

NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service will adopt the following recruitment and selection procedure for vacant posts.

Panel Members should have undertaken recruitment and selection training to ensure that the panel has the underlying knowledge and competencies to carry out good quality recruitment and selection.

The procedure will be made available to all staff involved in recruitment panels. All members of staff involved in recruitment and selection will be trained in how to use it. Refresher training will be provided every three years or sooner in the event that the procedure is modified before the end of the period.

JOB ANALYSIS

When a new role or existing role becomes vacant, it is paramount that a robust and thorough job analysis, up-to-date job description and person specification are carefully prepared and in place. These help to ensure that the definition of the desired candidate is both, fair and objective.

JOB DESCRIPTION

When a vacancy has been identified, the requesting manager responsible for the post will prepare a job description outlining the various duties and responsibilities of the post. This will include:

- the main purpose of the job
- reporting relationships
- the main duties of the job
- key performance indicators of the post
- limits of authority of the post holder
- the date on which the job description was compiled or last updated.

Each time a vacancy arises, the line manager will liaise with the Human Resources Department to review the job description.

PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

The requesting manager will also prepare a personnel specification setting out the abilities, experience, qualifications and qualities required of the post holder. The criteria used should be objective and non discriminatory in nature. The personnel specification will identify both essential and desirable elements.

The requesting manager will then use the personnel specification to identify the selection criteria for the job. These will form the main basis of the advertisement, deciding which applicants to shortlist and the areas to be tested and measured during the recruitment process.

Each time a vacancy arises, the line manager will liaise with the Human Resources Department to review the job specification.

APPROVAL TO RECRUIT

Once a vacant post has been identified, the manager requesting the commencement of a recruitment process must provide the Employee Resourcing Section a fully completed Approval to Recruit Form, Job Description and Job Specification.

An Approval to Recruit Form is also required when seeking to appoint temporary Agency staff.

SELECTION PANEL

The requesting manager will set up a selection panel consisting of at least three people who will conduct each stage of the selection process.

As far as possible, the selection panel will include a mix of gender, ethnic groups, age, community backgrounds, etc.

The selection panel will not include the current or previous post holder unless they have moved to another post in the organisation at a higher grade.

The selection panel will meet for shortlisting and during this time will make themselves fully aware of the requirements of the post, agree the selection criteria, assessment arrangements and the timetable for the recruitment process. Shortlisting panels will be quorate if two panel members are present.

Once applications have been received, if a member of the selection panel finds that they have a conflict of interest in taking part in the process such as a family

relative, the panel member should discuss this with the other members of the panel and withdraw if appropriate and note the decision in the recruitment file. Advice should be sought from the Human Resources Department if a panel member is unsure if a conflict exists.

CONSTITUTION OF SELECTION/APPOINTMENT PANELS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTORS LEVEL POSTS OR EQUIVALENT.

VOTING MEMBERS

- **IN CASE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE:**

Two non-executive members and the Chairperson of the Trust. An External Assessor will be appointed by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety of Northern Ireland (DHSSPSNI) who will be a non-voting member of the panel. If deemed necessary the Trust may also appoint an External Assessor who will be a non-voting member of the panel.

- **IN CASE OF DIRECTORS:**

VOTING MEMBERS

The Chief Executive, Chairman of the Trust and one non-executive Director.

NON VOTING MEMBERS

Two External Assessors will be appointed.

SENIOR MANAGER POSTS OR EQUIVALENT

VOTING MEMBERS

Three members of management, who must be of a higher level of that of the vacant post, one of whom should be the person to whom the appointee shall be directly responsible.

NON VOTING MEMBERS

An External Assessor will be appointed by the Trust.

ALL OTHER POSTS

VOTING MEMBERS

Three members of staff, who must be of a higher level of that of the vacant post, one of whom should be the person to whom the appointee shall be directly responsible.

NON VOTING MEMBERS

Assessor if deemed necessary where the Trust would not have suitably qualified staff on a panel, especially specialist posts.

It is for the Trust to determine the need for a Human Resources representative on appointment panels: the representative may, at the discretion of the Trust, be either a voting or non-voting member.

It is essential that there is sufficient representation on the panel from the major specialities upon whose work the post will directly impinge. In all circumstances it is essential that all reasonable efforts are made to secure sufficient representation.

ASSESSORS

The Assessors role is to advise the panel which applicants are considered competent to perform the duties of the post.

- As a member of the Panel the Assessor will participate fully in the discussion and interviews but will not normally have voting rights. In certain circumstances assessors may be given voting rights where the Trust would not have suitably qualified staff to sit on a panel, especially specialist posts. In these cases, the chair of the panel will document the reasons for allowing voting rights and place on record in the recruitment file.

Assessors will only be selected if:

- a) They have appropriate professional qualifications, where necessary, and knowledge of the type of post under consideration.
- b) They hold a post for which the grading and status is senior to that of the post which is to be filled. In exceptional circumstances the Assessor appointed may hold a grade equal to that of the post to be filled.
- c) They have been suitably trained in selection techniques and are conversant with the requirements of the legislation relating to equality of opportunity.

The following persons may not act as Assessors:

- a) a reference for any of the applicants
- b) a relative of any of the applicants

ADVERTISING

The requesting manager will liaise with Human Resources who will arrange for the post to be advertised in the appropriate media.

All permanent posts within NIAS will be advertised internally through an Internal Trawl Notice and also externally through newspapers and the Central Services Agency Trawl. Other mediums may also be considered such as the NIAS Website, online recruitment sites and the Eastern Health and Social Services Board Bulletin.

All Trawl Notices will be issued by the Human Resources Department. All Trawl Notices are to be displayed on staff notices boards or a prominent place where staff have an opportunity to see them.

Managers must ensure that the Trawl Notice is forwarded to any staff on leave (of any type), secondment or career break.

If a post is being re-advertised, the treatment of those candidates who previously applied should be specified.

In times of organisational change the Trust reserves the right to internally trawl posts in the first instance.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Any individual who responds to an advertisement for a post will be provided with the following:

- an application form
- the job description
- the personnel specification, detailing essential requirements.
- a monitoring questionnaire
- the terms and conditions of employment

- any other information that the selection panel has decided to provide
- The application form and associated material will set out the deadline date and time for submission of applications and explain that no late applications will be accepted. It will also state that all applications must be completed in line with instructions
- The date of receipt of all applications will be recorded
- Requests for further information in regards to a post should be referred to the named contact person as stated on the Approval to Recruit Form for the post

SHORTLISTING

The selection panel will meet as soon as possible after the closing date for receipt of applications to carry out the shortlisting procedure.

Prior to examining the application forms the panel may decide to re-advertise the post if they consider that there has been an insufficient response. Also at this stage the panel will decide upon the shortlisting criteria to be used. All applicants who meet the shortlisting criteria will be invited to proceed to the next stage of the recruitment process. No new criteria will be introduced at this stage, although the desirable criteria may be applied if the number of applicants meeting the essential criteria is too large to interview within a manageable timescale. Discussion and agreement on this must happen prior to examining the application forms and be noted accordingly.

Candidates who have a disability (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) declared on their application form and meet the initial shortlisting criteria set by the panel will automatically be selected for the next stage of the recruitment process and not subject to the introduction of further shortlisting criteria. (For further information on the disability, refer to the Part D; Section 4 of the Managers' Resource Pack)

The decision of the panel regarding whether or not each applicant should be shortlisted will be clearly documented on the Proceedings at Shortlisting proforma. The Chair of the panel will sign and date the documentation.

The panel will also agree areas for assessment and questioning and ensure the essential criteria will be measured during the recruitment process at this stage.

At this time the panel will confirm the details of the interview and each shortlisted candidate will be notified in writing of the time and date of their interview.

LATE APPLICATION FORMS

Only applications submitted in time should be considered. Applications must be received by 4pm on the closing date. Envelopes will be retained with all late application forms. Late applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances such as a breakdown in postal arrangement. The decision on the acceptance of late application forms rests with the Employee Resourcing Manager or in his/her absence a nominated deputy.

ONLINE APPLICATIONS

Applications for advertised positions will be accepted via a NIAS approved recruitment site. All applicants who apply via this route will be required to sign their application form prior to interview to ensure that the information contained in the application form is accurate. Those who fail to sign the application form may disqualify themselves from the recruitment process.

FAXED APPLICATION FORMS

Faxed application forms will be accepted prior to the closing time and date for applications. The duplicate original form must be sent to the Human Resources Department within seven days of the closing date otherwise the application will be rejected.

CURRICULUM VITAE'S (CV'S)

CV's will not be accepted under any circumstances.

NON COMPLETION OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING FORM

The non completion of an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will not disqualify an applicant in the shortlisting process.

If an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is incomplete the Human Resources Department will give the applicant an opportunity to fully complete the form prior to the formal interview.

However, if an applicant refuses to complete the form by the interview stage the applicant will not be permitted to be interviewed for the post and the application will be rejected.

DECLARATION OF CRIMINAL / DRIVING CONVICTION

Any declaration of a criminal / driving conviction(s) should be dealt with on an individual basis and would not automatically exclude an individual from appointment. The Panel must decide at the shortlisting stage whether the conviction(s) is relevant to the post applied for and will impact on the suitability of a candidate. If the Panel requires further information about the stated conviction the panel (if the applicant meets the criteria for the post) may decide to invite the applicant to interview and seek clarification after the interview has ended. Further guidance for panel members is included in the Recruitment & Selection Procedure Guidance within the Managers Resource Pack.

OCCUPATIONAL TESTS AND ASSESSMENT CENTRES

At the first meeting, the selection panel may decide to use tests either to provide a means of reducing a long shortlist to a smaller number for interview or as part of the final selection process.

All tests will assess the candidate's actual or potential ability to do the tasks relevant to the job, and will be evaluated in an objective and equitable manner.

Candidates will be given the same tests under the same conditions, and be made aware of how the results will be used.

Requests for any Occupational Testing or Assessment Centres shall be made through the Human Resources Department.

SELECTION INTERVIEWS

The selection panel will meet before the first interview, usually at the shortlisting stage, to plan the structure and questions of each interview (based on the job description and personnel specification).

All candidates will be asked the same core questions in the same order. The selection panel may also ask supplementary questions to clarify or expand on candidates' answers.

All candidates will be allocated the same amount of time for their interview. Candidates will be given an opportunity at the end of the interview to add any relevant information not covered by the questions and to ask for further information.

SELECTION DECISION

During the interviews, each panel member will take notes on the candidates' responses to the questions. Each panel member is individually accountable for their assessment and must assess and mark all answers to all questions. Accordingly they must be familiar with the appropriate standard of response for all panel questions.

At the end of each interview, each panel member will allocate marks to the candidate and record them on an assessment form previously agreed by the panel. The assessment form will set out the selection criteria from the personnel specification and the maximum number of marks to be awarded to each criterion.

Immediately after all the interviews have been completed, the panel members will add up the marks awarded to each candidate and rank them.

The selection of the most suitable candidate will be based on the ranking order. If the panel members have placed different candidates in first place, the panel will discuss the performance of the candidates and reach a decision. At this point, the panel may take account of the actual marks awarded for particular criteria.

The assessments of each panel member will be recorded on a summary sheet, and signed by each panel member. In addition, the panel Chair will record all the recruitment or selection decisions, including the decision to place candidates on a reserve list on the Proceedings at Interview form. The Chair of the panel will ensure that all panel members sign this document.

The panel may decide to establish a reserve list in order of merit. The candidate who is placed first on the reserve list will be offered the post if the choice candidate does not accept the post and so on.

The panel may also wish to establish a waiting list in order of merit for any post/posts of the same job title and grade, permanent or temporary, as long as the post has been advertised accordingly.

Candidates will be informed if their name has been placed on a reserve/waiting list and the duration of that list. They will also be advised that they may apply for vacancies advertised in the organisation during the period of the reserve list. Waiting lists ideally will not be held for longer than 6 months

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION DOCUMENTATION

All documentation relating to the recruitment exercise, including handwritten notes will be kept securely by the Human Resources Department for a period of 3 years and as in accordance with the Trust's documentation disposal schedule.

APPOINTMENTS

All candidates will be informed in writing of the outcome of the selection process at the earliest opportunity.

The successful candidate will be offered employment subject to the receipt of appropriate references, satisfactory medical reports and proof of any qualifications taken into account during the recruitment and selection process.

A reference will normally be sought from the candidate's current or most recent employer. A second reference will be sought from one other person, nominated by the candidate, who has knowledge of their work performance. The referees will be provided with information about the job and the abilities and skills required for it. They will not be asked to make comments of a personal nature about candidates.

The successful candidate will be asked to provide proof of any qualifications which were relied upon during the recruitment and selection process. This will normally take the form of certificates issued by examining bodies, but other proof may be accepted if certificates are not available.

If there is doubt about the authenticity of a qualification, the Trust should consult with the awarding body for verification or the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) or equivalent body.

REFERENCES

Reference requests will be issued prior to interview for all shortlisted applicants who wish their referees to be contacted at this stage. The Job Description, Job Specification and a pre-paid envelope will be issued with the request.

The Chair of the panel must read references for priority candidates and discuss any concerns with other panel members, after the interview process has been completed.

The Trust reserves the right to make any necessary enquiries during the recruitment and selection process.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

On appointment to the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service all applicants will be required to undertake a Pre-Employment Health Assessment. Those staff moving to the operational posts within NIAS will be required to undertake a full Health Assessment (for example those staff moving from the Patient Care Service to the Accident & Emergency tier).

VETTING CHECKS

All applicants seeking employment within either the Accident & Emergency Service or the Non-Emergency Service are legally required to be screened by the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order (POCVA) 2003. A request for a check will be made after an applicant has been successful at interview. The Human Resources Department will then request for a check to be made. Only when a check has been carried out and the applicant is deemed suitable will an appointment be offered.

It may also be necessary to check an applicant for a post where it is deemed a "Regulated" position under Article 31 of the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 (POCVA).

CHANGES TO THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

Only in exceptional circumstances will it not be possible to adhere to these procedures. In such situations the procedures may be changed provided that the change(s) do not conflict with the underlying principles i.e. an open approach to people and their differences and appointment on the grounds of merit.

Any change must be agreed with the Employee Resourcing Manager and/or the Director of Human Resources and a variation order completed and placed onto the recruitment file.