

Recruitment and Selection of Employees – Policy and Procedures

The Board of Conservators recognises that the continuing success of the organisation depends upon finding people with the necessary skills, expertise and qualifications to deliver the strategic objectives as well as the ability to make a positive contribution to the values and aims of the organisation.

The recruitment process is the beginning of the organisations relationship with its staff and it is therefore important for it to be as positive and helpful as possible with equality of opportunity being an integral part.

The Board of Conservators will follow current and future employment legislation and ensure that its recruitment procedures incorporate all legal requirements as well as ensuring that its processes reflect best practice. All recruitment and selection systems must be fair, consistent and valid.

This policy applies to all recruitment and selection undertaken be it for permanent, full-time, part-time, fixed term or sessional employees.¹

1. Introduction

The following procedure is to be carried out on every occasion where there is a need to recruit a new employee:

1.1 Complete a Recruitment Authorisation Form to be signed off by the Director.

1.2 This form requires a justification for the position as well as:

- budgetary information/implications;
- up-to-date job description and person specification;
- agree advertisement wording and medium for publication; and
- estimated cost of advertising.

1.3 All arrangements for interviews, letters etc. will be the responsibility of the Clerk

2. Job Description and Person Specification

2.1 A job description and person specification will be required to enable applicants to decide whether or not to apply and to assist them with their application.

2.2 The Line Manager will be responsible for drawing up the job description which should identify:

- the job title;
- the grade with salary scale points;
- the main purpose of the post;
- who the position is accountable to;
- the staff it will be responsible for;
- the post's key accountabilities;
- any special characteristics of the job
- any occupational requirements of the job
- in addition the Job Description will include statements relating to Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities;

2.3 It will be the responsibility of the line manager to prepare a person specification for the post which will identify essential and desirable

¹ Reference has been made to sample policies and procedures from ACAS and FSB -
Recruitment & Selection Policy – [Updated February 2017](#)

requirements. A person specification will cover areas such as qualifications, knowledge, skills, aptitude, experience and personal qualities.

2.4 The person specification will provide the basis for short-listing and applicants will be advised of this in the recruitment pack.

3. Recruitment Advertising

The Line Manager will produce the job advertisement which should be clear and state briefly the job title, the requirements for the job, hours per week etc. Any specific requirements, for example the need for a Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS) must be stated. The advertisement will be circulated internally to ensure that all staff are fully aware of the vacancy; it will also be circulated to the Board for information.

4. Recruitment Pack

The pack will be available online, and on request and will consist of:

- A letter acknowledging receipt of initial enquiry in which it will state that CVs will not be considered (if applicable) and only applicants short-listed will hear further;
- application form;
- job description;
- person specification;
- Forest Strategic Plan;
- Any other relevant information.

5. Dealing with Applications

5.1 All applications will be handled by the Clerk and will be treated confidentially and circulated only to those individuals involved in the recruitment process.

5.2 Candidates' personal information will be held in accordance with current data protection legislation.

6. Selection Techniques

6.1 Care will be taken to use techniques and processes which are relevant to the job.

6.2 Selection decisions will be based on the candidates' ability to do the job, ability to make a contribution to the organisations effectiveness and potential for development.

7. Short-listing procedure

7.1 Ideally those who will be on the Interview panel will review all applications from which they will produce a list of candidates to be interviewed.

7.2 When it is not possible for all members of the Panel to be available a minimum of two will suffice, one of whom must be the Line Manager.

7.3 All internal candidates will be guaranteed an interview.

8. Discrimination

8.1 At all stages of the recruitment process, employers need to be aware of the risk of unlawfully discriminating against a candidate or potential candidate because of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;

- marriage and civil partnership;
 - pregnancy and maternity;
 - race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins);
 - religion or belief;
 - sex and/or sexual orientation.
- 8.2 These are known as the 'protected characteristics'. The Equality Act 2010 protects job applicants as well as employees.
- 8.3 The following are signs of unlawful discrimination in advertising:
- The advertisement uses stereotyped words or phrases, or words which indicate an intention to discriminate on grounds of age, such as 'young' or 'mature'.
 - The advertisement deters people with a particular protected characteristic from applying.
 - The advertisement requires a minimum or maximum number of years of experience, rather than setting requirements as to the type or breadth of skills or experience required for the job.
 - The advertisement is placed in a newspaper or publication which excludes or disproportionately reduces the numbers of applicants with a particular protected characteristic.
 - The advertisement sets unnecessary provisions or criteria which would exclude a higher proportion of people with a particular protected characteristic.
- 8.4 You should also ensure that any other job-related requirements included in the advertisement are necessary for the performance of the job and are not excessive, unjustified or overstated.
- 8.5 In summary, to comply with the discrimination provisions, the advert should encourage equality of opportunity.
- 8.6 There are, however, provisions in place to deal with the situation where, having regard to the nature and context of the work, having a particular protected characteristic is an occupational requirement, provided always that the occupational requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Legal advice should be sought in case of doubt, as the circumstances where an occupational requirement will apply are limited and the provisions certainly do not provide a licence to discriminate.
- 8.7 Unlawful discrimination can also take place later in the recruitment process, for example, at the interview or selection stage. Job applicants also have the right not to be discriminated against on account of their trade union membership or non-membership.
- 8.8 Discrimination may take place at the interview stage where, for example, questions are asked based on stereotypical assumptions or unnecessary questions, not relevant to the requirements of the role, are asked in respect of domestic

circumstances or the candidate's disability. If the information being sought is genuinely related to the role for which a candidate is being recruited, then this should be discussed objectively and asked of all candidates. If you propose to interview a disabled job applicant, it may be necessary to make reasonable adjustments to enable that person to attend interview and you will need to ensure the disabled applicant is not placed at a substantial disadvantage when compared to non-disabled applicants.

9. Interviews

- 9.1 Interviews will be conducted by a Panel normally comprising three people, one of whom must be the Line Manager (or their nominee), and where appropriate one the relevant Committee Chairman (or their nominee).
- 9.2 External members are permitted as nominees and/or additions to the Panel, as are other members of staff, as long as all mandatory Panel members agree to their appointment.
- 9.3 In the case of senior appointments (Director, Conservation Officer, Clerk) the Chairman of the Board will also be invited to join the Panel.
- 9.4 The Guidance for Interviewers set out in Appendix A will be followed.
- 9.5 Short-listed candidates will be invited to attend an interview. They will be given all relevant information including the precise format and content of the interview, the names of those on the Interview Panel, as well as any other relevant documentation to help them with their preparations.
- 9.6 Short-listed candidates will be asked to bring proof of their 'right to work in the UK' as well as proof of relevant qualifications specified in the person specification. The candidates will be advised that copies will be taken and the originals returned to them on the day.
- 9.7 The Interview Panel will compile a list of appropriate interview questions which will combine job specific questions with some pertinent to each applicant's individual application. All candidates will be asked the same job specific questions. The Line Manager will prepare Interview criteria grid for each candidate.
- 9.8 All interview notes must be accurate and relevant and totally job related.
- 9.9 The Line Manager will contact the chosen candidate verbally offering the position subject to satisfactory references. Providing they accept a formal written offer of employment will be issued.
- 9.10 Unsuccessful candidates will be written to advising that they will be able to obtain feedback if they wish.

10. Documentation – Data Protection

- 10.1 Unsuccessful applicants are advised in the Application Form that their applications will be securely stored for a period of 12 months and will then be shredded.
- 10.2 In addition all short-listing and interview notes from the panel will be kept for a period of 12 months in order to allow for any complaints to be handled.

11. References

- 11.1 The purpose of references is to obtain information from an appropriate third party providing a factual check on a candidate's employment history and experience. The information sought will include:
- length of employment;
 - job title;
 - brief details of responsibilities;
 - record of sickness absences;
 - time-keeping;
 - and reason for leaving.
- 11.2 It is accepted that information sought as to the applicant's suitability for the position on offer is subjective and therefore not necessarily helpful. It is also accepted that, because employees are able to ask their new employer to show them their reference, more and more employers are prepared only to provide references detailing facts about employment.
- 11.3 When recruiting for positions involving contact with vulnerable groups, the procedures set out in the Child Protection and Vulnerable People policies must be followed.
- 11.4 A minimum of two references will be required, preferably the most two recent employers including the current employer, if the applicant is in employment.
- 11.5 Applicants who have only just finished their education and therefore have little or no work experience will be asked to provide a referee from their school, college or university.
- 11.6 If, in the Person Specification, previous experience of working with young people or vulnerable adults is an essential criteria, at least one referee must be someone who has directly supervised the applicant in a similar role.
- 11.7 Referees will not be approached without prior approval of the applicant.
- 11.8 Letters requesting references will be sent out by the Clerk.
- 11.9 The letter to applicants offering employment will state the offer is subject to receipt of satisfactory references. All applicants will be advised that they will not be able to commence their employment until satisfactory references have been received.

12. DBS – (taken from Child Protection Policy)

- 12.1 When recruiting staff who, as part of their duties, are expected to work with children or young people the applicant must, if they do not have one, apply for an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Check, a DBS check.
- 12.2 The Board of Conservators along with an appropriate 'Umbrella' Body will be used to facilitate the application. The Board of Conservators will carry the cost of the application.
- 12.3 From March 2013 - If the individual has a DBS they will present their certificate to the Board of Conservators who will, with the individuals consent, log on to the 'Update Service'. This will be possible only if the individual provides a certificate, associated reference details and their personal data. If new information is

available, the Board of Conservators will, with the individual, apply for a new DBS check to obtain the latest information.

13. Qualifications

For certain positions, specific qualifications will be required. Evidence of these will be requested as part of the interview process.

14. Use of Freelance Consultants

14.1 Occasionally, due to factors such as limited funding, time constraints or the specialist nature of the work involved, it may be appropriate to contract outside consultants to undertake specific fixed term work. Appropriate contracts would then be issued.

14.2 Freelance consultants may also be considered when a recruitment exercise has been unsuccessful.

15. Review of this Policy

This will be reviewed every three years.

APPENDIX A

Guidance for Interviewers

The important point to remember during the selection and recruitment processes is to maintain equality of opportunity for all candidates. Fairness can best be demonstrated when everyone is treated in exactly the same way without allowing personal feelings to come into the equation.

Selection Scoring for Short-listing

The process of short-listing applicants will be undertaken by the Interview Panel. When it is not possible for all members of the panel to be available for this process, a minimum of two will suffice, one of whom must be the recruiting Line Manager. Before beginning the process the Panel will need to agree the scoring range for the essential criteria (e.g. 1-10) and for the desirable criteria (e.g. 1-5).

When concluding the process, the Panellists will identify their top, 2nd, 3rd place and so on by name rather than how much they scored. This is because despite of all efforts, we might not necessarily score in exactly the same way. If there is a difference of opinion amongst the Panel, it will be best resolved by inviting all the shortlisted candidates to interview even if it means more interviews than originally planned.

You need to have good reason (i.e. not personal feelings) for not selecting people for interview, and should bear in mind that unsuccessful applicants may request an explanation as to why we did not interview them.

Interview Questions

The Interview, where appropriate, could start with a practical exercise, presentation or written exercise – these will be scored.

These should be purely about the position and about specific points/areas relating to an individual's application form. When setting the question, you will need to know the sort of answer you want to elicit.

Always start with the job related questions and, in order to make candidates feel at ease, commence with an 'easy' question.

The job specific questions will be the same for each candidate. They should relate to the job description and person specification and should be such that they enable the candidate to demonstrate amongst other skills his/her knowledge and experience which will enable him/her to take on the position.

Questions should not be such as to suggest the Board wishes to take into account any factors that would, or might, discriminate on grounds of sex, age, sexuality, disability, race or religion. Questions about an applicant's family, ages of children, marital status, intentions about having children – in fact any questions of an intimate personal nature could be misunderstood, considered discriminatory and therefore should not be use.

Do not prompt or, if you do, agree in advance the wording and prompt for all candidates.

It is only applicable to ask different questions of different candidates when the questions relate to the individuals application form. These questions may cover areas such as elaboration of information about any voluntary work, clarification of dates of employment, gaps in history, why so many jobs in only one or two years, requirement for a work permit if stated etc.

Scoring Candidates at Interview

Applicants will be scored on the job specific questions only (ie not those relating to individual application forms). Before any interviews take place, the Panel may decide to score some job specific questions higher than others. If so, this will be agreed in advance.

When concluding the process, the Panellists will identify their top, 2nd and 3rd placed candidate by name rather than how much they scored. This is because despite all efforts, we might not necessarily score in exactly the same way. If there is a difference of opinion as to who is the best candidate overall, the Panellists should explain the reasons for their choice. If there is a split decision, 2 options will be considered. One, leave the final decision to the recruiting Line Manager, or, two, arrange a 2nd interview with the final 2 or 3 candidates. As a general rule the Panel will need to have a good rational and justifiable reason for not offering the position to the candidate who has the highest collective score.

Although the questions regarding individual applications will not be scored, should information come to light that is of concern (e.g. the candidate is unable to give a satisfactory explanation for a gap in employment history), these will be taken into consideration when the final choice is being made, particularly when there is a split decision.

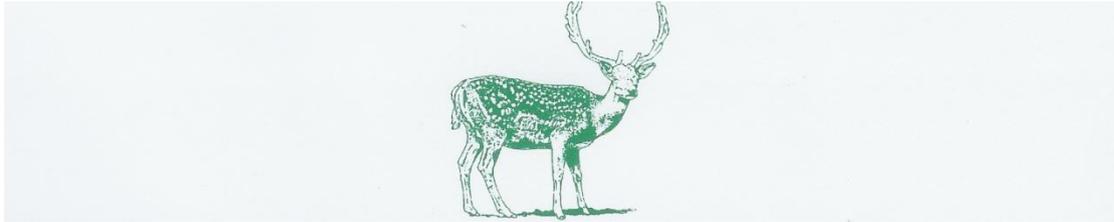
Just as when short-listing, you need to have good reasons for not selecting people for employment and please remember that unsuccessful applicants may request an explanation as to why we did not appoint them.

Interview Notes

All those interviewing need to remember that interview notes are disclosable to an applicant if requested, and it is therefore important for all notes taken at interviews to be clear and relevant with reasons for decisions given.

All notes (from all panels) and paperwork (copies of application forms etc.) must be handed back to the Clerk after the interview. They will be stored for 12 months just in case an applicant makes an application to an Employment Tribunal. At the end of 12 months they will be shredded.

**APPENDIX B
PROBATION / APPOINTMENT SUPPORT REPORT FORM**



PROBATION / APPOINTMENT SUPPORT REPORT FORM

This form is to be used to record the progress of all employees during their period of employment probation or appointment support.

Name of employee:

Job Title:

Date Commenced:

Date of Review:.....

Date Next Meeting Due:

(Please indicate if First/Second/Third/Fourth/Final review meeting)

Manager's comments on the manner in which the duties of the post are performed, with reference to the work programme/job description.

Areas of special note / good performance

Areas of concern:

Action needed to address areas of concern (including performance standards, attendance targets, training and development actions, additional support)

Comments by employee:

I have today shown this report to the above named employee and discussed its contents.

Has the Probation /Appointment Support period been satisfactorily completed: YES/NO (Final report only)

Signed: **Date:**
(Manager)

I have read this report and discussed its contents with my manager. I understand the comments made in it and have received a copy of the report.

Signed: **Date:**.....
(Employee)