



SWINDON CARERS CENTRE SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Policy Statement

Swindon Carers Centre recognises that its employees are fundamental to its success. Swindon Carers Centre therefore needs to be able to attract and retain employees of the highest calibre and a strategic, professional approach to recruitment is essential to do this. Swindon Carers Centre also recognises its responsibilities to ensure safer recruitment guidelines are followed and employees are suitable to work with children, young people and adults.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a sound framework for the recruitment and selection of employees based upon the principles outlined below, which also meet the requirements of the Dignity at Work Policy, DBS Policy and Procedures, the Equality Act 2010, safer recruitment guidelines and all other relevant employment legislation.

Management guidelines on the implementation of this policy are provided separately.

Scope

This policy and procedure covers all activities that form part of the recruitment and selection process. It is applicable to all employees and workers. In order for the policy and procedure to be effective it is essential that any employee who is involved in any aspect of the recruitment and / or selection of employees is aware of this document and follows it. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the senior management of Swindon Carers Centre, including line managers to ensure that this is the case.

Principles

Swindon Carers Centre has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment.

Swindon Carers Centre will seek to recruit the best employee candidate for the job based on merit. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job and Swindon Carers Centre.

Swindon Carers Centre aims to ensure both safe and fair recruitment and selection of all staff and volunteers by attracting the best possible candidates/volunteers to vacancies, deterring prospective candidates/volunteers who are unsuitable from applying for vacancies and identifying and rejecting those candidates/volunteers who are unsuitable to work with children, young people and adults.

Swindon Carers Centre will ensure that any and all disabled applicants that meet the minimum essential criteria for a vacancy will be given an interview.

Swindon Carers Centre will ensure that the recruitment and selection of employees is conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation. Swindon Carers Centre will provide appropriate training, development and support to those involved in recruitment and selection activities in order to meet this core principle. Any employee involved in the selection of employees should satisfy themselves that they are appropriately trained and can comply with the requirements of this policy and procedure. As a minimum requirement any employee

who takes part in any activity under this policy and procedure must have completed suitable Equality and Diversity training.

Recruitment and selection is a key public relations exercise and should enhance the reputation of Swindon Carers Centre. Swindon Carers Centre will treat all candidates fairly, equitably and efficiently, with respect and courtesy, aiming to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of the outcome.

Swindon Carers Centre will promote best practice in recruitment and selection. It will continuously develop its recruitment and selection practices to allow new ideas and approaches to be incorporated.

Swindon Carers Centre will ensure that its recruitment and selection process is cost effective.

If an employee involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, or has previously supervised the applicant as a member of staff or volunteer, they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process, unless they are authorised to participate by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Deputy CEO.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Applicants will have the right to access any documentation held on them in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Recruitment and Selection Procedures

This procedure outlines the key stages in recruiting and selecting for a position.

Preparation Stage

The recruitment and selection process should not commence until a full evaluation of the need for the role against the strategic plans and budget has been completed and agreement has been obtained as appropriate.

The recruitment of employees will take into account Swindon Carers Centre's need for new ideas and approaches and additionally should support Swindon Carers Centre's commitment to ensuring a diverse workforce by proactively seeking to attract groups that are under-represented in Swindon Carers Centre's profile to maximise its ability to meet diverse requirements.

Recruitment should form an integral part of the staffing strategy for the area and should take account of the need for any 'positive action' initiatives in process. 'Positive action' is lawful under the Equality Act 2010 and refers to the steps that an employer can take to encourage applicants from people who share a protected characteristic (e.g. a certain gender or race) who are under-represented in a particular area of the workforce, for example: placing advertisements in the minority ethnic press, the women's press and any other publication which is targeted at groups which are under-represented; including statements in advertisements that encourage individuals from under-represented groups to apply for the advertised position.

All new or changed positions must be reviewed before they are advertised in order to help ensure equal pay for work of equal value. Formal authorisation to recruit to a position should be sought before commencing the recruitment process.

If a manager believes that there may be potential difficulties in recruiting to a position they should contact the CEO for advice and guidance on the options for appropriate action.

Job Description and Person Specification

A job description and person specification must be produced or updated for any vacant position that is to be filled. The job description should accurately reflect the elements of the position. The job description includes a statement about Swindon Carers Centre's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expectations that staff and volunteers will demonstrate this commitment and adhere to relevant policies and procedures.

The person specification should state both the essential and desirable criteria in terms of skills, aptitudes, knowledge and experience for the job, all of which should be directly related to the job and applied equally to all applicants. Care should be taken when writing the person specification to ensure that criteria used do not indirectly discriminate against certain groups of applicants.

Advertising

As a minimum all positions will normally be advertised within Swindon Carers Centre. This will help maximise equality of opportunity and provide employees with opportunities for career development, thus maintaining the skills and expertise of existing individuals. In exceptional circumstances the CEO may waive the need to advertise. This is likely to include the following circumstances:

- Positions requiring specialised expertise where the manager in the department can demonstrate that a comprehensive search has been conducted and the nominated individual is the most suitable person for the position;
- Where the manager can verify that the work is required for a specific purpose of no greater than twelve months' duration;
- Employees subject to redeployment will be given access to vacancies before they are advertised more generally within Swindon Carers Centre or externally.

In certain circumstances it may be more effective to use a recruitment agency. This should be the decision of the CEO. This will, however, not eliminate the need to advertise the position internally and any external agencies or consultants who assist in the process must act in accordance with this policy and with respect to the equal opportunities requirements.

Applicants should be provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision regarding their suitability for the role.

Employees who have been in an acting position that subsequently becomes vacant will have to apply for the position when it is advertised, but in such cases the position can be advertised, in exceptional circumstances, on an internal basis only.

All advertised vacancies will be placed on Swindon Carers Centre's website and other websites as appropriate to the role. This includes the statement that Swindon Carers Centre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Selection of Candidates

Short-Listing

Shortlisting may involve the whole panel but must be carried out by a minimum of two people to avoid any possibility of bias, one of whom would normally be the direct line manager.

All candidates (internal and external) should be assessed objectively against the selection criteria set out in the person specification, and only candidates who meet all the essential criteria should be short-listed. Assumptions about the qualities of internal candidates should not be made.

Notes of the shortlisting decisions for each candidate should be recorded by each member of the panel and should be provided along with a list of candidates for interview to the CEO or other appropriate senior manager. The CEO or other manager will review against the equal opportunity monitoring sheets and if any identified disabled candidates have not been selected for interview, the manager will review their application and if they meet the minimum essential criteria they will be invited to attend for interview.

Shortlisted candidates should be provided with details of the selection process, including any tests, in writing giving as much prior notice as possible and a minimum of five working days before the interview. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, they should also be asked to advise if there are any particular arrangements or reasonable adjustments that could be made so that they can participate fully in the selection process.

Recruitment Panel

The recruitment panel will vary according to the position being filled and will normally comprise of two or three people. At least one member of the panel must have completed the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Safer Recruitment Training within the last 2 years.

The recruitment panel will normally consist of the line manager with a supporting manager, and where appropriate member of the board, or external adviser, with specialist skills, knowledge and expertise. For roles which involve working directly with carers (i.e. support practitioner, groups and activities coordinator), a carer, or young carer where applicable, may be included on the panel as an observer but will not take part in the decision making process.

Selection and Interview

All redeployment candidates who meet the essential criteria for the position (as set out in the person specification) will be offered an interview.

Selection is a two-way process: candidates are assessing the role and Swindon Carers Centre. Those involved in recruitment should consider how best to convey a positive image.

It is recommended that a range of selection methods, that are suitable for assessing both the essential and desirable criteria in the person specification are established as this will enhance objective decision making which is difficult through interview alone. Reasonable adjustments should be made to any selection testing process to ensure that no applicant is placed at a substantial disadvantage because of their disability compared with non-disabled applicants. Interview questions and the structure of the interview should be consistently applied to all candidates and should be based on the person specification.

Candidates will be required to:

- Explain any gaps in employment
- Explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the panel
- Declare any information that is likely to appear on the DBS disclosure
- Demonstrate their ability to safeguard and protect the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults

Interview questions should address candidates' motivations for working with children/vulnerable adults. Candidates are required to sign their application form to confirm all information provided is accurate including self-disclosure information which should be cross checked against the DBS check.

Notes recording the salient points of the interview should be taken, ideally by the interviewers, so that they can refer back to these when assessing candidates against the person specification and making decisions. Notes of the interview and any other notes on the candidate taken during the recruitment and selection process should be retained centrally following the selection process and will be kept for a minimum of six months following the selection process.

In the event that a candidate requests feedback about their performance in the selection process this should be arranged by the Recruiting Manager, although he or she may delegate this to another member of the panel where appropriate.

Unsuccessful interview candidates should be dealt with courteously and sensitively and will, as a minimum, receive telephone or written notification of the outcome of the selection process.

Making the Appointment

It is recognised that in many cases it is desirable to make a verbal offer very shortly after the selection process to enhance Swindon Carers Centre's ability to recruit the selected candidate. In such cases the verbal offer will normally be made by the Recruiting Manager, although he or she has the discretion to delegate this responsibility if felt appropriate.

Swindon Carers Centre recognises open contracts as the general form of employment relationship between employers and employees and will appoint new and existing employees to indefinite contracts unless necessary and objective reasons justify use of a fixed-term contract.

Appointments will usually be made at the minimum of the advertised salary scale unless directly relevant experience would justify additional increments. No appointment can be made above the advertised scale.

Offers of employment are normally subject to satisfactory references, checks of qualifications and any other checks as appropriate, such as Asylum and Immigration checks, and DBS checks (for positions that are exempted from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act). This policy should be read in conjunction with Swindon Carers Centre's DBS Policy to ensure safer recruitment protocols are followed.

Referees

Information sought from referees should be structured around the requirements of the job and the job description should be provided. It should be noted that many organisations have a policy of not providing personal references and therefore references provided may only confirm details of current appointment.

Referees will be asked specific questions about the following:

- The candidate's suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Any substantiated allegations.
- Any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, relating to the Safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

In certain circumstances a school or personal reference is acceptable.

Induction

Induction is the final stage of the recruitment process. In line with Swindon Carers Centre Induction Policy, once the successful candidate has accepted the offer of employment and a start date has been agreed a comprehensive induction programme for the new employee will be finalised.

Probationary Period

All employees joining Swindon Carers Centre will be placed on a three-month probationary period which will be the opportunity for Swindon Carers Centre to review the employees work performance to ensure that it meets the expected standards of the organisation.