

LANGSTANE HOUSING ASSOCIATION RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

The recruitment of high quality staff is crucial to the objectives and continued success of the Association. This policy is designed to assist managers to recruit and select the best candidate in a fair and consistent manner. The Association is committed to a policy of treating all employees and job applicants equally and to recruit the best person for each vacancy. No employee or potential employee shall receive less favourable treatment or consideration during recruitment and selection on the ground of race, colour, religion or belief, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, or marital status or will be disadvantaged by any conditions of employment that cannot be justified as necessary on operational grounds.

2. Scope

This policy is applicable to the recruitment and selection of all employees engaged to provide services for the Association, irrespective of whether such a contract is for a fixed term or permanent duration.

3. Recruitment Authority

Financial approval for the establishment of a new post or the filling of a vacancy must be obtained before recruitment commences. A Recruitment Authority Form (Appendix One) is to be completed and signed by all Directors. If the post is a new post, or an existing post is to be upgraded, then approval is required by the Committee of Management. The Recruitment Authority Form should be supported by a Job Description and Person Specification. Once the post is approved all documentation should be forwarded to HR.

4. Job Description

A Job Description is a key document in the recruitment process. A Job Description must be produced for every vacancy and drafted prior to taking any other steps in the process. The Job Description sets out the main duties and responsibilities of the post and has a number of purposes:

- It is the key document by which appropriate grading of the post is assessed
- It indicates to potential candidates the range of duties and responsibilities of the post
- It is used during the appraisal process to help evaluate the performance of an individual
- It is a tool for performance management to ensure that the postholder is fulfilling the appropriate duties to a required standard

The language in job descriptions should:

- Avoid jargon and unexplained acronyms and abbreviations
- Be readily understandable to applicants for the post
- Avoid ambiguity about responsibilities and be clear about the postholders accountability for resources, staff etc

5. Person Specification

The person specification is of equal importance to the job description and informs the selection decision. The person specification details the minimum skills, experience and abilities that are required to do the job. It should be drawn up after the job description and, with the job description should inform the content of the advert. The person specification should be specific, related to the job and not unnecessarily restrictive for example, only qualifications strictly needed to do the job should be specified. The inclusion of criteria that cannot be justified as essential for the performance of the job may be deemed discriminatory if they impact detrimentally on persons from different groups i.e. men or women, disabled people or persons from different racial groups. The person specification enables potential applicants to make an informed decision about whether to apply and those who do apply, to give sufficient relevant detail of their skills and experience in their application. The person specification forms the basis of the selection decision and enables the interview panel to ensure objectivity in their selection.

The person specification details the:

- Education/Qualifications
- Knowledge/Skills
- Previous experience
- Personal characteristics/other requirements

required to do the job, specifying which are essential and which are desirable.

Essential criteria are those without which a candidate would be unable to adequately perform the job. Desirable criteria are those that may enable the candidate to perform better or require a shorter familiarisation period.

Criteria which are subjective and for which little evidence is likely to be obtained should be avoided (for example, 'a flexible approach' is often too vague to be of any help on the selection process).

Knowledge can be derived in a number of ways, for example through education, training, or experience. For some jobs a particular qualification may be essential, while for others no single qualification may be appropriate and a particular type of experience may be just as relevant as a formal qualification.

Where formal qualifications are deemed essential these should reflect the minimum requirements necessary to carry out the job to an acceptable standard. UK qualifications should be stated but (other than for required membership of a UK professional body) overseas equivalents will be accepted.

The type of experience required of applicants should be specified, but stipulating length of experience should be avoided if possible, because the quality of experience is more important than its length. It is also important to remember that experience is sometimes transferable from one area of work to another, in which case specifying skills is likely to be more effective than specifying a narrow definition of experience.

Required abilities should be expressed in terms of the standards required, not just in terms of the task to be undertaken. For example, avoid statements such as 'ability to write reports' instead, indicate the expected standard, such as 'ability to write detailed financial reports that encompass departmental budgeting, annual variances and forecasting'.

Personal qualities may affect the ability of an individual to do the job, but they should not be seen as substitutes for skills. For example, the ability to deal effectively with frustrated customers is a skill. Simply possessing patience (a personal quality) will not be enough.

6. Disclosure

All candidates are required to disclose whether they have a current conviction. Such a criminal record will only be taken into account for recruitment purposes, where the conviction is relevant to the position being applied for, and where this is the case, will not necessarily bar candidates from employment. Any such decision will depend on the precise nature of the work and the circumstances and background to the offence.

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 ex-offenders do not have to disclose spent convictions. However, there are some exceptions. Employers are entitled to ask candidates to reveal all convictions both current and spent for certain jobs such as 1) working with children and/or 2) vulnerable adults. For these positions the Association has access to a service called Disclosure Scotland offered by the Criminal Records Bureau. This service checks if the successful candidate has a criminal record by accessing a variety of records held by statutory bodies. If the manager believes a disclosure check is required for a particular post this should be discussed with HR prior to the post being advertised.

7. Information for applicants

The information provided to applicants in respect of a vacant post must include the Job Description and the Person Specification together with any other information that a potential applicant needs to decide whether to apply for a post or not.

Information should include the following:

Details of the main terms and conditions of employment (including holiday and pension arrangements, working hours etc)

Details of any relocation benefits – relocation expenses if they apply.

Information on the Association and section (organisational chart for section)

Equal Opportunities Statement and Monitoring Form

Guidelines for completing the application form and for requesting the information and application in an alternative format i.e. large print, email etc.

8. Publicising the vacancy

The purpose of advertising a post is to attract the widest range of high calibre applicants possible and therefore the information sent to applicants must give a clear picture of the post, the section and the Association as an employer. All posts will be advertised on the Association's website. Posts will be externally advertised in the local press and in other specialist and national media as considered appropriate for the particular post. Where appropriate the local Job Centre and free press will also be used. All vacancies will be advertised externally to ensure quality of access unless and only on the authorisation of the Chief Executive, there are sound operational reasons for internal advertising only.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission advise that ‘word of mouth recruitment’ is likely to be indirectly discriminatory in terms of race and/or sex discrimination. It is very important therefore that all posts are advertised as widely as possible and that all applicants are dealt with in the same way and given the same information and opportunity to make an application.

To ensure that applicants are fully informed about the vacancy for which they are applying and to ensure that they provide the Association with all the information we require, adverts must direct applicants to the further particulars, which will provide more information including how to apply.

Advertisements should include the following:

- Langstane Housing logo etc
- Job Title
- Salary
- Brief details of job
- Key details of person specification
- Duration of appointment (if not permanent)
- How to obtain further information
- Closing date for applications
- (Ideally) interview date or likely week when interviews will be held

All advertisements should be placed through HR to ensure compliance with this policy. The advert will be set to a standard format as appropriate and the draft will be provided to the manager before it is finally approved.

External adverts should have a closing date of at least 2 weeks after the date of publication.

9. Processing applications

Department managers need to make their staff aware that when dealing with enquiries about vacancies it is unlawful to state or imply that applications from one sex or from a particular racial group would be preferred and to do so may lead to a complaint against the Association.

Care must also be taken when initiating contact with applicants to ensure that all applicants are treated in the same way, for example with regard to invitations to visit the section, informal meetings to discuss the vacancy, and provision of information.

The confidentiality of applicants must be respected by all those involved in the selection process.

10. Shortlisting

After the closing date has passed, HR will pass the completed forms to the Department Manager, and shortlisting for interview should take place. Shortlisting should be carried out by at least two members of the interview panel, including the immediate line manager.

It is the responsibility of the shortlisting panel to ensure that applicants are measured against the requirements outlined in the person specification. Shortlisting decisions should be based on evidence that the applicant has met the requirements of the person

specification. Shortlisting panel members should avoid dismissing applicants who appear to be over qualified. Assumptions should not be made about their reasons for applying for the post as they may eliminate an otherwise exemplary applicant. Consideration of the neatness of the application form e.g. the neatness of their handwriting should not be the basis for shortlisting unless the neatness of their handwriting is desirable for the post. A person with a disability may have some difficulty in producing a neatly written document and have no access to a person who can assist them.

The Association is committed to promoting job opportunities for people with a disability and will ensure that anyone with a disability who meets the criteria will be shortlisted for interview.

A Shortlisting Form will be provided by HR for completion (Appendix Two). Whatever documentation is used the Department Manager who is recruiting is responsible for recording decisions taken against the agreed criteria and returning this to HR.

The original applications for all applicants, together with a written note of the reasons for shortlisting or rejecting applicants will be retained by HR for one year from the date that an appointment decision is made.

11. Interview Panels

All interviews will be conducted by a panel. The composition of the panel will depend on the post being advertised. There should however be at least two people interviewing, one of whom should be the Corporate Services Manager. For Middle Managers or specialist posts the panel should include a Director from outwith the service in which the post is located. For Senior Managers and the Chief Executive the panel will be appointed by the Committee of Management.

Panels must:

Consist of a minimum of two people including the immediate line manager of the vacant post

Consist of staff who have received training in recruitment and selection

Reflect a sex and ethnicity balance wherever possible

Declare if they already know an applicant

Be willing and able to attend all interviews for the duration of the recruitment process, to maintain consistency and to ensure fair treatment of all candidates.

12. Selection tests and Presentations

Consideration should be given to using job related selection tests or asking applicants to give presentations as part of the selection process if there are some areas of the person specification that are difficult to test at interview. If selection tests or presentations are to be used, all applicants should be given the same written information as to how long they will take, the topic area(s) they will cover, and what if anything they should prepare in advance. Care should be taken to ensure that job related tests are well explained in writing for applicants, in plain language, and that all

applicants are subject to the same tests under exactly the same conditions, and that presentation topics do not favour any one applicant.

Selection tests should be carefully considered – a person with a disability may be capable of the task but find the time constraints difficult, due to the nature of the disability, allowances will be made for this if the job does not require such quick responses.

A Selection Decision Form (Appendix Three) should be completed by the chair of the interview panel.

13. References

References will normally be taken up by HR before the interview. However if an applicant indicates that he/she does not want her current employer contacted prior to interview this will be respected. References are confidential and will be sought 'in confidence'. Any request for disclosure of references should be forwarded to HR.

References should only be used for the purpose for which they were intended and their confidentiality must be maintained. Panel members must return all copies of any references with the application forms together with their interview notes to HR on completion of the recruitment process. References must only be kept on the personnel file held by HR. Before the appointment is made HR will also carry out the relevant checks to ensure that the applicant is entitled to work in the UK.

14. Appointment

The successful applicant will be advised as soon as possible and offered the post verbally. A formal Offer of Employment will be issued by HR. The terms and conditions will normally have been agreed by this stage however if there is any negotiation in salary the Chief Executive should be consulted for agreement.

All unsuccessful applicants will be advised in writing by HR as soon as possible.

If the post is for a fixed term and an existing employee of the Association is appointed it will be the policy that on completion of the term they will return to a position no less than the position they were originally employed in.

15. Induction

It is the Associations policy that managers ensure that all members of staff, whether they are new to the organisation or moving to a new role within, go through an induction process so that they gain an understanding of their work and potential contribution to the Association, feel supported in their new work environment and are able to apply their skills and experience at an early stage. An induction development plan should be drawn up and monitored by the employee's line manager. Assistance can be provided by HR.

Review Date: November 2011

