

Recruitment and Selection Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of the recruitment and selection policy is to ensure HOS recruit:

- The best candidates, based on their relevant merits, to support the delivery of our corporate strategy
- In an equal and inclusive way that is consistent with employment legislation and good practice.
- Through a process that supports HOS values and visions
- Positively promoting HOS as an employer of choice

2 Scope

The policy applies to all internal and external candidates who are applying to HOS. It covers all recruitment with the exception of the following.

- Ombudsman
- Apprentices

3. Policy Statement

We want to constantly improve our performance as an organisation. In order to achieve this, we need to recruit from the widest possible pool of talent. HOS aims to attract and recruit people with diverse backgrounds, skills, and abilities, who will enhance the quality of service and contribute to HOS's success.

HOS is committed to providing opportunities for development and career progression to current employees. This means that HOS will normally advertise vacancies both internally and externally. However, in exceptional circumstances and on rare occasions, there may be a strong business case for making appointments without advertising the opportunity externally.

3.4 In order to achieve these objectives HOS will:

- ensure that every director regularly reviews the organisation of their directorate and the job responsibilities and roles of individuals within it. This will be completed through the individual performance review process, when a vacancy arises, and at regular resource planning meetings.
- ensure that managers consider the extent to which vacant posts could lend themselves to flexible working to attract a wider range of candidates.
- endeavour to reach traditionally under-represented groups and ensure that discrimination does not take place at either the attraction or selection stage.
- ensure that recruitment procedures are regularly updated in line with changes in legislation and best practice.
- ensure that the administration of the selection process is user friendly and carried out to the highest professional standard.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 Permanent positions:** A candidate who has been issued a permanent contract of employment and is on HOS's payroll.
- 4.2 Fixed term positions:** A candidate who has been issued a fixed-term contract of employment for a specified period of time and is on HOS's payroll
- 4.3 Temporary agency workers:** Short-term temporary agency workers are occasionally necessary for short-term projects that cannot be covered with internal resource. There is no contract of employment between the temporary agency worker and HOS. The worker is paid directly by the employment agency who is responsible for references and other pre-engagement checks. Notice can be given at any time (see agency worker policy)
- 4.4 Professional contractors:** On occasions, for specialist posts on an interim basis, there may be a requirement to recruit a professional contractor. The status of the contractors' engagement is the same as for temporary agency workers.
- 4.5 Internal Secondments:** The temporary deployment of a contracted member of staff within HOS to another role for a specific purpose and period of time to the mutual benefit of all parties. Any HOS colleague may apply for a secondment, providing that they have no current, documented, performance management issues. Secondments are generally for periods of greater than 3 months, up to a maximum of 1 year in length, subject to the needs of the business and the job holder's performance standards being met. *Potential secondment opportunities should initially be discussed with the HR Team.*
- 4.6 External Secondments:** The temporary deployment of an employee to undertake a piece of work based with another organisation for a defined period of time whilst remaining on their contract with their substantive employer. External secondments can be a HOS employee seconded to another organisation to undertake a piece of work or a member of staff from another employer coming into HOS to complete a particular piece of work. Following the defined period of time, secondees return to their substantive posts with their contract employer.
- 4.7 Acting-up appointments:** These involve covering a post while the substantive post holder is away or, perhaps, whilst the post is being recruited to. These opportunities are for periods of up to a maximum of 6 months at any one time. The opportunity to act up will be advertised internally to the relevant audience. Positions of this nature that are for longer than 6 months should generally be advertised as fixed term positions. *Potential acting up opportunities should initially be discussed with the HR Team.*

5. Employment Arrangement

5.1 Internal candidate: For the purposes of this policy, an internal candidate is a HOS colleague (employee) on either a permanent or temporary/fixed term employment contract

5.2 Agency temps will be informed about internal vacancies by HOS from the first day of their assignment as per the Agency Workers Regulations 2010.

5.3 Agency temps are not eligible to apply or take up secondment or acting up opportunities.

5.4 Fixed term to Permanent: Where a position is fixed term but may have the possibility of conversion to permanent status towards the end of the fixed term, this should usually be included in the advertisement.

5.5 Temporary to Permanent: Where a temporary to permanent vacancy is advertised, agency staff are eligible to apply provided that they do not have any performance management issues. Please refer to the Temp to Perm procedure for full details.

6. Recruitment Process

6.1 There are a number of key stages in recruiting and selecting for a post. This procedure outlines the key stages. Further advice and guidance is available from the HR team.

6.2 Preparation Stage:

The recruitment and selection process should not commence until a full evaluation of the need for the role against the area's strategic plans and budget has been completed. The Director will evaluate the need for any new, changed or replacement post using the budget to decide if the role will be permanent, fixed term, acting up or secondment liaising with the Finance department to ensure that all posts are authorised through the Recruitment Request Form and fully funded before recruiting.

6.3 Job Description and Person Specification:

- For established roles, the Head of will review the current job description and person specification to ensure that it still reflects the role and the required skills, aptitudes, knowledge, and experience for the post and is consistent with the HOS standard Job Description template. Any major changes will be notified to the HR team for review and recommendation for external re-evaluation.
- For new roles, the Head of will draft a job description and person specification stating both the essential and desirable criteria in terms of skills, aptitudes, knowledge, and experience for the post for the HR team to review. All new role job descriptions will be sent off to an approved Job Evaluation service. All new role job descriptions must be formally reviewed and graded before they are advertised in order to help ensure equal pay for work of equal value.
- The Job Description and person specification will be the basis upon which methods of assessment are agreed and the selection decision is made. This cannot be changed at a later date within the recruitment process.

- The HR team will check all Job Descriptions and person specifications to ensure that the criteria used does not unlawfully discriminate against certain applicant.

6.4 Recruitment Panel:

Recruitment panels must have a minimum of two people on the Panel, at least one of whom is fully trained in the recruitment process of HOS.

- The recruitment panel wherever possible should reflect HOS's commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- A member of the HR team must be present as part of the panel for all internal posts, and external posts grade 4B and above.
- All panel members must be involved in the shortlisting process.

6.5 Advertising:

- All posts, permanent and fixed term should be advertised – internally and externally at the same time with the exception of acting up roles and secondments.
- For posts advertised externally, HOS has a preferred/retained resourcing agency – CJA group that undertakes all the advertising and attraction phase of the recruitment process. Recruiting Managers should liaise with the HR team in the first instance regarding their recruitment needs.
- Where posts are advertised internally only, they are open to all HOS employees (although employees in their probationary period will not normally be considered).
- Staff who have been in an acting up position that subsequently becomes vacant will have to apply for the post when it is advertised, but in such cases that would allow for internal career progression and staff in the acting up position evidence meeting the requirements of the position the post can be advertised on an internal basis only
- Posts which were once advertised internally as acting up or secondment which becomes vacant later will be advertised internally in the first instance for a week. Upon unsatisfactory applications, post will be advertised externally.
- At the discretion of the Director, Recruiting Managers may advertise some vacancies as temporary to permanent internally only.

6.6 Shortlisting:

- Shortlisting should take place within a reasonable amount of time following the closing of the vacancy and should be planned in advance
- The assessment of applications should be based on the information included within the submission only. The applicant's suitability should only be compared to the requirements that were advertised in the job description and person specification.
- It is important that decisions for each candidate are recorded with a brief explanation of the decision and retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

- For posts advertised externally, the initial sifting of applicants will be done by HOS retained resourcing agency using a blind process. This means removing the candidates name and any other identifying factors from applications to make all efforts to prevent discrimination or unfair treatment against all colleagues or potential colleagues on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, being pregnant or on maternity leave, marital status, race, religion/belief or disability. They will then provide the panel with detailed recommendation to use as part of the final shortlisting. The panel may decide as part of the selection process to run initial screening such as testing, or online assessment as part of the shortlisting. This would be agreed at the start of the recruitment process and candidates should be made aware as part of the advertising. Each candidate should be invited to undergo the same assessments and the panel must remain consistent across each element of candidate assessment. The only exception will be for applicants who have requested reasonable adjustments to the process to accommodate a disability.
- A shortlist of candidates will be drawn up for interview, based entirely on merit and suitability for the post but taking account of HOS's responsibilities in relation to Equality legislation. Other than in exceptional circumstances, reasonable notice will be given to ensure that candidates have sufficient time to prepare for and make the necessary arrangements to attend the interview. As a disability confident committed employer, all candidates who have indicated as part of their application they have a disability and have met the minimum criteria for the role as advertised will be invited to interview.

6.7 Interviews:

- Interviews will be held by a panel comprising of at least two people, one of whom should be the Recruiting Manager. The panel should be gender and ethnicity balanced wherever possible. The interviewers will encourage candidates to be at ease during the interview, in order that they can give a fair and accurate impression of themselves.
- Interview questions will be agreed by the panel in advance and will be developed from the current job description for the post. The panel will seek to include questions which ask the candidates to give examples of their previous relevant experience.
- All candidates will be asked the same (or comparable) set of questions, and their responses rated between 1-5. The panel will each have a copy of the questions and will make notes and score independently of each other during or after the interview. Wherever possible, time is allocated between interviews for the panel to discuss each candidate and to award a total point score.
- Notes and scores from the interviews should be passed back to the HR team following the selection process and will be retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

- It should be remembered that an interview is a two-way process. Candidates will be given every opportunity to ask questions about the Organisation, to ensure that they have a full understanding of the post for which they are applying and the way that HOS operates.
- In addition to interviews, a range of other selection techniques may be used. In such circumstances reasonable notice and relevant information will be given to ensure that candidates have sufficient time and information to prepare.

6.8 Appointments:

- All appointments will be made strictly on merit and related to the requirements of the job.
- The selection of the preferred candidate can only be made after all the selection activities are complete, the outcomes recorded and returned to the HR team.
- For posts externally advertised, all interviewed candidates will be notified of the outcome of the selection process as soon as possible by HOS's retained resourcing consultant, either by telephone or email.
- Where posts are advertised internally only, it is the responsibility of the Lead Panel member, usually the Recruiting Line Manager, to provide feedback either in writing or over phone to candidates. Feedback will be given within 5 working days of request.
- Offer of employment, whether made orally or in writing, are legally binding and a record should be maintained of how and when the offer was made. Offers must be subject to terms and conditions detailed in the formal offer letter that will follow and will be conditional upon satisfactory results from the following:
 - Satisfactory references to cover last 3 years of employment, in the absence of employment referee, character reference will be sought.
 - Confirmation of the right to work in this country
 - Conflict of Interests Disclosure
 - Disclosure and Barring Service check (Basic)

6.9 Probation:

- All permanent appointments with HOS will be made subject to a probationary period of six calendar months.
- In addition to their monthly supervision meeting with their manager, after three months a review meeting will take place between the post holder and their line manager to discuss progress. The probation document is then shared with the Head of/Director for sign off.
- At the end of the probationary period, and subject to a satisfactory report by the appropriate line manager and final sign off by the Head of/Director, employees will be notified in writing that they have successfully completed their probationary period.
- The probationary period can be extended by a further 3 months should the individuals line manager consider this appropriate (Please refer to Probationary Policy).
- For all new employees, part of their probationary period will include a HR/Corporate Induction coupled with a structured induction programme relevant to their role. The programme is comprehensive and includes all relevant training and policies. It also details milestones, expectations, and any additional support available.
- Throughout the induction period, all new staff members will receive regular monthly meetings with the manager and their mentor/buddy (If applicable) to discuss progress and identify any further training and development or support needs.

7. Recruitment Monitoring

7.1 HOS seeks to recruit employees on the basis of their ability and the requirements of the post.

7.2 HOS is determined to make all efforts to prevent discrimination or unfair treatment against all colleagues or potential colleagues on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, being pregnant or on maternity leave, marital status, race, religion/belief or to meet this commitment, all candidates are asked to complete a recruitment monitoring form enclosed with the application process. All completed monitoring forms will be treated as confidential. The form will be separated from their application on receipt and those involved in the selection process will not have access to it. The information given by candidates will be solely used for the purpose of monitoring the recruitment process.