

National Autistic Society

Recruitment and Selection

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Purpose

The policy sets out the charity's approach to recruitment and selection.

Scope

Our aim is to recruit the right person for every vacancy across the charity. In order to achieve this, our charity has adopted a value-led approach to the recruitment and retention of staff.

This policy explains our charity's commitment to the process of recruiting and retaining staff members based on good practice and our values.

The policy complies with the requirements of relevant employment legislation in accordance with current good practice.

Legal framework

Equality Act 2010

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016,

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and (Exceptions Order) 1975,

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006,

The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006,

The Data Protection Act 2018

and other statutory obligations as arise from time to time.

Policy Summary

The policy sets out how we will recruit high quality staff who share our charity's values and can demonstrate these in their behaviour.

It also explains how the charity will address any breach of this policy.

Core Principles

Our recruitment process will:

- Be values led
- Provide the opportunity for applicants to find out more about our charity
- Where possible, have autistic people either as panel members or participating in the recruitment process at different stages.
- Be based on fairness and good practice.

All staff members involved in recruitment and selection will have a duty to take action to eliminate discrimination throughout the recruitment and selection process.

Our charity encourages applications from autistic adults.

We are and will maintain our status as a Disability Confident employer and will apply guidance from the scheme to interview applicants with a declared disability who meet the minimum essential criteria.

Our Values

- **We learn from real experience.** We've spent over 50 years working together with people on the autism spectrum. No one has more practical knowledge of autism. But we move with the times and we understand that there's always more to learn.
- **We tell it like it is.** We share what we have learned about autism, so that more people can make informed decisions and lead the best lives possible.
- **We inspire.** We celebrate progress, open up new possibilities, spur people into action and motivate change.

Breach of Policy

The charity will consider a breach of policy as alleged misconduct or gross misconduct. The Conduct Management Procedure sets out how a breach in NAS policy is addressed.

Related Policies and Guidance

- Scottish Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme – HR-0031
- Disclosure and Barring Service – HR0023
- Safer Recruitment Guidance for NAS and NASAT Schools and Services
- Online Searches Guidance for NAS and NASAT Schools
- Induction & Probation Policy –HR-5007
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy –HR0005
- Secondment Policy – HR0017

Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Where changes in employment legislation occur that directly affect this policy these will be reflected with immediate effect.

The Procedure

The procedure below explains the steps to be taken to ensure that we recruit the right person for every vacancy.

Recruitment Cycle

Vacancies will occur due to several factors:

- New services being developed
- Resignations and dismissals
- Permanent reduction in an existing employee's hours e.g. due to flexible working request creating additional hours that need to be filled.

- Temporary recruitment to cover long term absence e.g. maternity/adoption leave or secondment

Identifying a Vacancy

The recruiting manager working with the HR team will determine if there is a vacancy and the best possible ways to recruit or to reorganise the role. In order to do this the recruiting manager will consider the following:

- Establish if the vacancy exists in the establishment list and in the staff budget
- Review whether the vacancy needs to be filled and if so by what grade, skill mix, etc, and if the vacancy can be a home-based post.
- Review or prepare a job description, which identifies/outlines the responsibilities and duties of the post.
- Review or prepare a person specification that indicates the experience, knowledge, ability, skills, and competencies required for the post under the essential and desirable headings.

Any new or revised job descriptions and person specifications will need to be evaluated by HR.

Approval Process

The Recruiting manager completes the vacancy notification form to seek appropriate approval.

Advertising

Once the role is approved, an advert will be placed.

- Vacancies will be posted on the website and internally using approved advert templates and appropriate external job platforms.
- All adverts and attachments must be of high quality and must include a role and team description; key details such as closing date, salary, and location
- If applicable consult with marketing team and/or advertising agencies with regards to specific advertisement campaigns - corporate branding must always be taken into account.

Applications

- Applicants will be encouraged to apply for all roles through our online job portal.
- Depending on the role, applications will either be made by
 - following a one step process where the applicants are asked to complete a long application form, or
 - a two-step process where applicants are asked to send in their CV's and complete a short application form. This allows them to show an interest in a role by providing basic details such as their personal information.

- All completed applications will receive an automatic email confirming the receipt of the application.
- screening/shortlisting can take place throughout the period of advertising provided each application is considered fairly and consistency against the criteria for the role.
- Advertisements can be closed early due to the volume of applications as long as there is indication in the advert that this will be the case.

Screening/Shortlisting

- The hiring manager should arrange a suitable date for screening and shortlisting. This must be planned in advance and should normally be no more than two working day after the closing date of the advert.
- Applications can either be reviewed as these are received or will be reviewed within 2 working days of the closing date
- All applications should be scrutinised by the hiring manager to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, and the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies. Any gaps in employment must be identified and further explored at the Assessment or Interview day.
- Recruiting managers are responsible for updating the online portal with the shortlisting outcome for each applicant, selecting the relevant status.
- Recruiting managers will issue an invitation to interview either through ARecruit or other means including telephone or email.
- Applicants not invited to attend will be sent a “regret” email once the status is selected in ARecruit by the manager.– feedback is not given at this stage in the process.
- All applicants who have a disability and meet the required criteria for the role they are applying for must be offered an interview. This practice is in line with our commitment to our disability confident accreditation. If a disabled candidate has not meet all the required criteria, then feedback must be given as to what criteria was missed.
- Where applications have not been received via the online job portal the recruiting manager must ensure these are recorded on the online portal.
- Please refer to the Safer Recruitment guidance and Online Searches guidance for further information on shortlisting.

References

- References will be requested once the candidate has identified suitable referees. For all roles in the charity, as a minimum the HR team will request the employees two most recent employment references. This must include their current or most recent employment. Regulatory requirements will be applied for roles in Adult Services and Schools.

- Good Practice – If possible, references should be sought for all candidates being interviewed prior to interview taking place.
- The online job portal reference templates must be used. For posts within schools and services, please refer to the guidance on Safer Recruitment, and our charity's Reference Policy.

Interviews

- Where the candidate has asked for reasonable adjustments this will be indicated by a symbol against their application and the candidate asked by their preferred method of communication what, if any reasonable adjustments are required to attend interview.
- Only adjustments required for the interview and assessment day should be passed to the panel members. Information regarding support and adjustments that may be required if employed should only be passed to recruiting manager once a decision regarding appointments have been made.
- Where practicable, all applicants must be advised to bring a passport/birth certificate (proof for eligibility to work in the UK) and a confirmation documents of their National insurance number, along with all relevant documents required to progress safeguarding checks. (DBS, Disclosure Scotland, Access NI). Copies of these document must be kept on the successful candidates' employee record. Unsuccessful applicants' documentation must be confidentially disposed of.
- Where a professional qualification is a requirement for the job, the candidates should be asked to bring along any relevant documents to confirm their education and professional qualifications before offering the post.

Interview Panel

- The interview panel must include the recruiting line manager and at least one other panel member.
- The same panel members must interview every candidate.
- Where the vacancy is specifically working with children and young people, every panel should have at least one person who has completed their Safer Recruitment training or has a thorough understanding of our charity's Safer Recruitment Policy.

Interviewing / Assessment

- Interviews/assessments days must be structured to reflect the requirements of the role as set out in the person specification that was advertised.
- As such, the process must adhere with the following:
- The use of pre agreed questions based on the person specification, not precluding the opportunity to ask follow up questions.
- The use of signed off assessment materials, (for assessment days) onepage profile, resilience quiz and skills tasks/scenarios. The assessment toolkit consists of

candidate, assessors and facilitators workbooks and resource's) and Template questions.

- Ensure each candidate are asked the same questions in a competent and consistent manner. The use of probing questions is permitted to gain clarification or to obtain further information if an answer is unclear. •
- Ensure any unanswered gaps in the candidate's employment history are questioned, including any periods of time where voluntary or temporary work was undertaken
- Ask the candidate for any declaration in line with safeguarding requirements and the criminal records disclosure.
- Ask for the candidate's consent to seek references and confirm if the candidate has had any formal action taken against them in current or previous employment.
- Any notes taken during the interviews or assessment day must be given to HR for secure retention or destruction.

Interviewing family or friends

- In the unlikely circumstance that a family member or personal friend (as opposed to a work-colleague) of a panel member is to be interviewed this conflict of interest must be disclosed immediately and the panel member must stand down.
- There are no circumstances in which it would be reasonable for that individual to be on the selection panel.
- Should a family member or personal friend of a current member of the team/department be shortlisted for the vacancy then the interview panel must include at least one member who is unaware of the connection in order to obtain transparency and fairness in the selection process.

Choosing the successful candidate

- Selection of the successful candidate cannot be based on appearance, health, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, political opinions or parental status.
- The person specification and job description should be used as the core guide for selecting the appropriate candidate, all candidates should be judged against the essential attributes before any other factors are considered.
- Any candidate at this stage may request feedback, so the rationale behind the selection process for the successful candidate must be clear, logical and defensible.

Providing Feedback

Recruiting/Line Managers may receive requests from unsuccessful and successful applicants for feedback on their interview performance.

- These requests should be responded to by email, telephone or letter.

- Guidance is published on the Managers Resources Page – Providing Feedback to unsuccessful candidates.
- If the Hiring Manager is uncertain of how to respond to a feedback request they must check with HR before sending out the response.
- A record of the feedback given should be maintained on the candidates' paperwork.

Offer and Appointments

- Once a decision has been made, the recruiting line manager should contact the successful candidate to verbally offer the role subject to pre employment checks, and after verbal confirmation of acceptance of the offer, then contact the unsuccessful candidates.
- Starting salaries should normally be offered at the bottom of the scale unless exceptional circumstances exists, Managers should seek guidance from HR.
- Paperwork for all candidates will be forwarded to HR within 24 hours.

HR will then issue:

- An offer letter
- A Health Questionnaire information, instructions and link. A Disclosure (DBS, Disclosure Scotland, Access NI) information, instructions and link, if applicable to the role.
- For British citizens who have been in the UK for 10 years or less and non-British citizens commence, in addition to a disclosure report, a good character reference must be obtained.
- Where an England or Scottish disclosure report is obtained, the candidate can begin working for us however the candidate's overseas Criminal Records check will be requested and must be obtained within their probation period in order for them to be confirmed in post.

HR will proactively follow up outstanding ID if not supplied at interview and obtaining references including other post recruitment checks. (Please read reference section above)

Immigration & Asylum

- All new employees (including temporary staff, relief staff and those on fixed term contracts) need to satisfy the NAS that they are entitled to live and work in the UK.
- In accordance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, the NAS is required to make certain checks on all new employees.
- Employees must show (and HR must keep a copy of on record) appropriate documentation, in accordance with the requirements published by the Home Office, which shows that s/he is entitled to live and work in the UK.
- Applicants who provide documentation in any other language than English must provide translated documents at their own expense.

Pre Placement Health Assessment

- HR Team will monitor the application and responses received back from successful candidates.
- Where a medical report has been provided by the Health Questionnaire provider this will be emailed to the line manager to take the appropriate measures e.g. Risk Assessment completed.
- Failure to complete the online Health Questionnaire within 7 days may result in the offer of employment being withdrawn.

Criminal Record Checks

The NAS must ensure that all members of staff who have regular access to children, young people and adults do not pose a risk to the clients they serve.

The NAS will use a third party provider to undertake checking of the background of applicants, and provides detail of a person's criminal record including convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings.

A guide to applying for a Disclosure can be found in relevant policy and websites.

(www.disclosure.gov.uk; www.disclosurescotland.co.uk; www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni-checks)

- The HR Team will monitor the progress of the DBS application and once the certificate has been issued the HR Team will email the successful candidate with details of the DBS update service in order that they may register for the update service which is part of the offer of employment.
- Failure to apply for either the DBS or the update service within 7 days may result in the offer of employment being withdrawn.

Overseas Criminal Record Checks

If the person has lived or worked outside the UK, the criminal record check (CRC)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-recordschecksforoverseas-applicants>) for overseas candidates also needs to be carried out, where reasonably practicable. This is not required if the applicant holds a British passport. In cases where the applicant doesn't have a British passport but has lived in the UK for a long period of time we would need to explain the rationale if we are unable to complete this check (e.g. not lived abroad since a particular date). The NAS requires this check to be conducted where the potential staff has lived in the UK for less than 10 years.

Start Date and Contract of Employment

The hiring manager is required to review the outcome of all pre employment checks and confirm the appointment can proceed and an appropriate start date.

Once confirmation is received HR will issue:

- Start date and Contract of Employment

- Invitation and Induction Calendar

A candidate may be able to commence employment prior to an Overseas Criminal Records check being received subject to the UK DBS checks being satisfactory.

Hiring Managers will complete the following:

- Requests for IT equipment and access to appropriate systems and servers
- Request for a swipe card or fob for the relevant building where required
- Arrange any relevant local department induction
- Arrange shadow shifts if relevant

Note: No new starters will be allowed to start employment or shadow shifts without all relevant checks being received.

Induction

HR will discuss with the line manager the on-boarding date to coincide with scheduled Corporate Induction Programmes and book the successful candidate onto the Corporate Induction Programme, copying in line managers and trainers once all re-employment checks and training have been completed.

Probation Period

All new NAS employees are on probation when they begin employment to allow time for them and their line manager to determine whether they have the skills and abilities necessary to do the job, and to provide the opportunity for the appropriate induction and guidance to take place.

This is usually for a period of six months, however in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to extend the probationary period. See Induction & Probation Policy – HR-5007.