



Recruitment Policy

All Services

The purpose of the Recruitment Policy is to set out our approach to Recruitment and ensure that we attract, employ and retain the very best candidates available in a fair and transparent manner.

Recruitment policy covers the recruitment of all staff, independent sessional workers and volunteers across the company and its operating companies.

This policy forms part of the Quality Management system ISO 9001.

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Associated Procedure and supporting documents:	

All Polaris companies are detailed in the current legal structure

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Equal Opportunities

We are an Equal Opportunities employer and we insist that all company staff involved in the recruitment process act consistently and without prejudice.

We believe in providing equality of opportunity regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religious beliefs, marital status, illness or disability.

We actively welcome applications from people with a disability, mental or physical impairment, or health condition. We have an Interview Guarantee Scheme for such applicants, which offers an automatic interview for the vacancy they have applied for if they meet the essential shortlisting criteria for that post.

Candidates who wish to utilise the Interview Guarantee Scheme through their application form will be contacted to discuss what reasonable adjustments we can make to facilitate their interview if they are shortlisted to ensure they suffer no disadvantage because of their disability or impairment.

We are proud to have been awarded Double Tick status by Jobcentre Plus, which emphasises our commitment to interviewing applicants with a disability, impairment, physical or mental health condition, who meet the essential shortlisting criteria.

Declaration of a vacancy, approval and sign-off

With the exception of Sessional and Voluntary posts, Recruitment activity will only commence when a vacancy has been approved by the Board through the Request to Recruit process.

Advertising

Advert templates for every role across the company exist and should be reviewed against the Request to Recruit form and Job Description before being amended and posted.

All adverts and accompanying job descriptions should clearly describe the remit of the role being advertised, key responsibilities, and what knowledge, skills and experience are required of candidates.

All candidates should receive upon request a copy of the advert they have applied to, relevant job description and Safer Recruitment statement.

Where a role is identified as an internal recruitment opportunity only the advert will only be posted on the company intranet page. In exceptional circumstances if a role is a developmental opportunity within a team or business area or extra duties are required as part of an existing function, we reserve the right to circulate the vacancy to an appropriate limited pool of internal candidates that are in scope to apply.

Conflicts of Interest

It is important that conflicts of interest are identified and avoided before they occur. The company recognises that such conflicts can arise in the recruitment and selection of individuals who have a personal relationship with those involved in the recruitment and selection process. A “personal relationship” is defined as one which commenced or

continues outside of the work environment including, but not limited to, romantic or family connections. To avoid the possibility or appearance of favouritism and bias, applicants must declare any known personal relationships with staff or foster parents, which will be confirmed at interview stage if applicable. Additionally, those involved in the recruitment and selection process must declare any personal relationship with an applicant as soon as they become aware and withdraw from the recruitment process for that role. Such applicants will only be offered employment if:

- The potential conflict of interest has been risk assessed and suitable countermeasures have been identified. Such countermeasures include ensuring that there are no line management or supervisory responsibilities between those that share the conflict and ensuring the applicant works within a different team, office, agency or region, as appropriate.
- The CEO, Head of HR and Agency Director, where applicable, have given express authorisation.

Applications

All applicants must complete an application form prior to interviewing. The application form is the primary document used to determine whether or not a candidate meets the required skills, experience and qualifications expected, and is therefore suitable or not to interview. A CV is not an acceptable substitute for an application form however, it is acceptable in addition to a completed application form.

Application forms are confidential documents and should only be available to those involved in the Recruitment and Selection process, which typically includes staff from within the HR team, hiring managers and interview panels.

Reference information is requested as part of the application process and referees may be contacted prior to offering an interview to a candidate.

Interest in our vacancies are welcome from existing staff members, sessional workers and volunteers across the company, however we do request that they inform their line manager or supervisor of their intention before making a formal application.

Shortlisting

The Recruitment team may pre-screen applications to remove any that are obviously unsuitable with the approval of the hiring manager.

Applications should be reviewed against the requirements as set out in the job description and person specification to create the shortlist.

Applicants who are not shortlisted will be sent an email informing them of this within seven days of this decision being made.

Applicants who are shortlisted will be contacted with the offer of an interview slot.

Interviews

Other than Sessional and Voluntary posts, all interviews will be conducted in person by an Interview Panel consisting of at least two members of staff. One of these must be the hiring manager, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The company definition of in person includes video interviewing.

At least one member of any interview panel, ideally the hiring manager, should have completed Safer Recruitment training and be able to lead on this and monitor the interview to ensure best practice is observed.

For Sessional and Voluntary posts where possible interviews should also be face to face and involve an interview panel. Where this is not possible or practicable the interviewer should at least have completed Safer Recruitment training and be at least partly responsible for supervision of the candidate if appointed.

Both interviewers and interviewees will receive an interview pack prior to interviews taking place.

Interviewers will receive, as a minimum, a copy of the completed application form for each candidate, an interview schedule, stock interview questions, copy of advert, copy of job description, Safer Recruitment statement, and a reminder regarding what ID and supporting documents they need to take. The interview panel should receive this pack at least three working days ahead of the interview date wherever possible.

Interviewees will receive a copy of the advert, a copy of the job description, Safer Recruitment statement, details of any assessments or presentations they will be expected to undertake, and instructions regarding what ID and supporting documents they will need to provide.

The hiring manager is responsible for verifying the ID, any relevant proof of professional registration and/or qualifications and taking copies or a scan of these from the candidate during the interview process.

All interviewees for the same post will be asked the same questions to ensure fairness and responses will be noted down and scored by the interview panel.

In addition to the interview questions the interview panel should take the time to review the application form with the candidate and understand as far as possible their motivations for applying, the reasons behind any career gaps, and to explore any areas of concern.

Following on from interview, the panel will consider the applicants suitability based on the responses provided to the interview questions and scores, and their performance if asked to complete a test or complete a presentation if applicable.

It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates and to complete this within seven days of interview. The feedback given should be fair, non-discriminatory and constructive, relating only to the interview outcome.

Offers of employment

It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to ensure that they are clear about the approved salary and benefits pertinent to the vacancy before making a conditional verbal offer. The Recruitment team can provide assistance here if necessary.

After a verbal offer has been made and accepted, the hiring manager must confirm this with the Recruitment team and provide the appointee's interview notes, ID and supporting documentation including any relevant proof of professional registration and/or qualifications, and appointment form. The Recruitment team will then verify so the HR Admin team can issue the offer pack and commence pre-employment checks.

Pre-employment checks

The Recruitment Team will request a post-16 form from the candidate to gather details of the appointee's educational, voluntary, employment and unemployed activity from the age of 16. The form largely replicates the application form but allows for closer scrutiny of the latter document to ensure there are no inconsistencies, and where there are, an opportunity to explore further. The appointee is expected to return this document within three working days of receiving it so as not to cause any unnecessary delays to the onboarding process.

A seven-year reference history will be sought for all appointees, which should include at least two references. We retain the right to request additional references if we deem it necessary including where:

- A reference/s is not of sufficient detail or quality
- The applicant has not worked with children within the last 7 years but did so in a previous role
- References received do not cover the last 5 years of continuous employment or a 5-year working history if not continuously employed.

All written references will be verbally verified by the HR department.

- Proof of identity including a recent photograph, proof of address, and proof of eligibility to work will be requested if not among the documents already collected.
- A DBS/PVG of appropriate level will be sought for all appointees unless the appointee already has a valid DBS/PVG and subscribes to the update service allowing us to check its status. A risk assessment may be needed in addition depending on the result of the DBS/PVG check.
- A medical questionnaire will be requested.
- A valid driving licence, car insurance and MOT details will be sought if driving is a role requirement.
- For sessional independent workers (excluding Panel Members) the appointee must provide evidence of suitable indemnity insurance.

Overseas checks will be carried out if the applicant has worked with children or vulnerable people whilst in that country, the applicant was born in that country, or has been in that country for a 12-month period or more.

Redeployment or transfer of staff

For redeployment or transfer of staff, the portability of checks between different companies within the company will be determined on a case-by-case basis. For example, the following factors will be relevant:

- Where the Person Specification of the current and redeployed job roles differ.
- Where the redeployed job role exists in a different jurisdiction/country from the current job role.
- Where staff that transfer to the company under TUPE, employment files are not normally provided by the transferor. In these circumstances company will have acquired a member of staff under TUPE legislation who has not undertaken our standard recruitment process. The company will comply with employment law in this respect but also reserves the right to undertake relevant checks for DBS/PVG as appropriate and may also request a reference of suitability from the transferor.
- Where an employee or checked self-employed worker applies for an internal role there will normally be the standard application and interview process that takes place alongside other candidates for the role to ensure all candidates are assessed equally and fairly.
- If an employee or checked self-employed worker wishes to change employment status to a role that does not require a standard application process, i.e. An employed social worker wishes to leave their employed role but continue to provide services to the company in the same or a similar role on a self-employed basis, their responsible manager can make an assessment of their competence as an alternative to a fresh application and interview, which will be recorded on their file. Where a break in service occurs, the standard application and interview process would apply, although any references still on file within the data retention period can be re-appropriated where previously verified.

Retention of data

Application forms and interview notes from unsuccessful candidates will be retained for a period of six months. Any ID and supporting documentation taken will be securely disposed of as soon as possible after the application outcome is confirmed.

Application forms, interview notes, ID and other documentation relevant to the recruitment of an appointee will be retained within their staff file for the duration of their employment with us, and ordinarily for seven years from the date of their departure.