

RECRUITMENT POLICY

1.0 General Aim

- 1.1** The aim of this policy is to select and appoint staff with appropriate skills and experience through a methodical selection process, free from discriminatory bias and soundly based on the principle of equality of opportunity.
- 1.2** Visibility complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by Scottish Ministers, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons and other recipients of information by Disclosure Scotland under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing applicants' suitability for positions of trust. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
- 1.3** We have a full written policy, detailed below, on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available in all formats to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

2.0 Equal Opportunities

- 2.1** We are committed to equality of opportunity, to following practices, and to providing a service, which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. We ensure that no applicant, volunteer or member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, physical or mental disability, or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.

- 2.2** Visibility actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. The selection of candidates for interview will be based on skills, qualifications and experience.
- 2.3** Equal Opportunities monitoring forms will be detached from staff applications and stored with human resource files. Following the deadline for posts the information from monitoring forms will be collated and analysed. Over a longer period the information from this process will be analysed further and may result in recommendations for improvements in the recruitment policy.
- 2.4** In accordance with the organisation's equal opportunities policy, attempts will be made to accommodate the particular needs of any person suffering from a disability within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 at all stages of the recruitment process.

3.0 Advertising

- 3.1** The extent and method of advertising will be dependent on whether the post is temporary or permanent. Permanent posts will be recruited using the most appropriate method for the post. Advertising will normally be done through the national press, professional journals (where appropriate), job centres, through voluntary sector networks, talking newspapers and other media specifically targeted at visually impaired people. Posts expected to last less than one year may be recruited through existing contacts, professional journals (where appropriate) and other media specifically targeted at visually impaired people. All printed advertising will contain 'Positive about Disabled People' symbol.

3.2 We will request an Enhanced Disclosure (see Appendices 1 and 2) for any post in which the postholder will come into contact with vulnerable adults or children. Where a Disclosure is deemed necessary for a post or position, all applications forms, job adverts, careers literature, website, and any other appropriate literature will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

4.0 Recruitment

4.1 All recruitment will be carried out in liaison with the Director of HR. Only appropriately trained staff will be responsible for the selection of staff, although team members may have an input to new recruits to their team.

4.2 Prior to advertising a new post or filling an existing vacancy, a job description and person specification will be drawn up by the line manager of the post holder. These documents should then be passed to the CEO and Director of HR and Finance for approval.

4.3 Copies of all advertising will be placed on internal notice boards and existing employees who meet the minimum criteria for a post will be guaranteed an interview.

4.4 Application packs (in the appropriate format) will be sent to all prospective candidates. These will include job descriptions, person specification, equal opportunities monitoring form, criminal conviction declaration form (see Appendix 3) and envelope, and background information on Visibility and relevant projects. Applicants are asked to return the completed criminal declaration form sealed in the envelope provided.

4.5 Suitable candidates will be shortlisted from applications received. Applications from people who do not meet the minimum criteria or who are not included in the shortlist will be responded to with a 'no thank you' letter at the earliest opportunity. The sealed envelope containing their criminal conviction declaration form will be destroyed, without opening.

5.0 Short Listed Candidates

- 5.1** The sealed envelopes of short listed candidates containing their completed criminal conviction declaration form shall be opened at this point. If any short listed candidate has declared previous criminal convictions, the relevancy of these offences shall be considered, taking into account the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences. The relevancy of these offences and an assessment of potential risk shall be assessed by the management team.
- 5.2** We ensure that those involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974).
- 5.3** Where an offence is considered a risk to the organisation and/or our service users, the short listed candidate shall not be selected for interview. A letter will be sent at the earliest opportunity, acknowledging the positives of disclosing and explaining the decision. The criminal conviction declaration form shall also be returned.
- 5.4** Where an offence is not considered a risk, the candidate shall be invited to interview.
- 5.5** References will be taken up for all shortlisted candidates prior to interview. Candidates will be invited for interview, subject to satisfactory references.

6.0 Interviews

- 6.1** The interview panel will consist appropriately trained staff and Board Members. Where possible, a gender balance will be maintained.

- 6.2** The panel will meet prior to interview to agree questions and criteria for objective scoring. During interviews each candidate will be scored directly following each interview. The applicant with the highest overall score will be offered the post.
- 6.3** Where appropriate, skills tests will form part of the interview. However, psychometric testing will only be used if the test has been validated in relation to the job, is free of sex or racial bias and is administered and validated by a suitably trained employee.
- 6.4** If any candidate has previously declared criminal convictions, the chair of the interview panel will declare at the beginning of the interview that the criminal convictions shall be discussed. The purpose of this discussion is to clarify information relating to the circumstances and background of the offences, or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of a subsequent offer of employment.
- 6.5** If necessary candidates will be asked to return for a second interview.

7.0 Post Interview and Appointment

- 7.1** When a suitable candidate has been identified, an offer of a job, specifying salary, must be made subject to two acceptable references, receipt of CRBS Disclosure Certificate and sight of qualification documents. The candidate may also be asked to undergo a medical examination prior to confirmation. The letter of offer should also contain terms and conditions and include a form of acceptance, which the candidate should sign and return. Should satisfactory references or Disclosure not be received the panel can either appoint the next most suitable candidate or re-advertise.
- 7.2** We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the subject of that Disclosure before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

- 7.3 All unsuccessful candidates should be informed as soon as confirmation of the new appointment is received. Feedback of interview performance should also be made available on request and this should stress where the panel recorded clear evidence of the applicant's strengths and highlight areas of weakness. All candidates' information will be kept for a maximum period of 6 months, subject to the Policy on Disclosure Information and Personal Data.**
- 7.4 In the case of internal promotions or job changes, the employee who is to be promoted must be made aware of the conditions attached to the promotion, e.g. salary, probationary period, what will happen should they be unsatisfactory in the new role, etc.**
- 7.5 When the start date has been arranged the pre-induction process must be initiated by the team co-ordinator, Director or CEO. The length of the probationary period will be determined by the levels of skills and responsibility demanded by the job and may be split into three periods, not exceeding six months in total.**
- 7.6 Where a suitable candidate with previous criminal convictions is appointed, they shall be informed of the Policy on Disclosure Information and Personal Data. The candidate will be reassured that their criminal conviction declaration and Disclosure Information shall be kept confidential and duly shredded, according to the aforementioned policy.**
- 7.7 New employee's progress will be monitored closely by their team co-ordinator, director or CEO and they will be interviewed at the end of each probation period. At this time the co-ordinator will make a recommendation to the management team as to whether the employment should be continued. If an employee has failed to meet the necessary standards a decision will be made to either terminate the contract of employment or extend the probationary period. If the period is extended the employee will be notified in writing of the deficiencies in performance and the date at which the extended probationary period will end.**

APPENDIX 1

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, was established to create equal access to employment for ex-offenders. Provided they have not been re-convicted for another offence, their conviction is said to become spent and to be treated as though it never existed. However, this only covers sentences up to 2½ years.

Nevertheless, the Exceptions Order 1975, allows Visibility to be exempted from this Act, as we carry out work that brings the person into contact with vulnerable groups, namely children and young people, old and elderly people and people with a visual impairment.

This Exceptions Order, thus overrules rights in relation to “spent convictions” and these must therefore be disclosed.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily stop ex-offenders from working with Visibility. This will depend on the nature of the position, together with the circumstances and background of their offences.

APPENDIX 2

Police Act 1974 (Part V)

In line with the above and dependent on the nature of the position, Visibility will ask successful applicants to permit either Standard or Enhanced Disclosures. Details of what happens to this information is available in the organisation Policy on Disclosure Information and Personal Data.

A Standard Disclosure will contain details of all convictions on record, whether “spent” or “unspent” under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Enhanced Disclosures shall also contain the above, but in addition will contain details of non-conviction information held locally by the Police, where this is considered relevant to the post or voluntary work being sought.

APPENDIX 3

Criminal Convictions Declaration Form (VPC 053), attached.