



RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

WLHP will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, on tape or in another non-written format.

1. POLICY PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy sets out the West Lothian Housing Partnership's (WLHP) approach to recruitment and selection of employees. This policy applies in respect of all WLHP employees. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

2. POLICY PRINCIPLES

WLHP actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from any candidates with the right mix of behaviours, skills and potential. The selection of candidates for interview will be based on appropriate skills, qualifications and experience.

3. TRAINING

All employees who are required to take part in the interviewing process will be trained and be competent in recruitment and selection and equal opportunities.

4. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

WLHP aims to be an equal opportunities employer with specific procedures in place to meet its obligations under equal opportunities legislation. This policy encompasses the principles outlined in WLHP's Equal Opportunities Policy. A nominated officer will be given responsibility for the monitoring of all equal opportunities matters in relation to recruitment matters. WLHP will act ethically and conduct its affairs with honesty and integrity and avoid conflicts of interest ensuring compliance with the Scottish Housing Regulator standards.

Advice should be sought on any legislative issues from Employee Relations.

5. PROCEDURE FOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The steps set out below will be followed in the recruitment and selection process for employment in WLHP. Certain posts within WLHP are subject to disclosure checks - please refer to the WLHP Disclosure Scotland Policy before starting the procedure for recruitment and selection.

5.1 Review of Vacancy

The WLHP Management Board and the LHOs' Management Board will annually review the staffing plan of WLHP in accordance with the overall Business Plan and Objectives and subsequently approve any plans for major organisational change. The relevant trade union/s will be consulted on any proposed changes. In order to ensure that WLHP achieves the best from and for its employees, it will delegate the authority for reviewing vacancies to local managers.

Local managers will undertake a number of steps prior to the decision to recruit, with advice from Employee Relations, including (i) a review of whether the post is still required, its financial implications, its grading, the post requirements (based on existing job profile, discussions with existing post holder and other relevant stakeholders), (ii) the production of a revised and updated job profile (where appropriate) prior to the advertising of the post and (iii) where agreed, ensuring that the designated authority has reviewed and signed off permission to recruit.

The relevant trade union/s will be consulted on any proposed changes.

When creating new job profiles or making amendments to existing profiles managers should be mindful of the need for profiles to reflect our values; namely that as an organisation we are passionate, inspirational and ambitious. These values underpin everything we do and reflect and re-enforce the attributes we want our staff to demonstrate each.

The job profile will outline the outputs required of the post, its main purpose and interdependencies, the line manager the postholder will report to and any staff management responsibilities. Along with the contract of appointment, it will form the basis of the legal contract between WLHP and the successful applicant. Other details in the job profile will include an equal opportunities statement and the title, grade, salary scale and status of the post.

The job profile will form the basis for the selection of the successful candidate by the selection panel. It will define selection criteria relevant to the requirements of the post, thereby minimising subjective judgements on the part of the selection panel. This reduces the potential for discrimination and also provides demonstrable evidence of WLHP's recruitment processes.

The job profile will also list the person specification to be considered. The range of criteria may vary depending on the position, but most specifications will normally include a minimum of: experience, knowledge required, qualifications/training, specific skills and abilities.

Essential criteria are those without which it is impossible to do the job. They are required from the first day of the job. The absence of any essential requirements will exclude a candidate from further consideration.

WLHP job profiles will not include requirements related to ethnic or national origin, gender, marital or civil partnership status, age, domestic circumstances, religious or ethnic beliefs, sexual orientation or disability unless these are directly related to the particular requirements of the job and fall within one of the lawful exemptions provided for within the Equality Act 2010.

5.2 Recruitment

Vacancies will normally be advertised both internally and externally, except where there is a need to avoid potential redundancies or when a similar vacancy has been advertised within the last eight weeks and where it is known that there are candidates who match the shortlisting criteria, or where there is an appropriate candidate identified as requiring a welfare move. In a redundancy situation, where a vacancy arises, those who are available for redeployment should be considered in the first instance; moving to external recruitment only if a suitable candidate is not available.

5.3 Advertisement

Managers will liaise with Employee Relations on the content and method of advertising to be used.

The job profile will provide the basis for any advertisement. This will outline the principal outputs of the post and requirements of the post holder.

Advertisements will contain information on place of work, job title, salary/wage scale, experience, skills and qualifications required, provide a brief description of the role and of WLHP, confirm whether the post is full or part-time, temporary, fixed term or permanent, confirm WLHP's commitment to the principle of equality of opportunity and state whether a disclosure check is necessary.

One or more of the following sources will normally be used, based on the nature and seniority of the post: national and local press (as appropriate), job centres city-wide, professional periodicals e.g. Inside Housing, community organisations and publications and Internet and Intranet sites.

In addition, WLHP may target a specialist source appropriate to the requirements of the post. In deciding placement of advertisements, WLHP will have regard to any groups which are currently underrepresented within the workforce and will seek to ensure that adverts are placed in locations that will encourage applications from these parts of the community.

5.4 Application for Posts

To allow each candidate equal opportunity to demonstrate how they meets the requirements of the post, applicants will be required to complete a standard application form or submit a CV as appropriate. This application form will be accompanied by a monitoring form which can be returned separately. This monitoring information will allow WLHP to assess how well we are meeting our equal opportunities targets and commitments.

All requests for application forms will be responded to within two working days. Applicants should receive: application form; job profile including the person specification; equal opportunities statement, guidelines and questionnaire; envelope for return of completed equal opportunities questionnaire and any other appropriate information.

WLHP may, in addition, send out other material appropriate to a particular post. For example, in the case of posts that require a disclosure check (please see Procedure for the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders section below) prior to appointment, the relevant documentation will be included in the application pack along with guidance on how this information will be used. A standard cover letter will also be included, advising of the closing date and the proposed timescale for short-listing and interviews

6. SELECTION/INTERVIEWING

6.1 Shortlisting

All applications will be acknowledged.

Shortlisting will be carried out by the same panel that will carry out interviews for the post. Shortlisting decisions will be based on a consensus view. WLHP will act ethically and conduct its affairs with honesty and integrity and avoid conflicts of interest and where a member of the selection panel has a conflict of interest (e.g. they are a relative of one of the candidates), another officer with similar skills or experience will stand in.

All applicants will be assessed against the job profile's person specification to determine suitability for interview.

While an applicant's attendance record can be discussed at interview and may be taken into consideration when making a final decision it will not be used as a criterion for shortlisting.

6.2 Procedures for Shortlisting Disabled Applicants

Any applications from disabled persons will be judged against the essential job profile criteria for the post and if they meet the requirements then they will be granted an interview. In accordance with the "Positive about Disabled" Scheme, all disabled applicants who meet the basic criteria will be interviewed.

6.3 Interviewing

Interviews will generally be arranged within two weeks of the advertisement closing date where practicable. Interviews will, whenever possible, be carried out by all members of the shortlisting panel. The interview panel will, where practicable, be representative of race and gender and consist of a minimum of two people. Where interviews are held for Senior level posts the interviews will also include a representative from Employee Relations.

Where a member of the interview panel has a conflict of interest, another officer with similar skills or experience will stand in.

Interviews will be carried out in a private location, without interruption.

Interviews will be based on the criteria identified in the job profile. A list of questions to be used will be prepared in advance and will be asked of every candidate with answers recorded on the Interview Record Sheet. These will then be used to complete the Interview Assessment Form.

All interviewers will be familiar with: the job profile, the advert, the application form, the Interview Record Sheet, the Interview Assessment Form and the content and the structure of the interview process, including the prepared questions set from the job profile.

The purpose of questions posed at the interview will be to assess applicants' suitability against the job profile and provide additional information to supplement or clarify the Application Form. Comparable questions will be asked of all the applicants being interviewed.

Where it is necessary to obtain information on personal circumstances (e.g. in relation to a selection criterion such as flexibility to work irregular hours) or on whether a candidate will be able to work well with colleagues, questions about this will be asked equally of all candidates and, like other questions, will relate only to the job requirement.

Applicants will not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants will not be asked about matters concerning age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation without the approval of Employee Relations (who will first consider whether such matters are relevant and may lawfully be taken into account).

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6.4 Interviewing applicants with a disability

Disabled applicants who identify themselves at the application stage will be provided with appropriate interview arrangements (such as an accessible interview room) to enable candidates to compete on an equal basis.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which will only be used with Employee Relations approval. For example:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments);
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment;
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons;
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).

6.5 Assessment

Once the interview is complete, the panel will evaluate all relevant information on each applicant and complete an Interview Assessment Form.

7. APPOINTMENT

The selection panel will select the best candidate and agree the starting salary on the spinal point and provisional start date. The terms and conditions of employment will be those agreed for use by WLHP's Management Board.

The letter of appointment, together with the Conditions of Employment document, will give details of job title and grade, start date, salary offered, hours and place of work and will confirm that the offer is subject to (i) 2 satisfactory references (1 reference for internal candidates) and disclosure information. (ii) production of relevant document(s) in terms of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and (iii) a satisfactory report being received from the Occupational Health Service in relation to the medical questionnaire.

References and other checks will then be requested. The interview panel will not see references until after the interviews take place.

If a reference or references are unfavourable, the interview panel will judge whether this is relevant to any of the criteria in the Person Specification. If it is relevant the panel must then judge whether another applicant is better suited to the position.

Where required candidates will be asked to produce documentary evidence of qualifications relevant to the vacancy.

8. MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Appointments will be subject to medical fitness for the job. Successful applicants will be required to complete a confidential medical questionnaire, which will be returned to the Occupational Health Service who will determine if a medical is necessary.

Where there is concern as to the successful applicant's fitness, a medical examination by a Medical Practitioner will take place prior to the confirmation of appointment. Reference will be made to WLHP's Code of Practice on the Employment of Disabled People. Any offer of employment will be made conditional on completion of a medical questionnaire and on a satisfactory report being received from the Occupational Health Service in relation to the medical questionnaire. Advice will be sought from Employee Relations before the withdrawal of any offer of employment on the back of the results of such medical questionnaire or report.

9. EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTATION

Where applicable, checks will be undertaken to ensure that GHA only offers employment opportunities to people who have permission to live and work within the United Kingdom. Appropriate documentation will be copied or retained and checked. All documents must be original, valid and current. The documents provided must show that the holder is entitled to do the type of work being offered.

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Candidate's must provide one of the documents or combinations of documents as specified in List A, or one of the documents or combinations or documents, specified in List B. No other documents of combinations can be accepted.

9.1 List A Documents

The following are examples of the documents which candidates will be asked to provide if they are not subject to immigration control:-

- a passport showing that they are a British citizen or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having the right of abode in the UK;
- a passport or national identity card showing that they are a national of the European Economic Area ("EEA") or Switzerland;
- a Registration Certificate or Document Certifying Permanent Residence issued by the Home Office to a national of an EEA country or Switzerland;
- a Permanent Residence Card issued by the Home Office to the family member of a national of an EEA country or Switzerland
- a current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder indicating that the person named is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK;
- a current passport endorsed to show that the holder is exempt from Immigration Control, is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK;
- a current Immigration Status Document issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the named person is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer;
- a full birth or adoption certificate issued in the UK which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents or adoptive parents, together with an official document giving their permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer;
- a birth or adoption certificate issued in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland together with an official document giving their permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer;
- a certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen together with an official document giving their permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.

9.2 List B Documents

The following are examples of the documents which candidates will be required to show where they are subject to immigration control:-

Group 1 – Documents where a time limit applies to the duration of the applicants stay

- a current passport endorsed to show that the holder is allowed to stay in the UK and is currently allowed to do the type of work in question;
- a current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder which indicates that the named person can stay in the UK and is allowed to do the work in question;

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- a current Residence Card (including an Accession Residence Card or a Derivative Residence Card) issued by the Home Office to a non-EEA national who is a family member of a national of an EEA country or Switzerland or who has a derivative right of residence;
- a current Immigration Status Document containing a photograph issued by the Home Office to the holder with a valid endorsement indicating that the named person may stay in the UK, and is allowed to do the type of work in question, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.

Group 2 – Documents where the expiry date of these documents is 6 months or less

- A Certificate of Application issued by the Home Office under regulation 17(3) or 18(A) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006, to a family member of a national of a EEA country or Switzerland stating that the holder is permitted to take employment which is less than 6 months old together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service;
- An Application Registration Card issued by the Home Office stating that the holder is permitted to take the employment in question, together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service;
- A Positive Verification Notice issued by the Home Officer Employer Checking Service to the prospective employer, which indicates that the named person may stay in the UK and is permitted to do the work in question.

On receipt of the original documents, their validity will be checked. We are required to satisfy ourselves that the candidate is the person named on the presented document. Once we have done so, copies of the relevant pages will be taken and retained for the duration of employment and for a period of two years after employment has ended.

Where a candidate falls within any of the List B categories (i.e. where they are subject to immigration control), the checking of original documents will be repeated within 12 months of their start date and annually thereafter (every 6 months for List B Group 2 documents), until such time as they no longer have any limit on the duration of their stay in the UK.

10. ADVISING CANDIDATES OF THE OUTCOME

When an offer of employment has been made, a member of the selection panel will advise the successful candidate by telephone first and in writing soon after. All unsuccessful applicants will be informed of this in writing.

11. WRITTEN STATEMENT OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All employees will be given written particulars of terms of employment within 8 weeks.

12. RECORD OF RECRUITMENT PROCESS

A clear record of all decisions relating to advertising, short-listing and selection will be maintained by the selection panel and retained for one year following interview. Thereafter personal information will be destroyed.

13. FEEDBACK TO CANDIDATES

All unsuccessful external and internal candidates will automatically be offered the opportunity to discuss the reasons for their non-selection. Where appropriate i.e. where the successful and an unsuccessful candidate work in the same office, it may be necessary to speak to the unsuccessful candidate as well, prior to his/her receiving notification in writing.

Where requested by an interview candidate, a member of the selection panel will provide feedback on the decision made. This will be given with reference to the person specification identified for the job profile. Feedback should be requested within 2 weeks of notification of the interview outcome.

14. MONITORING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

WLHP will monitor the results of its recruitment policy in relation to a number of factors. Once the recruitment and selection process is completed, a monitoring report for the post should be prepared. This will include where the post was advertised, gender of applicants, number of applicants with disabilities and profile of ethnic origin. The report will include information in the following categories: all applicants, all shortlisted applicants and all successful applicants.

These reports will be held in a secure location by Employee Relations. Reports will be provided on a regular basis to the Board demonstrating overall equality monitoring (while protecting anonymity). These reports will fit within the monitoring framework which WLHP will establish for all its policies.

15. INDUCTION PROGRAMME

WLHP will provide an induction for all new recruits and for those appointed to new posts from within the organisation. This will include information on the organisation, its purpose and business plan, introductions to relevant people throughout the organisation, rules of the organisation, information on Trade Unions and any training required in relation to equal opportunities, health and safety or occupational hazards. Details of this will be provided with the offer letter.

16. TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT

The Chief Executive may authorise recruitment of temporary posts as required, without Board approval. These appointments will be reported for information to the Management Board.

17. JOB SHARING

For job sharing posts, the recruitment and selection procedure will be exactly the same as described above. It is good practice for the existing job sharer to meet his/her prospective partner prior to appointment.

18. MONITORING AND REVIEW

These guidelines will be reviewed no less than every three years. WLHP will monitor both its own performance and that of LHOs. Reports will be made to the Management Board on an annual basis. Key information will include:-

- number of appointments advertised and number of appointments made;
- numbers of applicants by advertisement source and numbers taken to interview from each source;
- time taken to make appointments from the date that the decision is taken to appoint until the letter of appointment is issued (to identify difficulties in skills recruitment);
- equal opportunities monitoring by applicant, short-listed applicant and successful candidate (including sex, ethnic origin, marital status, disability, age).

19. PROCEDURE FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

WLHP 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. WLHP will treat all applicants for positions fairly and will not discriminate unfairly against the subject on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

There are some posts within WLHP that are subject to disclosure checking and these are identified in WLHP Disclosure Scotland Policy.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily debar individuals from working with WLHP. This will depend on the nature of the position, together with the circumstances and background of the offences. WLHP aims to protect the vulnerable by safe recruitment.

Where a criminal conviction check is to form part of the recruitment process, WLHP will ask all applicants selected for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. A separate envelope will be provided and this should be sent to a designated person within WLHP. WLHP will ensure that this information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, questions will only be asked about convictions which are defined as "unspent" in terms of that Act, unless the nature of the position is such that we are entitled to ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record (please refer to WLHP Disclosure Scotland Policy).

At interview, or under separate discussion, we undertake to ensure an open and measured discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned. Failure to reveal information that WLHP considers relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

WLHP will request a standard or enhanced disclosure check only where this is considered appropriate and relevant to the particular position. This will be based on a thorough risk assessment of that position. Where a disclosure is deemed necessary for a post or position, all application forms, job adverts, careers literature, website, and any other appropriate literature will contain a statement that a disclosure check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

It is customary to make any offer of employment which is subject to disclosure checking conditional on receipt of a satisfactory disclosure check. Should the disclosure check prove unacceptable, then no formal contract exists and the offer may be withdrawn.

WLHP will discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure check with the subject of the check before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

We undertake to make every subject of a disclosure check aware of the existence of this policy, and to make a copy available on request.

WLHP ensures that all those in WLHP who are 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).

20. PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS

WLHP is committed to practising fair and transparent recruitment processes, which ensure that the best candidates are appointed to vacant posts. If an individual believes that he/she has been treated less favourably, that WLHP's Recruitment and Selection Policy has not been adhered to, or that there has been a breach of WLHP's Equal Opportunities Policy, the following process will apply.

20.1 Making a Complaint

The individual should raise the complaint in writing to the Employee Relations Leader as soon as possible following the recruitment process and within 2 weeks of the notification of

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the outcome of the application for employment. The grounds of the complaint of less favourable treatment must be detailed.

The Employee Relations Leader or nominated officer will assess the relevance of the complaint and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and either:-

- Include a response to the complaint; or
- Identify the nominated officer investigating the complaint and provide a timescale by which WLHP will respond in writing (usually within 2 weeks of receipt of the letter).

Where the Employee Relations Leader was involved in the recruitment process, the complaint should be made in writing to the Group Director of Finance. If the Group Director of Finance was involved in the recruitment process the complaint should be made in writing to the Chief Executive.

20.2 Investigation

Where practicable, the nominated officer will initiate an investigation of the complaint within 3 working days of the receipt of the letter. He/she will:-

- Interview the chair of the recruitment interview;
- Interview any other appropriate person who was involved in the recruitment process;
- Where it is considered appropriate, interview the complainant. The complainant may be accompanied by a certified trade union representative or an existing WLHP employee of their choice if he/she so wishes.

The investigating officer will prepare a written report of the investigation to the Employee Relations Leader. This will detail what happened and will identify any areas where WLHP's policies were not adhered to. The investigating officer will recommend any remedial action that may be required.

20.3 Follow Up Action

The Employee Relations Leader will consider the report and authorise any remedial action to be taken. The nominated officer will respond to the complainant in writing. In some occasions it may be appropriate for the complainant to be met in person.

The nominated officer will inform the complainant of the result of the investigation, taking into account applicant confidentiality. This will include an apology where appropriate and any remedial action that has been introduced as a result of the complaint. Where the complaint is not upheld, this should be explained to the complainant.