Recruitment and Selection

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 The Recruitment and Selection Policy is designed to support managers in providing a fair, consistent and effective approach to the recruitment of all employees and to help managers deal with recruitment and selection effectively and consistently.

2. PRINCIPLES

2.1 In accordance with the PPA's Equal Opportunities policy, this procedure will not discriminate, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or religious beliefs, age, trade union membership, disability, offending background or any other personal characteristic.

2.2 The PPA also recognises the need for equality and diversity within the workforce and promotes equality and diversity issues and awareness.

2.3 The PPA endeavours to be an equal opportunities employer and has taken measures to ensure that any opportunity for discrimination during the recruitment process is minimised. Personal information, other than surname and initial is removed from application forms prior to shortlisting and is used for monitoring purposes only. We will also ensure that objective selection criteria are used, the decision making process is recorded and it can be demonstrated that appointments are made on merit.

2.4 Recruitment and selection is carried out in accordance with all relevant legislation.

2.5 The PPA will ensure that all employees who are responsible for undertaking recruitment and selection are suitably trained and have the necessary knowledge and skills.

2.6 The PPA uses the Disclosure service provided by the Criminal Records Bureau to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust. The PPA complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants fairly. The PPA also undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information received.

2.7 Recruitment within the Operations Division will be dealt with on a local basis therefore each Processing Division will be responsible for ensuring that shortlisting, testing and interviewing are carried out in line with the principles of equal opportunities and the PPA's policy and in conjunction with Human Resources when necessary.

2.8 All of the standard format documentation referred to in this procedure will be accessible via the PPA's Intranet.

2.9 Data is held and destroyed in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

2.10 The policy and procedure will be reviewed periodically by the Human Resources Department and UNISON giving due consideration to legislative changes.

3. PROCEDURE

Identifying a Vacant Post

3.1 Before deciding to fill a vacancy and progressing to the next stage of the recruitment process there are a number of questions to be asked.

- Can the work itself be eliminated?
- Can the work be absorbed by re-organising existing resources?
- Is there still a job to be done?
- Is it the same job as was done previously?
- Will the job be permanent or temporary?
- Can the vacancy by covered with a temporary secondment?
- Is this one vacancy or can a single process be used to fill this and subsequent vacancies?
- Are you recruiting solely to fill this particular post or are you looking for somebody with promotion potential?

3.2 Once it is clear that there is a vacancy, either on a permanent basis or temporarily, an appointment requisition form must be completed and submitted to the Human Resources Department (see Appendix A).

Appointing to a vacant post without advertising

3.3 If a post becomes available on a temporary basis due to such reasons as maternity or long-term sickness cover, the recruitment and selection process must be followed when selecting an employee to cover the vacancy. In such circumstances, should the post then become available on a permanent basis, it may be possible to waive the standard recruitment process.

3.4 This will only be the case where it can be demonstrated that the initial selection for the post was made fairly and equitably, i.e. other people were also given the opportunity.

3.5 A decision to waive the standard recruitment process must always be made in conjunction with a Human Resources Adviser.

3.6 Temporary appointments will be reviewed between 10 and 12 months in order to establish whether the temporary promotion can be ended and the employee confirmed into that position. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to extend the temporary promotion beyond the 12 month period.

3.7 Any decision to waive the standard recruitment process in total will be made by the Director of Human Resources in consultation with UNISON.

Ring Fencing

3.8 The 'ring fencing' of vacancies would normally only apply where certain jobs are at risk. Where managers are considering 'ring fencing' vacancies for any other reason they must consult with Human Resources prior to doing so.

Compiling a Person Specification

3.9 Having established that a vacancy exists a person specification must then be completed for the post. If it is an existing post then the current specification must be reviewed and any necessary changes made.

3.10 The person specification defines the qualifications, skills, experience, aptitudes etc. that are required by a person to fulfil the role. The criteria must be categorised as either essential (the minimum standards required to perform the job adequately) or desirable (the standards which will enable the person to perform the job more effectively). The criteria used should be competency based to enable candidates to demonstrate at interview how they have used particular skills previously.

3.11 The person specification should be prepared in conjunction with your HR Adviser.

3.12 It is important that the criteria used in the person specification is completely justifiable in order to demonstrate that decisions are made solely on merit.

Compiling a Job Description

3.13 Having established that a vacancy exists a job description must then be completed for the post. If it is an existing post then the current job description must be reviewed and any necessary changes made.

3.14 The job description must summarise the role and responsibilities of the post in a concise and accurate way.

3.15 The job description should be prepared in conjunction with your HR Adviser.

Advertising a Vacancy

3.16 Where external advertising is appropriate, your HR Adviser in conjunction with the recruiting 03manager will establish the most efficient and effective method of advertising e.g. newspapers and/or professional journals etc.

3.17 All external adverts will automatically be issued to all Divisions to be advertised internally and placed on the PPA's website (applicants have the facility to apply on line or download an application form).

3.18 Where a vacancy is to be advertised internally only, details will be placed on internal notice boards and will be circulated to all Departments electronically.

3.19 Once the completed job description, person specification and appointment requisition form have been received, adverts will be prepared by Human Resources Department, taking into account advertising best practice and the requirement to avoid any discriminatory statements within the advert. The advert will then be sent to the recruiting manager for final approval.

Recruitment Process Timetable

3.20 The closing date for applications will be agreed with the HR Adviser and the recruiting officer following final approval of the advert.

3.21 A time table must also be drawn up to include:

- shortlisting date
- interview date (allowing at least 5 days notice for candidates)
- testing arrangements and date (where applicable)

Application Process

3.22 The Recruitment Pack will be available by post from the Human Resources Department or by downloading from our website. It will contain as a minimum a covering letter with application form; job description, person specification and general information relating to terms and conditions. Some vacancies may warrant further information, depending on the nature of the post.

3.23 A record of packs posted and website "hits" for each post will be maintained by the Human Resources Department for monitoring purposes. All posts will also be monitored for equal opportunities purposes.

3.24 The Human Resources Department will normally receive the application forms for all HQ divisions. On receipt of the application forms applicants' personal details will be removed from the form, with the exception of the candidates' surname and initial. To minimise the opportunity for discrimination the remainder of candidates' personal details will not be made available until after shortlisting has taken place.

3.25 In the case of recruitment within Operations Divisions, application forms will be processed locally, in line with the procedure outlined in 3.23.

Shortlisting

3.26 Shortlisting must be carried out in line with the pre-arranged timetable. A minimum of 2 people from the appropriate section/department must be involved in the shortlisting exercise.

3.27 Having assessed all candidates' against the essential and desirable criteria given in the person specification the shortlisting matrix must be completed fully and signed and dated by all officers who are involved in the shortlisting decision.

3.28 The shortlisting decision will be verified by the Human Resources Department before invite to interview and regret letters are sent out.

3.29 Recruiting Officers must be aware that in the event of a claim against the Authority alleging discrimination or unfairness and in line with the Data Protection Act 1998, all written comments are disclosable.

Testing

3.30 Testing can be used to supplement the recruitment process and enable the panel to make a better informed selection decision. Testing can take a number of different formats and can include giving candidates essay type questions to be completed prior to interview, asking candidates to do a presentation at interview and typing tests/in tray exercises. Testing can also be carried out via more formal methods such as psychometric testing. Tests can be conducted by HR Advisers who are accredited by the British Psychological Society for this purpose.

3.31 Recruiting Officers must discuss the use of any test with an HR Adviser prior to it being included in the recruitment process.

Interviews

3.32 Interviews should be undertaken by a minimum of three people, 2 section/department representatives who were involved in the shortlisting process and one representative from the Human Resources Department. The officers who are involved in the recruitment process must be suitably trained, via the PPA's internal Recruitment and Selection course.

3.33 The questions to be asked by the Panel at the interview should be agreed beforehand and reflect the criteria in the person specification and also any technical aspects of the vacant post.

3.34 To avoid discrimination no reference should be made to the person's individual circumstances throughout the interview and the same basic questions should be asked of each candidate (although it is recognised that further probing questions may need to be asked in order to follow up particular issues).

3.35 The interview may be formal/informal depending on the nature/level of the post and may also incorporate alternative methods of assessment i.e. presentations.

Interview Assessment

3.36 Those involved in the interview should make notes throughout, and assess the applicant's suitability against the criteria on the person specification via their responses to the questions asked.

3.37 Once all candidates have been interviewed the 3 panel members should discuss their individual assessments and come to a consensus over who is the best applicant.

3.38 The HR Adviser will complete the interview assessment sheet which will be signed by all panel members.

3.39 The summary, shortlisting matrix and the application forms of all candidates will be retained by the Human Resources Department for 6 months from the date of appointment as evidence of how the decision was made, and for feedback purposes.

3.40 In the case of internal candidates, the Panel will nominate one of its members to contact all unsuccessful candidates and give feedback where requested.

3.41 The decision to appoint a candidate must only be made by the panel members. Where the panel is unable to agree which candidate should be appointed they should arrange a further assessment exercise (i.e. second interview, test, presentation etc.)

3.42 Where the panel is still unable to agree on the successful candidate, the recruiting manager (normally the line manager for the vacant position) will be responsible for making the final decision.

Appointment Procedure

3.43 Once the appointment decision has been agreed by the Panel, the Human Resources Department will normally write to the individual with an offer of employment (Operations Divisions will do this themselves). Offers of employment must be made on condition of receipt of the following:

- medical clearance (external candidates only)
- receipt of two satisfactory references (external candidates only) or receipt of one satisfactory reference (internal candidates only)
- proof of British Citizenship (external candidates only)
- receipt of a satisfactory CRB check (where appropriate)
- proof of relevant qualifications

3.44 Where the successful candidate is a registered health professional (e.g. a Pharmacist), a member of the Human Resources Department will confirm that an Alert Letter has not been issued by the Regional Director of Public Health in relation to the candidate.

3.45 Successful candidates must be advised not to submit their resignation to their current employer (where appropriate) prior to all of the relevant information being received and being satisfactory.

References

3.46 Requesting References

Internal Candidates

Where an internal candidate is successful in gaining an alternative post within the PPA it is not necessary for the full reference process to be followed. Managers should however obtain, from the individual's Line Manager, a completed 'Information Request Form – Internal Candidates' to obtain an outline of any issues in relation to any relevant performance, absence and disciplinary issues that should be taken into consideration. This can be done verbally providing the relevant form (Appendix B) is completed.

External Candidates

When appointing external candidates, including those from other NHS organisations, all of the necessary pre-employment checks must be completed before that person is confirmed in post (offers of employment can be given subject to the necessary pre-employment checks being completed satisfactorily). In line with guidance from the Department of Health, Managers must ensure that they have 2 employment references for the individual concerned. Where it is not possible to obtain 2 employment references, for example, when employing a School/University leaver, references should be sought from teacher's/Tutor's.

When obtaining employment references, at least one must be from the candidates current or most recent employer.

3.47 The PPA does not accept personal references.

3.48 When requesting references the standard Reference Request Form (Appendix C) should be used.

3.49 References can be obtained verbally providing the information is transferred onto the Reference Request Form.

Offering employment subject to satisfactory references being received

3.50 Having made the decision to appoint an individual to a post there should be no confirmation of employment issued until all of the relevant pre-employment checks have been completed.

3.51 Where you are unable to obtain references from the referees that the candidate has identified you should, in the first instance, ask the individual to provide alternative referees. Where you are still unable to obtain satisfactory references either verbally or in writing, you should withdraw the offer of employment on that basis.

3.52 Where two conflicting references are received, where appropriate the unsatisfactory reference should be investigated in further detail. In exceptional circumstances an additional referee may be obtained from the candidate in order to assist the appointment decision.

Receiving Unsatisfactory References

3.53 When an unsatisfactory reference is received (for either an internal or external candidate) you should consider the information you have been given taking the following points into account:

- ✓ Does it affect the person's ability to carry out the role?
- ✓ Are the issues such that it would be inappropriate for that person to carry out the role? (e.g. a person applied for an Accountancy position who has a current Disciplinary warning for fraud)
- ✓ Is the level of sickness/absence unacceptably high in line with Authority/Directorate levels (excluding maternity related, post operative or accident related absences)
- ✓ Are any comments about poor performance relevant to the role applied for e.g. if a reference highlights that a person has poor communication skills and the role involves substantial contact with other people/organisations)

Withdrawing an offer of employment

3.54 If you, after careful consideration, decide to withdraw the provisional offer of employment you must be clear on the grounds on which you are withdrawing it e.g. due to unsatisfactory references or other pre-employment checks and rescind the offer of employment in writing. This decision must be made in conjunction with a Human Resources Adviser.

Making Reasonable Adjustments

3.55 If a disabled candidate is selected for appointment, the need for reasonable adjustments to the role will need to be discussed with the individual concerned. Where it is agreed that reasonable adjustments need to be made this should be discussed with Occupational Health and the HR Adviser involved in the recruitment process.

Reserve Candidates

3.56 Where more than one candidate meets the selection criteria the Panel may decide to list second and third choice candidates. Where the first choice candidate is unable to take up employment, for any reason, the second candidate may be offered the position and so on. Reserves may be held for a period of 3 months and if there is the requirement to fill the same post during that period the reserve candidate may be offered the position without having to repeat the recruitment process.

Feedback

3.57 Verbal feedback should be made available to all applicants at all stages of the recruitment process. Feedback would normally be provided by one of the shortlisting officers (at the shortlisting stage) and one of the interview panel (at the interview stage).

Complaints

3.58 If an applicant is unhappy with the outcome of their feedback, or any stage of the recruitment and selection process they can address their concerns, in writing, to the Human Resources Manager. Where the Human Resources Manager is involved in the recruitment and selection process, concerns should addressed to the Director of Human Resources.

Appendix A

NHS

Prescription Pricing Authority

APPOINTMENT REQUISITION FORM

(PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL SECTIONS ON THIS FORM ARE COMPLETED)

TITLE OF VACANCT POST:

GRADE:

DIVISION:

IS THIS AN ADDITIONAL POST: YES θ NO θ
(letter of authorisation from the Chief Executive must be attached)

IS THIS AN EXISTING VACANCY:
(please give the name of the employee who has left)
……
……

HOW MANY POSTS ARE TO BE ADVERTISED? ……

PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF THE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS POST AND THE TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING THAT CAN BE CONSIDERED: (e.g. full time, part time, job share, flexible working hours etc.)

IS THIS A PERMANENT OR FIXED TERM POSITION? (If Fixed Term please give initial end date)
……
……

ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL WORKING CONDITIONS INVOLVED? (e.g. night working, shift working, heavy lifting etc.) Please give details:
……
……
……

ALL POSTS ARE ADVERTISED INTERNALLY. IF YOU ALSO REQUIRE THIS POST TO BE ADVERTISED **EXTERNALLY**, PLEASE LIST THE PUBLICATIONS BELOW:
……

WILL THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE REQUIRE A CRB CHECK? (please follow flow chart) Will the job holder:

Be required to work with children? : YES θ (E) NO θ

Be required to have regular contact with vulnerable adults? : YES θ (S) NO θ

Be required to be a member of the legal profession and a recognised member of the Law Society? YES θ (S) NO θ

Be required to hold a professional qualification in the Accountancy field and be a member of a recognised professional body? : YES θ (S) NO θ

Be regularly caring for children or vulnerable adults? : YES θ (E) NO θ

Be required to be a 'named person' for the Authority in respect of gaming, lottery or entertainment licences? YES θ (E) NO θ

If the answer to any of the above questions is YES then a CRB check <u>must</u> be undertaken at the level indicated: E = Enhanced, S = Standard

ARE YOU INCLUDING ANY FORM OF TESTING IN THE SELECTION DECISION, IF YES, PLEAES INDICATE THE TYPE OF TEST YOU WOULD LIKE TO USE AND WHY (e.g. psychometric tests, presentation, in-tray type exercises, typing test etc).

PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE ATTACHED AN ACCURATE JOB DECSRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION WITH THIS REQUISITION FORM (see Managers Handbook Guidance Notes for assistance).

REQUISITIONED BY: ……

SIGNATURE: …… DATE:……...

POSITION: ……

Appendix B

INFORMATION REQUEST FORM
(INTERNAL CANDIDATE)

Name of Employee: ……

Post Applied For: ……

Please give details of any particular skills, aptitudes, strengths or weaknesses they may have that may be relevant to their application (please give examples of where these have been demonstrated):

Please give details of the number of days and occasions of absence they have had in the last 12 months (please include reasons for absence):

Is this person currently subject to any form of disciplinary action or do they have any disciplinary warnings 'live' against them? (if so please give details of the level or warning and reason)

Is this person currently subject to any action in relation to the Addressing Unsatisfactory Work Performance procedure? If so, please give details.

Please give your opinion on their suitability or otherwise for the post for which they have applied (details attached):

SIGNATURE: …….

PRINT NAME: …….

JOB TITLE: ……

DATE: ……..

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS REFERENCE. THE INFORMATION THAT YOU HAVE PROVIDED WILL BE DEALT WITH IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

Appendix C

REFERENCE REQUEST FORM
(EXTERNAL CANDIDATES)

Name of Applicant: ……

Post Applied For: ……

Present salary:……

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Please outline what are / were the main duties and responsibilities of the candidate:

Please give details of any particular skills, aptitudes, strengths or weaknesses the applicant may have that may be relevant to their application (please give examples of where these have been demonstrated):

Please confirm in what position this person is/was employed:

In what capacity and for how long have you known the applicant?

Please confirm the dates this person was employed and their reason for leaving:

Would you re-employ this person?

Please give details of the number of days and occasions of absence the applicant has had in the last 12 months (please include reasons for absence):

Is this person currently subject to any form of disciplinary action or do they have any disciplinary warnings 'live' against them? (if so please give details of the level or warning and reason)

PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT

Please give your opinion on the applicant's suitability or otherwise for the post for which they have applied (details attached):

SIGNATURE: …….

PRINT NAME: …….

JOB TITLE: ……..

DATE: ……..

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS REFERENCE. THE INFORMATION THAT YOU HAVE PROVIDED WILL BE DEALT WITH IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.