that put children at risk will be considered as a reason to refuse employment.

Enhanced DBS checks are carried out for all staff and non-staff personnel who have unsupervised access to children, including volunteers, students on placement, consultants and independent visitors. These checks include a check against the Independent Safeguarding Authority barred list.

Enhanced DBS checks are renewed every 3 years.

10. REFERENCES

Wherever possible, we will get a reference relating to a previous post or role where the candidate worked with children and young people, and will always get a reference from the current employer (where applicable).

Referees will always be asked to comment on the candidate's suitability for the post with explicit reference to the job description and person specification, and in particular, their suitability to work with children.

References will be followed up in writing and checked.

11. RECORD KEEPING

Checks will be documented and/or photocopied (e.g. qualification certificates) and retained on the individual's personnel file. In the case of Enhanced DBS checks, a record will be maintained of the date the disclosure was obtained, by whom, the level of disclosure and unique reference number.



12. ACTION ON CONCERNING INFORMATION

Where concerning information emerges from any of these checks, such as the Enhanced DBS disclosure that shows that s/he is barred from working with children; the candidate has provided false information; or there are serious concerns about the candidate's suitability to work with children, an appointment will not be made. The concerning information will be acted upon by seeking advice from the HR Advisor and where false information is provided, this may be reported to the Police. If there is evidence of an allegation having been made but not dealt with, advice will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

This Policy/Procedure should be read in conjunction with Empowering Futures Volunteering & Co-Worker Policy.

RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS POLICY STATEMENT

Appendix 2

RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS POLICY STATEMENT

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (Enhanced DBS) service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, 1625 Empowering Futures complies fully with the Enhanced DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of an Enhanced DBS check based on a conviction or other information revealed.

We are committed to the fair treatment of our staff, potential staff or users of our services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

This policy statement, on the recruitment of ex-offenders, is available to all Enhanced DBS 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 an interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

The level of Enhanced DBS check required is ascertained after a thorough risk assessment indicating which level is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. All application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs contain a statement that an Enhanced DBS check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

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Since an Enhanced DBS check forms part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. Unless the nature of the position allows us to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We ensure that all managers have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure 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.

During an interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters 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 or termination of employment at a later date once the information comes to light.

We make every subject of an Enhanced DBS check aware of the existence of the Enhanced DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in an Enhanced DBS check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Date of Policy Creation: 1st February 2019

Last Reviewed: 20/10/25 by Lucy Edgell

Next Review Due: 20/10/26

Signed off by: Maria Needs

We follow the Social Model of Disability. We offer bespoke opportunities to ensure we remain person centred. Our services are firmly embedded with quality and purpose for each individual we work with. Our approach is holistic. We encourage personal responsibility. We aim to increase independence and to empower individuals. We have a proven track record of significant success.

