

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

SPECIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

## **Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure**

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## **Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure**

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# Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

## 1. Policy

- 1.1 It is essential that a high quality recruitment service, where concern for customer care is a priority, be provided to all applicants. Although a candidate might be rejected for an appointment, it is important that she/he retains a favourable impression of the Institute.
- 1.2 The purpose of this document is to set out, in the form of a manual, the correct procedure for line managers and staff Selection Panel members responsible for filling vacant Institute posts; and to inform applicants of the Institute's policy, procedure and expected standards. These procedures will be applied in recruitment to all Institute posts from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007.
- 1.3 In order to ensure this procedure is effective, it is the responsibility of all Panel members to raise issues of good and bad practice with other members of the Panel. In the case of apparent bad practice, Panel members should raise the relevant issues with the Chair of the Panel. If the issues are not resolved, they should be reported to the Associate Director of HR who has the authority to stop the process. In addition, the Institute will actively seek feedback from those involved in the process (as an interviewer or interviewee) as part of the constant review and evaluation of this Procedure.
- 1.4 This procedure relates to the recruitment and selection of all Institute posts whether full or part time, regardless of how the post is funded.

### ***Equality, diversity and fairness***

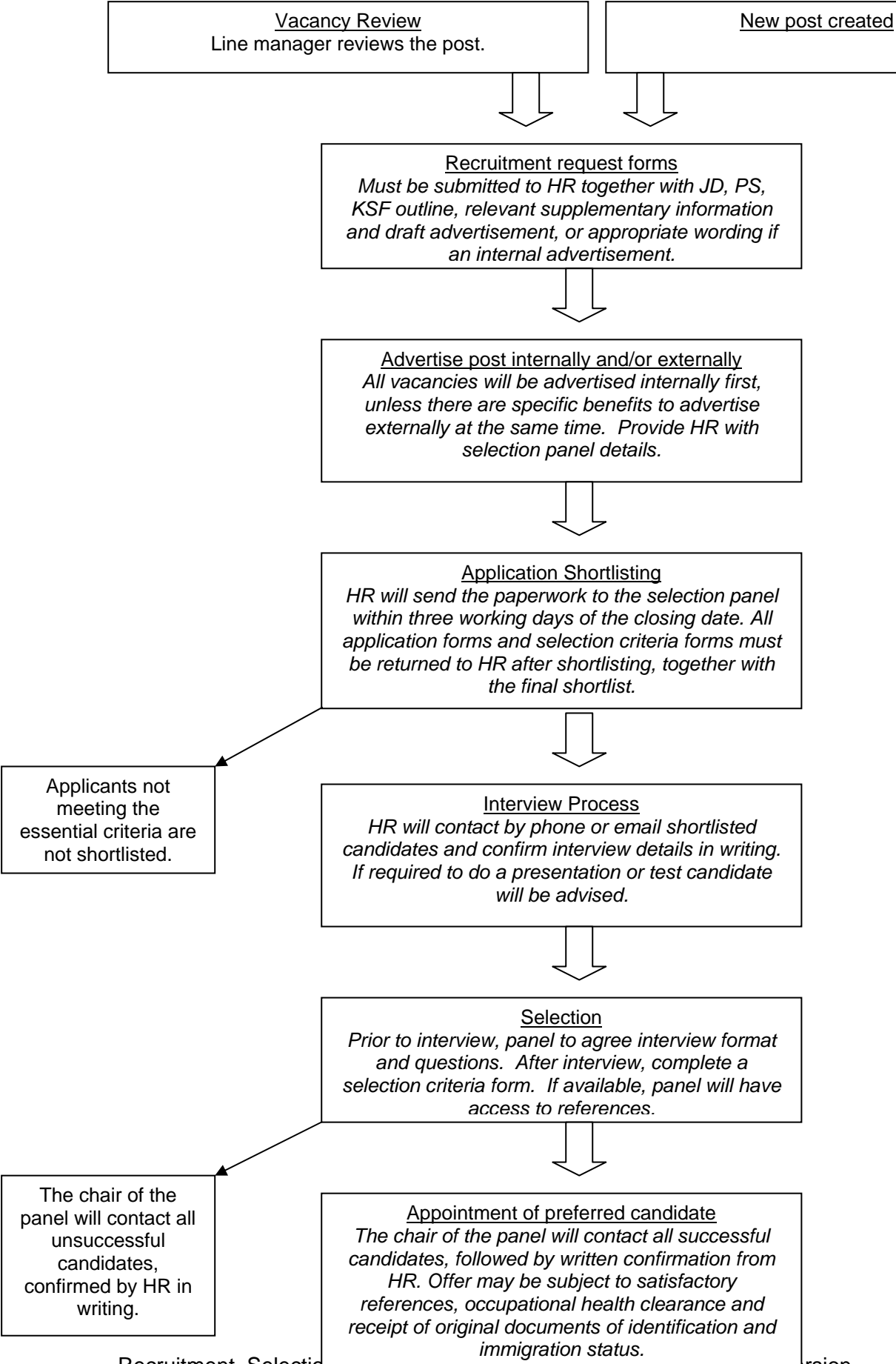
- 1.5 Equal opportunities and race equality considerations are reflected at every stage of this document. The procedure embraces the requirements of the Institute's Equality and Diversity policy and Race Equality Scheme and relevant Equal Opportunities legislation and practice.
- 1.6 The Institute aims to employ a diverse workforce that reflects the society we operate in. In order to achieve this, we may encourage applications from those groups that are under-represented in the organisation.
- 1.7 We encourage applicants who feel that equality and fairness has not been observed during the recruitment process to bring their concerns to the attention of the Associate Director - HR.

- 1.8 The Institute will collect data regarding the sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion of applicants and will monitor the representation of candidates by sex, race, disability and age at each stage of the recruitment process. The anonymised results of this monitoring will be published annually as part of the Institute's Human Resources Annual Report. Anonymised reports on sexual orientation and religion will be prepared when requested by internal or external parties.

***Training and guidance***

- 1.9 Recruitment and selection training courses will be held regularly (at least once every two years). It is the Institute's requirement that all members of Selection Panels be trained in recruitment and selection techniques, and equality and diversity, before they participate in the recruitment and selection process. This training must have been undertaken within a two-year period prior to participating in the process.
- 1.10 Any of the documents used in the selection process (including rough notes) may be required for inspection at any time and it is therefore the responsibility of the Chair and Panel members to keep an accurate record of decisions made. The record will be retained by HR for up to a year for shortlisted and non-shortlisted candidates.

**2. Recruitment and selection flow chart**



### **3. Vacancy/new post review**

- 3.1 When a vacancy/new post occurs the post's line manager should review the post and may consider the following where applicable: -
- 3.1.1 Ascertain from the departing post holder aspects of the post that may require consideration and review.
  - 3.1.2 Does the post need to be filled, or could the duties be absorbed within the department?
  - 3.1.3 If the post is to be filled, are there any changes that could affect the salary band, hours or departmental structure and is funding available?
  - 3.1.4 Are there circumstances deeming it more appropriate to offer the post on a temporary or fixed term basis as an alternative to a permanent contract?
  - 3.1.5 If the post is temporary or fixed term (e.g. maternity leave cover) consideration should be given to offering the post internally on an acting-up or secondment basis.
  - 3.1.6 Is the post suitable for flexible working in line with the Institute's Flexible Working Policy?
  - 3.1.7 It is essential to ensure that the job description and person specification is consistent with the Institute's Equality and Diversity Policy, i.e. it does not unlawfully discriminate against individuals or groups.
  - 3.1.8 It is the responsibility of the line manager to prepare an up-to-date Job Description, Person Specification and KSF Outline for the post before any recruitment action is initiated, and that these documents are submitted to HR for confirmation of the pay band. Advice should be sought from HR if required.

### **4. Job descriptions and person specifications**

- 4.1 A job description details the purpose, tasks and responsibilities of a job. Appendix x offers guidance on producing both job descriptions and person specifications, and includes an outline template which must be adhered to in the case of all posts.
- 4.2 Managers must ensure that the job description is up to date. It is good practice to review all job descriptions for vacant posts so any amendments can be incorporated right at the beginning of the recruitment process. HR will provide advice and assistance in reviewing the job description if requested.

- 4.3 A person specification details the requirements that applicants will be assessed against to determine their suitability for the post. Person specifications must be attached to all job descriptions outlining the essential and desirable knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience required by the successful candidate. The criteria identified must be objective, non-discriminatory and relevant to the requirements of the post. HR is required to provide advice and assistance in reviewing and writing person specifications.
- 4.4 All new and revised job descriptions and person specifications must be submitted to the HR Department to be evaluated in accordance with the Agenda for Change processes, prior to the recruitment process starting. The HR Department will arrange for the post to be evaluated and will confirm the Pay Band for the post.

## **5. Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF)**

- 5.1 The KSF outline describes the knowledge and skills that will be expected of a competent and experienced post holder. The KSF outline is different from the person specification because the person specification describes the entry requirements for a post and the KSF outline describes the standards that should be attained to demonstrate full competence in the role.
- 5.2 For new posts, line managers should develop the KSF outline, which must include the 6 NHS Core Dimensions and the appropriate Specific Dimensions for the post. Appendix x offers guidance on how to produce a KSF outline including a template which must be followed.

## **6. Criteria for advertising posts internally before external advertisement**

- 6.1 All vacancies will be first advertised internally on the Institute's Intranet site. Vacancies that have not been successfully filled through internal recruitment may then be advertised externally. Posts can be advertised externally at the same time where there are special circumstances for doing so (see 6.3 below).
- 6.2 If only one internal applicant applies then the interview should go ahead, provided the applicant meets the person specification.
- 6.3 Reasons for advertising vacancies internally and externally at the same time are:

- 6.3.1 Posts which Directors, Associate Directors and recruiting manager consider would be more appropriate to advertise externally e.g. specialist qualifications or senior posts.
- 6.3.2 Posts which are considered to be inappropriate for internal advertising, e.g. posts with a pay band lower than any other posts within the Institute.
- 6.4 If a Director (or Associate Director) and recruiting manager consider they have a case for advertising internally and externally at the same time, he/she should detail the reasons on the recruitment request form. The Associate Director - HR will decide whether the case put forward justifies the request to advertise internally and externally at the same time.

## **7. Recruitment request forms**

- 7.1 All requests to advertise a post must be submitted to HR on a recruitment request form.
- 7.2 The budget holder must sign the declaration, as this is the authorisation to recruit to the post. The recruitment request form, fully completed, should indicate:
  - 7.2.1 Whether the post will be advertised internally in the first instance or simultaneously advertised internally and externally
  - 7.2.2 Where the advertisement should appear in addition to the normal advertising media (i.e. NICE website and the NHS recruitment website)
  - 7.2.3 Proposed closing date (normally 10 working days or 2 weeks following insertion)
  - 7.2.4 Proposed shortlisting arrangements (allow 5 working days after the closing date)
  - 7.2.5 Proposed interview dates (normally 7 working days following receipt of the shortlisting pack in HR; to allow candidates at least 5 working days notice of their interview).
- 7.3 The following information must also be submitted to HR with the Recruitment Request form:
  - 7.3.1 An updated job description including details of the pay band, salary range and any allowances payable (e.g. High Cost Area Supplement, Recruitment and Retention Premia);
  - 7.3.2 An updated person specification;
  - 7.3.3 A KSF outline;

- 7.3.4 Relevant supplementary information, to forward to applicants (if appropriate);  
and
- 7.3.5 A draft advertisement/appropriate wording, if an internal advert.
- 7.4 Vacancies will not be advertised unless all of the above is supplied.
- 7.5 HR can be contacted if any advice or assistance is required in order to comply with the above requirements.

## **8. Recruitment Advertising**

- 8.1 All externally advertised posts will be placed on the Institute's website and the official NHS recruitment website. In addition, posts may be advertised in other media such as newspapers and professional journals, depending on the nature of the job and the availability of funds. All recruitment advertising (internal or external) will normally run for two weeks. All recruitment advertising must be placed by HR. This will ensure a consistent approach and good practice throughout the Institute.
- 8.2 All recruitment advertisements must include the following information:
  - 8.2.1 A standard statement about the role and functions of the Institute, if advertised externally;
  - 8.2.2 A description of the job and its key requirements;
  - 8.2.3 The pay band and salary range, plus details of any allowances payable (e.g. HCAS and RRP);
  - 8.2.4 The instructions on how an application should be submitted;
  - 8.2.5 The closing date and proposed interview date; and
  - 8.2.6 The standard equality and diversity statements
- 8.3 HR will place the advertisement or liaise with the Institute's advertising agency if necessary to place the advertisement, and obtain any relevant media advice to ensure that the most appropriate media is used for attracting applications. Where there is a more appropriate and cost-effective method for attracting the best quality applications, HR will liaise directly with that source. For example, the Job Centre, Careers Offices, local advertising using non-media methods.
- 8.4 Managers are encouraged to discuss their vacancies with their colleagues and HR prior to submitting recruitment requests, to identify any similar posts that could be

advertised at the same time and in the same publication. Advertisements may then be amalgamated to ensure that the correct image of the Institute is portrayed and to ensure consistency and cost efficiency. HR in liaison with the advertising agency will assist with identifying such posts.

- 8.5 Managers should identify and indicate on the recruitment request form if the advertisement is a “repeat” advert. If so, consideration should be given as to why the original advertisement did not produce a successful outcome and whether the advertisement wording, timing and type of media used be amended. HR should be contacted for further advice if necessary. The advertising text should state that the post is being re-advertised and previous applicants should not apply.
- 8.6 Agency staff working within the Institute are eligible to apply for internally advertised positions, providing they have been working at the Institute for 12 weeks, prior to the post first being advertised.

## **9. Selection Panel**

- 9.1 The line manager should decide on the composition of the Selection Panel as soon as the vacancy is advertised. The composition of the Panel should not change throughout the recruitment process, except in exceptional circumstances. Panel members should normally be senior to or on the same pay banding as the position they are interviewing for.
- 9.2 The Panel will normally consist of at least three members, one of which should be the relevant line manager and one of which must be a member of staff from another team. Normally, the line manager will chair the Panel and take lead responsibility for ensuring that the recruitment process is properly managed. For more senior posts or where specialist expertise is required, the line manager should make arrangements for an external assessor to join the Selection Panel for the interview.

## **10. Applications**

- 10.1 Applications for posts should be made on the Institute’s approved Online Application Form. Applicants may request applications in alternative formats, e.g. paper format or large print. Handwritten, emailed and online applications will be accepted. Application forms that are submitted in hardcopy must be signed and dated by the applicant.

Emailed applications should be sent from the applicants' personal email address.  
Online applications will only be accepted through the NHS recruitment website.

- 10.2 CVs only may be requested in advertisements for posts on the Senior Management Team. They should be submitted with a covering letter setting out the reasons for the applicant's interest in the post, and the particular skills and experience that they can bring to it, referred against the person specification.
- 10.3 Candidates will be asked to supply the names of two referees in their covering letter, one of whom should be the current or most recent employer, or person representing an official or acceptable organisation. Applicants will be asked to indicate if they do not want their referees to be approached before interview. Candidates who are asked to submit CVs only must provide all information that would be included in an application form. Two written references are required for the preferred candidate. References are sought on an open basis and may be shared with the individual. This is made clear on the reference request form.
- 10.4 Application pack requests will be dealt with in a timely and professional manner. Application packs will normally be forwarded to applicants on the day of enquiry (either via email, or post, they are also downloadable from the NICE website), and no later than the next working day. Online application packs will include the same information as hardcopy packs. Each pack will contain: -
  - 10.4.1 A standard covering letter detailing the closing date and the reference number.
  - 10.4.2 Job description, including salary details
  - 10.4.3 Person specification
  - 10.4.4 Application form
  - 10.4.5 Equal opportunities monitoring form
  - 10.4.6 Guidance notes on how to complete the application form.
  - 10.4.7 Information regarding the next steps in the recruitment process
  - 10.4.8 Guide to NICE
  - 10.4.9 Additional supplementary information supplied by the recruiting manager  
(optional)
  - 10.4.10 Declarations of interest policy

- 10.5 The closing time advised to applicants will be 11:59pm on the closing date. Completed application forms arriving in the first post on the morning following the closing date will automatically be accepted and included for shortlisting. Late applications will not be considered unless an extension to the closing date has been agreed.
- 10.6 Applicants who apply using the online application form on the NHS recruitment website will receive an automated response to acknowledge receipt of their application, and can track the progress of their application online.
- 10.7 Applicants who submit their application by email will receive an emailed response to confirm receipt of their application.
- 10.8 Applicants who submit their application by post and would like confirmation that their application has been received should attach a self-addressed postcard/envelope to their application. The postcard/envelope will be date stamped and returned by post.
- 10.9 All applicants will be advised to assume their application has been unsuccessful if they have not been contacted within two weeks of the closing date. Applicants who apply using the online application on the NHS recruitment website will receive online notification of the outcome of the shortlisting process. Applicants are welcome to contact the HR department by email or telephone to obtain feedback on the reason(s) they have not be shortlisted. HR will notify the recruiting manager who will provide individual feedback.
- 10.10 All original application forms will be held by HR. Three copies of the application forms received will be sent to the recruiting manager within two working days after the closing date. The Equal Opportunities forms will be removed from the application and will not be sent to the recruiting manager.

## **11. Informal discussions and visits**

- 11.1 Informal discussions provide applicants with the opportunity to obtain information about the job and the Institute to assist them in deciding to apply for a position. Managers who are inviting informal discussions should ensure that the opportunity is offered to all potential applicants by explicitly stating in the job advertisement. The details of the informal discussion will depend on the information requested by the potential applicant. However, managers must ensure that the information they provide to applicants in response to similar queries is consistent and accurate.

11.2 If it is considered appropriate for applicants to be offered an informal visit to the Institute, the opportunity for these visits be offered to all candidates. Recruiting managers need to ensure that they do not offer any one candidate any additional opportunity without providing it to all.

## **12. Shortlisting**

12.1 Shortlisting is the process of assessing each application against the criteria specified in the person specification. Under no circumstances can the selection criteria be changed at this stage of the process.

12.2 Arrangements for shortlisting, including dates and location will be agreed by the recruiting manager and at least one other member of the Selection Panel, before the advertisement is processed.

12.3 Shortlisting must be undertaken by at least two representatives of the Selection Panel, both of whom must have sufficient knowledge of the post. The recruiting manager will normally lead the shortlisting process.

12.4 HR will send copies of the application forms to the designated members of the Selection Panel normally within three working days of the closing date.

12.5 The shortlisting pack will contain:

12.5.1 Job description

12.5.2 Person specification

12.5.3 Copied application forms

12.5.4 Selection Criteria Form

N.B. HR will retain all Equal Opportunities monitoring forms.

12.6 Shortlisting must be carried out by examination of application forms against the selection criteria form, and these must be applied consistently to all candidates on the basis of the information supplied in their application forms. Under no circumstances should the selection criteria (detailed in the person specification) be altered at this stage of the process.

12.7 Shortlisted applicants will be those who appear from their application forms, to meet the criteria of the Person Specification most fully. All shortlisted candidates must at least meet the essential requirements stated in the person specification, which are

assessable using the application form. If there is a large number of applicants that meet the essential criteria, the desirable criteria may be used to determine the final shortlist.

- 12.8 The shortlisting process must be fairly and consistently applied to all candidates and must take fully into account the requirements of the Institute's Equality and Diversity Policy. Skills and aptitudes are important in assessing a candidate at the shortlisting stage. The length of experience or level of qualifications of a candidate may not reflect his/her ability to do the job. It is the quality of the knowledge, skills and aptitudes of each candidate that must be assessed. It is important to consider whether the candidate has the ability to develop the desirable criteria in the Person Specification as well as the ability to meet its essential criteria.
- 12.9 All applicants who consider they have a disability (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) shall be shortlisted for an interview if they demonstrate that they fulfil the essential shortlisting criteria.
- 12.10 If an applicant has disclosed information of a criminal conviction on their application form, this will not be disclosed to the shortlisting panel. The recruiting manager will be notified of the conviction prior to the interview taking place if the applicant is shortlisted (see 15.15 to 15.17)
- 12.11 The designated members of the Selection Panel will determine the candidate shortlist and complete the appropriate paperwork, signing all the selection criteria forms. The reason for the decision not to shortlist candidates must be clearly recorded on the selection criteria form.
- 12.12 All application forms, completed selection criteria forms and the agreed interview questions must be returned to HR after shortlisting, together with the final shortlist.
- 12.13 All applicants will be entitled to receive constructive feedback from a member of the selection panel on the reasons for the rejection of their application, if requested.
- 12.14 To ensure sufficient time for all administrative arrangements and reasonable notice of an interview for candidates, the shortlist and agreed interview questions must be returned to HR at least seven working days before the interview. Managers should inform HR, again at least seven working days before the interview, whether or not candidates will be required to do a test and/or presentation, the nature of the test and/or presentation and the duration.

12.15 At this stage, all members of the Panel should consider and agree on the appropriate selection methods. This may include testing, presentations, group work and any other form of assessment, as well as agreeing interview questions for the formal interview.

## **13. Interviews**

### ***Notification of Interviews***

13.1 Once the shortlist is completed and returned HR will:

13.1.1 Confirm any outstanding interview arrangements with the recruiting manager and ensure that at least 5 working days notice of the interview is given to the candidates.

13.1.2 Contact by phone or email all shortlisted candidates advising them of their interview

13.1.3 Send emails or letters finalising interview details

13.2 In their interview invitation candidates will be given the opportunity to request any reasonable adjustments or alternative arrangements to enable them to take part in the interview if they consider themselves disabled as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

13.3 The interview invitation will also include:

13.3.1 Details of when and where the interview will take place and the names and job titles of the selection panel

13.3.2 Details of the identity documents that should be taken to the interview.

13.3.3 A map and directional information as appropriate

13.3.4 Pre-employment Health Screening Form with a return envelope

13.3.5 Contact details for confirming their attendance/non attendance for the interview

13.4 Candidates will be asked to bring their completed Pre-employment Health Screening Form to their interview sealed in the envelope supplied.

13.5 Where a presentation or test forms part of the selection process candidates will be advised of any such requirements and provided with sufficient details in their interview

letter. All tests must be forwarded to HR at least seven working days before the interview date so that suitable administrative arrangements can be made.

### ***Interview Arrangements***

- 13.6 Arrangements for any interview (e.g. venue, timing etc.) will be such as to facilitate a "good performance" by interviewees and interviewers. A well arranged, timed and organised interview is essential. It is important that sufficient time is allowed between candidates for discussions and for completion of paperwork.
- 13.7 HR will be responsible for organising interview rooms in both London and Manchester offices. Where previously advised, HR will make any reasonable adjustments that are needed to enable a candidate with a disability to take part in an interview, so that they are not at a disadvantage. HR/Office Co-ordinator (if in the Manchester office) will be responsible for coordinating all arrangements on the interview day, including arranging refreshments, administering tests etc.
- 13.8 HR and Staff involved in the recruitment process must be aware of the increased level of confidentiality required for internal candidates. For example, ensure interview details are not highlighted within diary entries (please tick the private box to ensure entry is not visible to staff), use a meeting room that restricts visual access to those not involved in the process and post discreet signage on the door.
- 13.9 HR will send the receptionist, via the visitors list, a copy of the interview schedule of external candidates at least 48 hours prior to the interviews.
- 13.10 HR will keep the Chair of the Selection Panel informed of any candidates who withdraw prior to the interview day.
- 13.11 There is no obligation on the Institute to re-arrange interview dates to accommodate individual candidates. However, if it is possible, dates may be changed at the recruiting manager's discretion.
- 13.12 Interviews for overseas candidates may be conducted either by video conferencing or by telephone. HR will be responsible for setting this up prior to the interview day
- 13.13 The same assessment standards for internal candidates as for external candidates will apply e.g. if a test is planned, this should be undertaken.
- 13.14 Lunch can be provided if external panel members are present.

### ***Information for the Interview***

13.15 Interview packs will be prepared for all members of the Selection Panel by HR and will be available at least two working days before the interviews take place.

13.16 The Interview pack will contain: -

13.16.1 Interview schedule

13.16.2 Terms and conditions e.g. AfC grade, whether the post is full or part-time.

13.16.3 Job description

13.16.4 Person specification

13.16.5 Selection criteria form (including interview questions) for each candidate

13.16.6 Copied application forms

13.16.7 Guide to conducting a video conferencing/telephone interview (where applicable)

### ***Interview format***

13.17 The Panel must agree an interview format prior to interview. Each interview must be planned and structured so as to give every candidate an equal opportunity of response and presentation. Questions asked must be relevant to the Selection Criteria form, job specification and application form. The agreed interview questions will be asked of each candidate; other questions may be asked if answers suggest that supplementary areas need to be probed.

13.18 Questions that could be seen as directly or indirectly discriminatory must not be asked. If in doubt, the recruiting Managers should contact HR to clarify suitability.

13.19 The Chair of the Selection Panel should ensure that they obtain from each candidate a 'pre-employment health screening' form. These forms should be returned unopened with the concluded interview pack to HR.

13.20 All candidates must be advised of the date and how they will be informed of the interview decision. They should leave the interview with a favourable impression of the organisation. All interview expenses will be paid in line with the Travel and Subsistence policy.

13.21 Members of the Selection Panel should conduct themselves professionally.

13.22 Once all the candidates have been interviewed, selection criteria forms must be completed for each, clearly stating the outcome and providing objective, clear reasons as to whether a candidate is appointable or not relating the decision to the candidate specification.

13.23 The panel should seek to achieve a consensus agreement on the candidate to appoint, and any reserves. Where there is disagreement among panel members about the suitability of the candidate(s), the panel may reconvene to interview one or more candidate to reach a final decision.

### ***Telephone interviews/or video conferencing***

13.24 Telephone interviews/video conferencing may be considered when the applicant is unable to attend an interview due to being overseas, as an adjustment due to a disability, or when a candidate is unable to attend an interview due to extenuating circumstances. HR, in liaison with the recruiting manager, will arrange the date and time when the telephone interview/video conference will take place. Due consideration should be given to differences in time zones.

13.25 The telephone interview/video conference should be carried out by the same selection panel composition as for office-based interviews. Tele/video-conferencing equipment should be used so that all panel members are able to hear the candidate's responses and ask questions. The same set of interview questions and selection criteria should be used. In some circumstances it may be possible for presentations to be performed over the phone or by video link and presentational documentation to be supplied by email.

## **14. Selection tests**

14.1 The Institute encourages the use of selection tests in the recruitment selection process. Candidates may be tested on a range of work-related activities and skills. Selection tests may be done on an individual basis or in groups. Group selection exercises will normally be used to test skills and abilities in areas such as communication, teamwork, negotiation and decision making.

14.2 Selection tests can be used as a method of further defining a shortlist of candidates. This would result in only those candidates who reach the required testing standards being invited to attend an interview. Managers, who intend to use this two-tier selection process, must ensure that candidates are advised at the outset of the

process (e.g. in the recruitment advertisement, or in the letter inviting candidates to attend for testing).

- 14.3 Candidates will be notified in advance if they will be required to undertake any selection tests and the form the tests will take. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the testing arrangements (if requested) to accommodate candidates who consider themselves to have a disability.
- 14.4 Selection tests should be used for internal as well as external recruitment. The same testing standards should be imposed for internal and external candidates, even where the recruitment processes are undertaken at different times.
- 14.5 Selection tests must provide the selection panel with evidence that relates to the candidates suitability against the criteria detailed in the person specification.
- 14.6 In order to reduce the risk of bias being introduced to the selection process, the completed tests will be anonymised by the HR Department and given to the recruiting manager for scoring/marketing. Only when the results have been allocated will the recruiting manager be notified of the names of the candidate who completed each test.

## **15. Screening the candidates**

- 15.1 Prior to an offer of employment being made (or confirmed) the Institute will undertake a number of checks to establish and confirm the suitability of candidates. Job offers will not be confirmed until the Institute has received two satisfactory references and health clearance. On the day of the interview the candidate will also need to provide documentation confirming their legal right to work in the UK.

### ***References***

- 15.2 The Institute requires that two written references that are satisfactory to the recruiting manager be obtained prior to an offer of employment being confirmed (references will usually be requested once a preferred candidate has been identified). One reference must be from the candidate's current or most recent employer (preferably from a line manager). In the case of school leavers/graduates who may not have any work experience, one reference must be from a person who can comment on the candidate's conduct, punctuality and character.
- 15.3 References can be requested prior to the interview unless the candidate specifies otherwise. A copy of the relevant job description and person specification will also be

sent to the referee. References will only be seen by the selection panel once a preferred candidate has been selected.

- 15.4 Where a candidate has indicated that they do not wish us to contact their referees prior to interview, the Chair of the Selection Panel or HR must seek their permission before doing so. A candidate will not suffer any discrimination during any part of the recruitment and selection process if he/she does not wish references to be taken up before interview
- 15.5 References will be given to the selection panel after the interviews have taken place and a decision made on the appointable candidate(s). The references should assist the confirmation of the recruiting manager's decision.
- 15.6 A verbal reference may be obtained, following the interview and pending submission of written references. The recruiting manager is responsible for obtaining verbal references. The recruiting manager, when seeking a verbal reference should ensure that he/she is speaking to the appropriate person in the organisation and asks factual questions only. It is important that an accurate record of the verbal reference is made and submitted to HR to be retained with the recruitment records.
- 15.7 The HR Department is responsible for sending written requests for references. References should be supplied using the Institute's standard form. However, references in other forms (i.e. letter or email) will be accepted and should contain all the information requested in the standard form. On receipt of the written reference and after the interviews have been held the HR Department will send the reference to the recruiting manager for him/her to confirm the suitability of the reference.

### ***Health clearance***

- 15.8 All applicants who are shortlisted and invited to attend an interview will be required to complete a pre-employment health questionnaire. The health questionnaire asks a range of questions that enables the Occupational Health Department to assess a candidate's fitness to undertake a post.
- 15.9 The completed questionnaire should be placed in a sealed envelope and submitted to the chair of the interview panel. After the selection panel has decided on their preferred candidate(s), the pre-employment health questionnaire (still sealed in its envelope) will be sent to the Occupational Health Department. All other envelopes containing completed health questionnaire will be disposed of in a manner that protects

and respects confidentiality after the preferred candidate has accepted an offer of employment.

15.10 The Occupational Health Department will advise the Institute whether the candidate is fit to undertake the post. Where there are health concerns that may affect a candidate's ability to undertake the post, the Occupational Health Department will consult with the candidate and advise the Institute whether any adjustments should be made or what measures (if any) should be put in place to overcome any disadvantage. The decision regarding the suitability and reasonableness of any adjustments suggested will be made by the recruiting manager, following consultation with the candidate, the HR Department and the Occupational Health Department. In exceptional circumstances, the Occupational Health Department may advise that a candidate is not fit to perform the duties of the post and is unlikely to be in the foreseeable future. In these cases, the Institute will not be able to confirm an offer of employment.

15.11 The Occupational Health Department will consult directly with candidates who have health concerns. These consultations are confidential and the details are not disclosed to the Institute. It is at the candidate's discretion whether they choose to disclose details of his/her medical condition with the recruiting manager.

### ***Criminal records***

15.12 The suitability for employment of a person with a criminal record will vary, depending on the nature of the job and the details and circumstances of any convictions. The Institute aims to encourage honesty and openness from applicants, therefore details of a criminal record will be used only to assess an applicant's suitability for employment insofar as it is relevant. Applicants will be considered on merit and ability and not discriminated against unfairly.

15.13 Criminal records that are considered to be 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 do not normally need to be disclosed in an application for employment with the Institute. In the event that the Institute is recruiting to a job that is exempted from the Act, the requirement to disclose all convictions will be clearly stated in the recruitment documentation. In such cases the Institute is legally entitled to ask applicants for details of convictions, irrespective of whether they are spent or unspent under the Act.

15.14 The length of the rehabilitation period depends on the sentence given – not the offence committed. After the rehabilitation period an applicant will not normally be required to declare a conviction as it is considered to be ‘spent’. For a custodial sentence, the rehabilitation period is decided by the original sentence, not the time served. Custodial sentences of more than two-and-a-half years can never become spent. The current rehabilitation periods are as follows:

Sentence	Rehabilitation period for people aged under 18 when convicted	Rehabilitation period for people aged 18 or over when convicted
Prison sentences <sup>i</sup> of 6 months or less	3.5 years	7 years
Prison sentences of more than 6 months to 2.5 years	5 years	10 years
Fines <sup>ii</sup> , compensation, probation <sup>iii</sup> , community service <sup>iv</sup> , combination <sup>v</sup> , action plan, curfew, drug treatment and testing, and reparation orders	2.5 years	5 years
Absolute discharge	6 months	6 months

<sup>i</sup> Including suspended sentences, youth custody (abolished in 1988) and detention in a young offender institution.

<sup>ii</sup> Even if subsequently imprisoned for default

<sup>iii</sup> For people convicted on or after 3 February 1995. These orders are now called community rehabilitation orders.

<sup>iv</sup> These orders are now called community punishment orders.

<sup>v</sup> These orders are now called community punishment and rehabilitation orders

15.15 Candidates who have unspent convictions are required to disclose the fact they have a conviction and the details of the conviction on the application form in the space provided. The Associate Director of HR will provide the recruiting manager with a copy of the details of the conviction only if the applicant has been shortlisted to attend an interview, or if requested to do so earlier in the process by the applicant.

15.16 If a selection panel is considering offering a post to a candidate who has disclosed a conviction and the conviction is considered to be relevant, the candidate will be invited

to attend a meeting with the recruiting manager and a representative from HR. The candidate will be entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or friend. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the nature of the conviction and its relevance to the post. The Institute will take the following factors into account in making a decision about the suitability of the candidate:

15.16.1 The seriousness of the offence and its relevance to the safety of other employees, customers, clients or property.

15.16.2 The length of time since the offence occurred.

15.16.3 Any relevant information offered by the applicant about the circumstances which led to the offence being committed, for example, the influence of domestic or financial difficulties.

15.16.4 Whether the offence was a one-off, or part of a history of offending.

15.16.5 Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offence was committed, making reoffending less likely.

15.16.6 Whether the offence has been decriminalised by Parliament.

15.16.7 The country in which the offence was committed. Some activities are offences in Scotland and not in England and Wales, and vice versa

15.16.8 The degree of remorse, or otherwise, expressed by the applicant and his/her motivation to change.

15.17 Any candidate who is not offered a position for reasons relating to his/her criminal record will receive written reasons for the refusal of employment, within 7 working days of the meeting taking place.

### ***Employing overseas nationals***

15.18 All external candidates invited to attend an interview are required to provide, at the interview, documentary evidence of their right to take up employment in the UK, regardless of their nationality (in order to safeguard equal opportunities, the Selection Panel will not see any of this documentary evidence). Prior to employment, the Institute is legally obliged to check and copy specific original documentation to verify an employee's right to work in the UK. The HR Department is responsible for checking and copying these documents and new employees will not be permitted to start work until the required documentation is provided.

- 15.19 European Economic Area (EEA) nationals and nationals of Cyprus and Malta are entitled to take up employment in the UK without the need for a work permit. The EEA is Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK.
- 15.20 New employees who are nationals of the countries that joined the European Union (EU) on 1 May 2004 (except Cyprus and Malta) will need to register with the Home Office under the Workers Registration Scheme. The new employee should submit a copy of their registration application to the HR Department and also a copy of the certificate of registration when it is received. The affected EU countries are Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- 15.21 Candidates who do not have an automatic right to work in the UK will require a work permit to take up employment with the Institute. The Institute will only make an application for a work permit where it can be demonstrated (through evidence) that there are not any suitably qualified EU residents available to fill the vacancy. Where there are other candidates who do not require work permits and are suitably skilled and qualified, the next suitable candidate will be offered the position.
- 15.22 Work permits are not transferable between employers, therefore a new work permit application will need to be made by the Institute for an appointed candidate who has a work permit with another organisation.
- 15.23 When a work permit has been granted the new employee is responsible for applying to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate of the Home Office for leave to remain in the UK. Whilst the application for leave to remain is in process the employee is normally permitted to start work pending the outcome of the application.

## **16. Selection at interview**

- 16.1 Each member of the Selection Panel is responsible for recording their own assessment of each candidate. The chair of the Panel should complete the selection criteria form with the input of all Panel members after each interview. Each Panel member should sign the selection criteria form and the notes of each Panel member, together with any additional papers should be attached to the back. Applicants are legally entitled to view these documents and they can be used as evidence in Employment Tribunals.

- 16.2 In a situation where two candidates are equally appointable and one of those candidates has disclosed a disability, the candidate who considers himself/herself to have a disability (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) shall normally be offered the post. The appointing manager should discuss with the candidate whether any adjustments will be required to enable the role to be performed to a satisfactory standard. It may be necessary for the manager and the candidate to seek further advice from the HR, the Occupational Health Department and/or another specialist adviser prior to deciding whether the adjustments required are reasonable and practicable.
- 16.3 Selection decisions must be objective and should only be made on the basis of how closely the candidates meet the person specification and selection criteria form.
- 16.4 Once a decision has been reached the interview pack with all interview related documentation including the selection criteria forms, should be returned to HR, together with all unopened Occupational Health envelopes.
- 16.5 The Chair of the Selection Panel will be responsible for contacting candidates to inform them of the outcome of their interview, if they have advised candidates that this will be undertaken by telephone. Alternatively, candidates may be informed of the outcome by letter or email.
- 16.6 Selection Panel members are encouraged to seek advice from HR about giving appropriate feedback for unsuccessful candidates.
- 16.7 Candidates will receive a letter informing them of the outcome and the relevant form to reclaim their interview travel expenses will also be enclosed.
- 16.8 Unsuccessful candidates will be offered constructive feedback about their interview performance from a nominated member of the Selection Panel, normally within 5 days of their interview.

## **17. Appointment of the 'preferred' candidate**

- 17.1 Should the successful candidate have previously worked for the NHS, HR will forward a Staff Transfer Form to their most recent NHS employer to verify any previous NHS service. A reserve candidate should be selected who is appointable should the preferred candidate not take up the offer of a post with the Institute.

- 17.2 All offers of employment should be made subject to satisfactory references, occupational health clearance and receipt of original documents of identity and immigration status.
- 17.3 Recruiting managers may only offer a salary that exists as a point on the pay scale for the grade being recruited to, and which should never be more than the advertised salary range and Recruitment and Retention Premium (RRP) (where applicable). Agreement must be obtained from HR to offer a salary above the bottom of the Pay Band. Consideration must be given to the pay of existing staff in similar posts and the salary offered should not exceed what those staff receive. A new employee who has no previous experience in the NHS at the Pay Band that they are appointed to, will normally be offered a salary at the base of that Pay Band. An NHS Staff Transfer form will be sent to the employee's most recent NHS employer to confirm their NHS Pay Band and salary.
- 17.4 An application to apply or increase an RRP should be completed and submitted as set out in the RRP policy and procedure.
- 17.5 HR will advise on annual leave entitlement, which is subject to continuous NHS service.
- 17.6 After the interviews and prior to any formal job offer, HR will, in relation to the 'preferred' candidate:
- 17.6.1 Forward the sealed pre-employment health screening' form to the Occupational Health Department for processing. Once Occupational Health Department returns the pre-employment clearance to HR, any comments on the form will be disclosed to, or discussed with the recruiting manager.
  - 17.6.2 Obtain any outstanding references, which upon receipt will be disclosed to the recruiting manager
  - 17.6.3 Issue an 'Appointment letter", which will clearly state the offer is subject to satisfactory references, Occupational Health clearance and receipt of original documents of identity and immigration status. It will also state the agreed salary, annual leave entitlement, proposed start date (if available) and details on the NHS Superannuation scheme.
  - 17.6.4 In the case of an internal applicant, issue a "Confirmation/Appointment letter" varying the terms and conditions of service (e.g. -pay band and salary).
  - 17.6.5 Apply for a work permit in collaboration with the recruiting manager (if applicable).

- 17.7 The successful candidate will be asked to send an acceptance of the offer of employment in writing to HR by a date to be mutually agreed.
- 17.8 No Contract of Employment will be issued in the absence of medical clearance, two satisfactory references and a Work Permit (if required).
- 17.9 Recruiting Managers must agree on a start date with the candidates and inform HR.

## **18. Contracts of employment**

- 18.1 The contract will formalise the appointee's commencement date and terms and conditions of employment. The contract will be sent once HR has received Occupational Health Clearance and two satisfactory references. Contracts are normally issued on or before a new employee's first day of employment. Where this is not possible, contracts will be issued within the first eight weeks of employment, in accordance with legal requirements.
- 18.2 All appointments will be made subject to a satisfactory probationary period of 12 weeks. New employee's progress will be monitored closely by the line manager during this period and will carry out an interview mid-probation at 6 weeks and then have a probationary interview before the end of the probationary period. A recommendation should be made by the line manager as to whether the employment should be confirmed or terminated or the probationary period extended, and the line manager's recommendation should be discussed at the probation interview. If a probationary period is to be extended, the line manager should outline to the employee the areas for improvement and the measures that will be put in place to assist the employee in improving.

## **19. New starters induction programme**

- 19.1 Reporting instructions will be provided for the employee's first working day.
- 19.2 The aim of the induction is to welcome and inform new colleagues to the Institute so those new members of staff will be better able to: -
- 19.2.1 Describe the purpose, structures and functions of the Institute
  - 19.2.2 Explain the information and communication systems within the organisation
  - 19.2.3 Identify safe working practices in relation to the Institute's guidelines, policies and procedures

- 19.3 HR will organise the induction programme. All new employees are required to participate in the Institute's induction programme (once notified) as well as carry out the individual induction programme. These run for each new starter's first twelve weeks of their employment with the Institute. The line manager will have an input into the content of the programme. It is also the line manager's responsibility to ensure that their starters attend the induction programme.
- 19.4 Individuals who are transferring posts within the Institute are not required to complete a further induction, however if managers and individuals feel that it would be beneficial to their orientation into a new role, HR will organise this as requested.

## **20. Commencement of employment – HR's responsibilities**

- 20.1 Once HR has issued the contract letter, the following arrangements will be made:
- 20.1.1 HR will put together an induction programme and an induction pack.
  - 20.1.2 The employee's personal file will be set up.
  - 20.1.3 On the employee's first day of service, HR will ensure that the necessary payroll documentation is completed and any required documentation is photocopied and placed onto the personal file.
  - 20.1.4 All payroll paperwork will then be forwarded to the payroll organisation.
  - 20.1.5 Once the individual's paperwork is complete, the file will be included in the appropriate personal filing system.
  - 20.1.6 A security pass will be available.
  - 20.1.7 HR will inform IT of all new starters in order that network account permissions can be set up.

## **21. Record keeping**

- 21.1 It is HR responsibility to dismantle the concluded job pack – any photocopies of application forms, unsuccessful occupational health forms and Equal Opportunities form will be shredded.
- 21.2 The ethnic monitoring database will be updated and the ethnic monitoring form completed.

21.3 The job specification, person specification, selection criteria form, advertisement together with copies of the recruitment requisition and authority to appoint forms will be retained together with the originals of all unsuccessful application forms, interview assessment forms and equal opportunity forms for a period of 12 months from the closing date, at which point they will be shredded.

## **22. Monitoring**

22.1 HR will monitor the time taken for the stages of the recruitment process, and where necessary will suggest revisions to this procedure to enhance the speed and quality of the recruitment process. HR will also be responsible for establishing and developing tools for measuring quality.

22.2 Managers and applicants are encouraged to give feedback to the HR Department on how the recruitment procedures can be improved. From time-to-time the Institute may seek comments from managers and applicants who have participated in the recruitment processes.

22.3 The recruitment and selection policy and procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure consistency, fairness and effectiveness and in the light of changes in employment legislation.

Signed:

Date:

On behalf of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

Signed:

Date:

On behalf of NICE Unison Branch

Signed:

Date:

On behalf of NICE Staff Representatives

Approved by the NICE Board:

Date:

## **Appendices**

[Recruitment Request Form](#)

[Guide to writing job descriptions and person specifications](#)

[Guide to developing a KSF Outline](#)