



Recruitment Policy and Guidelines

Policy statement

This policy is aimed at ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status or civil partnership, race, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (these are known as protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act 2010), at any stage of the recruitment process, or in the terms and conditions offered to new employees or promoted employees.

The Organisation will regularly monitor the composition of its workforce in order to identify areas that may need positive action measures to promote equal opportunity and diversity.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that Mind in Croydon, (the organisation) employs and promotes the most appropriate job applicants and/or employees, in a fair and consistent manner, free from unlawful discrimination.

Scope

This policy and procedure covers all applicants for employment with the organisation, whether internal or external, including those applying for a temporary, fixed term, or permanent position. All candidates for promotion with appropriate skills, knowledge and experience are given the same degree of consideration. The policy and procedure will cover all internal and external recruitment and does not form part of the contract of employment of individual employees.

Creating and maintaining Equality

Mind in Croydon's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy applies to the recruitment process and must be complied with at every stage.

All applicants should not be discriminated against either directly, indirectly, by association or by perception on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status or civil partnership, race, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation under the Equality Act 2010.

Job descriptions, person specifications, advertisements, short-listing, application forms, interview questions and the selection of applicants should reflect a commitment to achieving and maintaining equality within the workplace.

We are committed to compliance with all aspects of equality legislation and work hard to build on this across all employment policies and practices. We prioritise providing an inclusive recruitment experience and supportive working environment that is welcoming to people from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented communities.

While not mandatory, we encourage all applicants to complete our **Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form**. Good quality data helps us hold ourselves to account and assess our performance.

During the recruitment process, we invite candidates to complete the equal opportunities monitoring form when they apply for a job and again if they join Mind in Croydon. All their data is confidential and anonymised into statistical information by restricted authorised personnel for monitoring purposes only. This is in accordance with the best practice of the Data Protection Act (2018).

General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) compliance

Mind in Croydon must comply with UK GDPR when we collect and process the personal data of anyone applying for vacancies. If you are involved in the recruitment process you need to be familiar with the **Job Applicant Privacy Policy (7)**.

As recruiting manager, it is your responsibility to pass on all documents used at the interview stage (including shortlisting table, tasks, tests and interview notes), to HR. Any hard copies should be handed to HR and duplicates shredded.

You must then delete all electronic applications (ensure this is done in your documents, Synology and all received, sent, and deleted emails.)

HR will keep all shortlisted candidates' applications on file, for 6 months and the successful candidate's applications will be added to their employee files. See Mind in Croydon Data Protection & UK GDPR policy for more information.

Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and the Immigration (Restrictions on Employment) Order 2004

All successful applicants must produce evidence that they have current and valid permission to live and work in the UK.

Successful applicants will not be allowed to commence employment until **originals of the relevant documents have been sighted*, photocopied and certified (signed with date)** – (current passport, birth or adoption certificate, current immigration status document). Such action is applied to all successful applicants to avoid discrimination and is made on the basis that Mind in Croydon will be liable to a fine or prosecution, removal of funding or licenses for employing someone who does not have permission to work in the UK.

**During any pandemic we will need to follow government regulations – this usually is to have a scanned document sent via email, which will need to be signed and dated before filing electronically.*

Recruitment Procedure

Recruitment procedure – for an overview of the process see **HR Recruitment Procedure Summary (1a)**.

Step 1: Before recruitment starts

When an employee leaves or there is a requirement to take on new or additional work, it is important to first consider the following:

- Have the needs of the department/role changed or is a change imminent?
- Is there capacity for some or all of the work to be re-allocated within the department?

If the answer to either of these two questions is yes, it is important to discuss this with your Head of Service and HR Manager before going ahead with the recruitment process.

Confirm the budget with the Head of Finance in line with the **Salary Policy (8)** and **Salary Grades**.

If this is a new role in the organisation Head of Service to discuss the role in the SMT and for this to be approved.

Step 2: Fill in the Recruitment Request Form (New)

Whether the role is a direct replacement or a new role funded by a service contract you or your head will need to fill in the **Recruitment Request Form (New) (2a)**. Do not start recruitment before a new service contract is signed off. For new or updated roles please submit the JD with the **Recruitment Request Form (New)** to HR.

Step 3: Write the Job Advert, Job description and Person specification

(See 3a. Writing Job Advert and Job Description)

As recruiting manager, you are responsible for preparing the job description and person specification. The job description should define the nature of the tasks, duties and responsibilities that the post will require and where the post fits into the organisational structure. Use the **JD template (3b.)** to write the job description. The job description should be written in clear and simple language. If using acronyms, please write out in full what they stand for the first time you use them.

3a. If a job description already exists

Then it should be reviewed to ensure that it still accurately describes the role and should be updated where necessary.

3b. Person specification

The person specification differs from the job description as it provides a summary of the qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills, capabilities and personal characteristics required to undertake the role. Any criteria set should be related to the job and ability level required. There should be no unnecessary criteria or words which would imply **unjustifiable bias or discrimination**. All criteria should also be able to be objectively assessed, some examples are below:

Avoid	Use instead
Unnecessary/unjustifiable qualifications	Qualifications that are statutory or justifiable requirement of the post, and add the phrase "or equivalent"
General: "X years' experience working in..."	"Demonstrate experience of delivering..."
Vague "ability to work under pressure"	"Ability to manage project relating to X and Y..."
Conflicting priorities: "to work to short and/or changing deadlines"	"Ability to deliver projects on time/manage time/prioritise"
Subjective or discriminatory criteria: "good sense of humour" or "physically fit" or "dynamic" or "fun"	"Ability to work in a team/support colleagues/work collaboratively to achieve team objectives"
General "5 years+ experience"	"At least 2 years' experience in a management position together with a background in the financial sector"
A long list of essential criteria	Concisely thought-out points to which evidence can be provided

Criteria should be split up into "essential" and "desirable". Essential criteria are what the candidate must have to be able to do the job and desirable criteria would enable them to perform the role better. If possible, this should also be split into how this will be assessed e.g. on the application form, selection test and at interview. Once the manager has completed the job description and person specification, send to HR to review and approve, please factor in time to do this.

Step 4: Advertising the vacancy

The advertisement (**3c. Advertisement Template**) should include a link to the job description and person specification. The advertisement should be kept short (no more than 700 words) and simple. As with the job description and person specification the job advert should not imply bias or discrimination for more information see Mind in Croydon's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

4a. Internal or external?

All vacancies must be advertised internally via the weekly recruitment email. You can decide whether you would like to advertise internally only or internally and externally. Mind in Croydon strongly encourage you to consider who would be suitable for the role within the organisation first.

4b. Receiving applications

The advert should specify the closing date for the return of the applications. All adverts must be advertised for a minimum of two week for internal only roles and external roles for at least three weeks. If you receive no suitable applicants, it maybe that the job description or person specification is too general or specific. It is usually worth revising with either the help of your manager or HR. It is not recommended to use rolling

deadlines as it is then difficult to assess the quality of candidates. Additionally, they make organising interviews and the process longer.

Once the advertisement has been drafted, please send this to HR with the **Recruitment Request Form (2a)**. HR will need to know where you want to advertise the role, dates for advertising, Shortlisting and Recruitment Panel names and dates, date of the interview. For HR it is important that they have this information so they can add to the HR calendar and invite panel members, giving enough time for panel members to be available.

Step 5: Shortlisting

Following the closing date, HR will send all applications to the shortlisting panel with the **Shortlist Form (4)** to be completed. Try and shortlist as soon as possible so there are no unnecessary delays. HR like to give interviewees at least **six to seven days' notice** so they have time to prepare. Shortlisting involves identifying applicants who best meet the requirements of the post as set out in the person specification, focus on Qualifications, Experience and Skills which HR will add to the form. A minimum of two people should be involved in the shortlisting process, but it would be preferable to have all three people who are on the interview panel. Ideally the shortlisting should be done separately, using the scoring system and then the panel meets to compare their lists and scores.

5a. Who should I invite to interview?

The candidates who best match the criteria within the job specification (Qualification, Skills and Experience) should be invited to the interview. Only the information used on the application should be used to decide. Objective reasons should be listed (on the Shortlisting Form) as to why the candidates have and have not been chosen for interview stage. There is no minimum number of candidates you should invite to interview if you do not receive any applications that match the job description and person specification it is perhaps time to revisit **Step 3** and discuss this with HR.

5b. Internal only roles

If the role is internal only you must consider the internal candidate/s and move through the stages in this process with the internal candidates first. After interviewing internal candidate/s you must decide whether you are going to offer them the role or not. You cannot open the position up to external candidates without first giving the internal candidate/s a decision.

If an internal candidate fits the person specification, then offer an interview. HR should be involved with the whole interview process if you are interviewing an internal candidate. You do not have to interview someone just because they are internal. If the internal candidate does not fit the person specification it is recommended that the recruiting manager has an informal chat with them to let them know why they haven't been selected and to provide feedback on their application. This will help the member of staff with their development and retention.

If an internal candidate is shortlisted, the recruiting manager should not seek the opinion of the current line manager on whether the candidate should be interviewed. You can

ask the internal candidate if their manager is aware they are attending an interview. Whilst the process is confidential it is important that line managers are kept in the loop so they can start to plan ahead. The recruiting manager can talk to the current manager about the employee and their suitability for the role only after they have been interviewed and if they are seriously considering offering them the role. Recruiting managers must get the employee's permission to do this, which may of course indicate to them that they are being considered for the role. It's important to do this to ensure good working relationships between teams.

5c. How should I invite candidates to the interview?

You should complete the **Shortlisting Form** and send this to HR. HR will send the candidate an email to invite them to an interview. Additionally, include any preparation instructions for presentations or assessments, see **Step 7** for further information.

Step 6: Interview preparation

Using effective assessment methods can help you select the best candidate for the role. After shortlisting has taken place agree which assessment method you will use, as well as an interview. Read **Interview and Assessment Guidance (5)** for more information. The recruiting manager is responsible for arranging the room, making the calendar invite, refreshments (if in person) and other logistics. If online this must be organised by HR via Teams or Zoom.

6a. Interview panel and preparation

The panel should consist of the same people who shortlisted the candidates, (all members on the interview panel should have experience of interviewing or a briefing session with the HR Manager on the interview process. The panel should be a minimum of three so that the final decision is agreed by the majority or all panel members. The panel should have a Chair which usually is the recruiting manager. Where possible the panel members should represent diversity (for example different genders, ages, ethnic backgrounds etc.) The panel should also consist of people that the successful post holder will work with.

If you decide on a task, another person should manage the task (or group discussion), once all the interviews are complete, they should be invited to share the outcome of the task results and their thoughts on how the candidate handled the task (or group discussion).

Prior to the interview the recruiting manager will need to prepare the interview questions using the **Interview Scoring Sheet - 6**, which should be written in line with the job description and personal specification (knowledge and experience). A list of examples can be found in the **Interview and Assessment Guidance** document. These questions to be shared with the panel to receive their input. If additional support is required, please contact HR.

Any questions or assessments used must be appropriate to the post and be non-discriminatory see **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** for more information.

All interviewers should be familiar with the candidate's application.

As well as providing advice throughout the recruitment process HR can also be requested to join the interview panel. Please give sufficient notice for this.

6b. Other considerations:

- Where a candidate who has been shortlisted is known personally to a panel member this information should be disclosed. Please ask HR for advice.
- Where a disabled candidate has indicated a special requirement for the interview these should be arranged in advance with attention paid to the accessibility of the building and interview room (if applicable). Contact HR if you are not sure how to proceed.
- If the role involves line management, you could also include a meet and greet section for the candidate to meet the team.

Step 7: Interviewing

The interview is a two-way process and should be conducted in a manner which enables the interview panel to ask job-related questions as well as providing the candidate with information about the post. The candidate should also be allowed to discuss/demonstrate their suitability for the post. All candidates should be given the same opportunity to demonstrate they are the best person for the role, and to ask questions of the interviewers. See **Interview and Assessment Guidance**.

7a. In person interviewing

If doing the interview in person you should ensure you give reception a list of candidates and timings prior to the first candidate arriving.

You could ask another member of staff to briefly show the candidate around the workplace – this can present an opportunity to assess interaction with would-be colleagues and give the candidate a better understanding of the environment in which they would be working. The member of staff showing the candidate round, should be invited to meet with the panel at the end of the interviews to give feedback on candidates.

7b. Taking notes in the interview

Use the **Interview Scoring Sheet (6)** to take notes. All panel members should ask questions and take notes. It is a good idea to take this in turns. Interview answers should be objectively scored Met: 2; Partially Met: 1; Not Met: 0.

Interviewers' notes are used not only for the decision-making process, but also for the recruiting manager to provide feedback to candidates if they ask. UK GDPR states that any individual can ask to see information held about them – for example, the application form, interview notes and references. Please ensure you write clearly on the sheet. *All interview paperwork must be given to HR (hard or electronic)*. Interview notes will be kept for **6 months** by HR.

7c. After the interview

Once the interview process is finished each applicant's interview and assessment performance should be carefully screened against the job description and the person specification. The decision is made based on who best meets the requirements. The final decision should lie with the Chair of the panel.

7d. Interview process for senior positions

For managers, coordinators, workers, assistants and administrators it is anticipated that following the above steps should be enough to make a hiring decision. For CEO and Heads of department a second interview is recommended. The interview panel should consist of more senior managers and trustees as well as the recruiting manager.

Step 8: Decide on successful candidate

Once a decision has been made the recruiting manager should discuss the appropriate salary by consulting with the Head of Service. Consideration should be given to the salary level sought by the applicant, experience of the candidate (see Salary Policy). If the preferred applicant is internal, consider their current salary. The salary range offered must be in the **New Recruitment Request Form**. If the offer is being made to someone who is self-employed, please contact HR for more advice on this.

The recruiting manager should give the successful candidate a call to let them know they have been successful and offer them the role, communicating the salary. If the candidate would like time to consider the offer, then a timescale should be agreed for receipt of their confirmation and a start date agreed. The recruiting manager should inform HR of the successful candidate as soon as possible

8a. Following the offer up in writing

The HR will send an Offer Letter; it should be made clear that the offer is subject to the receipt of satisfactory references and receiving proof of right to work in the country (**hard copy seen once person starts**). This should be done via email. For the UK: the offer requires proof of ID (passport) and address, which is included in the offer letter.

8b. What if my first-choice candidate declines the offer?

If the first-choice candidate declines the offer, the job should be offered to the next most successful appointable candidate either until the offer is accepted or no acceptable candidates remain.

8c. Declining unsuccessful candidates

Once the offer has been confirmed and accepted, send emails to unsuccessful interviewed candidates. If asked for feedback give positive and constructive feedback so as to leave a good impression with the candidate. We recommend that this is done over the phone by the recruiting manager. Plan what you are going to say and ensure the reasons given are objective and non-discriminatory. If you need any assistance with this, please contact HR.

8d. Other considerations

Where the successful candidate has informed us, they have a disability, reasonable adjustments may need to be considered depending on the disability. This should be done as soon as possible after appointment. HR will discuss this with you if applicable.

If you find several appointable candidates, please direct them to any other suitable roles that are available at Mind in Croydon.

Step 9: HR Onboarding

9a. Right to work

Candidates must provide proof of right to work in the UK. See Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and the Immigration (Restrictions on Employment) Order 2004 section for more information. This can be emailed initially but on the first day the new employee starts they need to show the hardcopy/passport which will be verified by HR, photocopied, signed and dated.

9b. References

All employment offers are conditional upon receipt of two professional references, one of which should be from the employee's current employer, the second can be a character reference or a previous employer. Referees should not be approached without the applicant's permission and will usually be approached only after a conditional offer of employment has been made (an offer subject to acceptable references/checks).

NB: If satisfactory references are not received within a reasonable timescale then Mind in Croydon reserves the right to withdraw an offer of employment.

9c. Other checks

- Enhanced DBS checks – all employees must have a valid enhanced DBS check; this must be no more than a year old if from another employer. For more information, please see **DBS Check Policy (9)**.
- Should a job role require relevant qualifications any offer of employment will be conditional upon production of valid evidence of qualification if not already provided.
- If, during employment, it becomes apparent that an applicant has lied about their experience or falsified certificates, qualification or membership to a professional body, then Mind in Croydon may take disciplinary action, which may result in the dismissal of the individual involved.

When can I ask HR for help?

If you have a query about any step of the process, please ask. Due to capacity HR will not be participating in every interview. Here are the scenarios when HR will be part of the process:

- One or more of the shortlisted candidates are internal
- The recruiting manager has limited interview experience
- The role is head level and above
- There is no one else to support you

Reviewed and Approved by the Board of Mind in Croydon – November 2022