

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Policy name | Recruitment and Selection Policy |
| Operational from | May 2023 |
| Next review date | May 2025 |
| Responsible staff member(s) | Aimz Rushton (Chair of the Board) aimz.rushton@nsun.org.uk Jen Beardsley (Interim Chief Executive Officer) jen.beardsley@nsun.org.uk |
| Associated policies | Data Protection Policy Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Family Friendly Policies Privacy Policy |
| Privacy | External |

Contents

1. Introduction
 2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 3. Person Specification
 4. Job/role Description
 5. Adverts
 6. Recruitment/Application/Information Pack
 7. Applications
 8. Internal applicants
 9. Shortlisting
 10. Task
 11. Interview
 12. Appointing
 13. Background checks, Right to work in the UK and References
 14. Recording notes and Confidentiality
- Appendix 1- DBS checks and working with staff with criminal convictions**

1. Introduction

We aim to attract, recruit, select and appoint the best candidates for the job - staff, trustee and volunteer roles at NSUN - and to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in order to build, develop and sustain a team who achieve the objectives of NSUN.

2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We are an equal opportunities employer and seek to encourage applications from all sections of the community, especially those which are under-represented in our workforce. NSUN will take positive action in recruitment advertising by utilising the relevant sections of The Equality Act, when this is relevant.

There are clear person specifications and job descriptions for all roles and candidates will be shortlisted according to these criteria. All selection decisions will be based on skills, knowledge and experience. We recognise that as well as job related qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience, applicants may have transferrable experience, knowledge and skills from other aspects of life experience, including but not limited to voluntary roles. This ensures we are following a fair and equal recruitment process.

All NSUN appointments and promotions will be based on merit and no job/role applicant will be unfairly discriminated against on grounds of a 'protected characteristic' as defined in NSUN's separate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Any disclosure of health problems, including mental health or substance misuse problems will only be discussed following a job/role offer. NSUN will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace and to employment arrangements so that a disabled person is not at any substantial disadvantage.

3. Person Specification

This is a statement of the specific skills, knowledge, experience and attributes required to undertake the tasks involved in the job/role. It contains known, appropriate, justifiable and agreed criteria which are used for selecting candidates to be shortlisted and making decisions after the interview.

Person specifications are worded to ensure that criteria are relevant to the job/role, and that they do not discriminate on any grounds other than the ability to do that job/role. Due to being a user-led mental health organisation, it is essential that people have personal experience of mental ill health, distress or trauma.

4. Job/role Description

This sets out the main purpose of the job/role and shows the responsibilities and accountabilities of the role as well as the main tasks/duties.

NSUN signed up to 'show the salary' and as such salaries will always be shown in job descriptions and job adverts. Job descriptions are worded to ensure they are accessible to everyone and that criteria are relevant to the job, and that they do not discriminate on any grounds other than the ability to do that job.

5. Adverts

Adverts are designed to attract as wide a group of suitable applicants as possible, using accessible language. Adverts are placed externally and are shared with online networks including those led by people from marginalised and/or racialised communities.

Adverts should reflect the main elements of the job/role description and person specification and should also include:

- Name of the organisation
- Job/role title
- Salary details (or if it's a voluntary role)
- The type of contract (e.g. permanent, fixed-term) and hours (e.g. full-time, part-time, flexible, casual etc), home-based in the UK
- Brief outline of tasks/duties and requirements
- How to apply
- Closing date/deadline and interview date
- Equal opportunities statement
- Whether or not a DBS is required and the level of check which will be applied for (see Appendix 1 to this policy)

Where appropriate, the job/role may be placed with recruitment agencies or specialist select and search consultancies, which may include Charityworks. Where these providers are used, they will be given a brief, including the job description and person specification to ensure that the requirements are fully understood and candidates suitably matched to these requirements. Fees for using any agency or consultancy must be negotiated in advance and their terms of business received and agreed prior to authorising them to start the search. When recruitment agencies are used the procedures set out below may differ slightly and may include additional steps. This will be explained in the recruitment pack and throughout the process.

6. Recruitment Pack

The following will be available to all job/role applicants:

- Date of interview and name of person who can discuss the job/role with the applicant
- Job/role description
- Person specification
- Main terms and conditions including contract being home-based in the UK
- Whether any employment checks will be made with relevant bodies (such as the DBS- see Appendix 1 to this policy)
- Information about NSUN
- Background information relating to the role
- Application form and how to apply
- Equality and Diversity monitoring form
- Reference contact details (including statement that references won't be taken until after an offer has been made)
- Access and support needs form or question
- Details of whether applications will be acknowledged or not
- Whether or not candidates might be asked to attend a second interview before receiving an offer

NSUN will make provision for job/role information to be available in accessible formats.

Where a DBS is required, the application form will ask candidates whether they have ever been convicted of a criminal offence by a court of law. The recruitment pack will include statement (where DBS check required) that having a criminal record will not necessarily exclude

someone from obtaining or retaining a paid role with us, referencing the recruitment policy.

7. Applications

All applications are treated as confidential in line with NSUN's Privacy Policy and Data Protection Policy (please see separate policies for further details). Applications will only be circulated to those directly involved in the recruitment process. All applicants will be kept informed of any significant changes to the recruitment timeframe.

The Equality and Diversity monitoring form is completed anonymously and kept separate from the application. It helps us understand whether we are succeeding in promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging representation.

8. Internal applicants

We encourage internal applications to ensure staff development. Where possible, all jobs/roles will be circulated internally to ensure that existing staff and volunteers are given the opportunity to apply and develop their skills and careers. This ensures staff are made aware of career opportunities available to them. Benefits of recruiting internally mean that a candidate will already be familiar with NSUN's policies, procedures, internal structure and systems, they may be able to start the job/role earlier than an external candidate and NSUN can save on costs and time of external recruitment.

However, jobs/roles will not be advertised internally where there is a reorganisation within a department and we have employees with jobs 'at risk' of redundancy for whom we are seeking alternative jobs, or where we have an obligation to place somebody in another job (e.g. changing for health or safety reasons or returning from family friendly leave whose original job is no longer available). In these instances, the needs of the employee to be redeployed will take priority.

Where a job role is advertised externally, internal applicants will automatically be offered an interview with the first recruiting panel. In the event that a recruitment agent is being used, this means the internal candidate will go through the same process as other candidates but will automatically proceed to the first NSUN panel.

9. Shortlisting

All applications received before the closing date will be acknowledged and considered. People who are involved in the shortlisting process should declare an interest to the recruiting manager if they do business with, are related to or are a close friend or partner of any of the applicants. The recruiting manager will decide whether they should withdraw or continue to be involved in the shortlisting selection process.

If an applicant has disclosed that they identify as disabled, this will not adversely affect their chances of being shortlisted or offered a job/role. This also applies if an existing member of staff newly identifies as disabled.

Each applicant's ability to meet the requirements of the job, as stated in the person specification, are assessed using a simple scoring system where essential criteria will be weighted three times higher than beneficial criteria. Each person specification areas will be assessed as follows

| Score | Person Specification Area |
|-------|---|
| 0 | Not met |
| 1 | referenced but no /low evidence or examples |
| 2 | Partially met, with relevant examples |
| 3 | Fully met, with strong relevant/multiple examples |

Applicants who are shortlisted for interview will be notified in good time and asked if they require any adjustments to the interview process to enable them to participate. NSUN will endeavour to meet any adjustments requested.

Applicants who are not shortlisted for interview will be contacted to let them know that they have been unsuccessful in their application. Due to the potential large numbers of applicants and the capacity of NSUN's small team, it may not be possible to offer individual feedback at this stage but we will do our best to provide it, if it's requested. Internal applicants will be advised in person with feedback given.

10. Task

For most roles, candidates will be asked to complete a short task, either before the interview or as a presentation at the start of the interview. The aim of the task will be to assess one or more of the elements of the person specification. The details of the task will be sent 1 week before the interview date and should take no more than 3 hours to complete.

The assessment of the task will carry the same weighing as one interview question.

11. Interview

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview. They will be sent the relevant job description, together with location details, map/directions (where appropriate), and, if it's in person, where to report and who to ask for. We aim to give sufficient notice to candidates before the interview date to enable them to adequately prepare for this. However, in some circumstances due to time restraints and organisational needs, this might not always be possible.

Interview questions and any relevant tasks will also be shared with candidates beforehand and they will be interviewed by at least two people. The interviewers will be introduced and an outline of the structure of the interview given. Candidates will be encouraged to:

- Take the time they need to think about responses to questions
- Ask for clarification if any question is unclear
- Give as many examples as they can to support their answers

They will be asked the same initial questions and allocated the same amount of time for their interview. Different supplementary or probing questions can be asked as appropriate depending on the response of the candidate to the initial question. Candidates may also be asked specifically about a matter arising from their application form. Questions about marriage plans, family intentions, religious or political commitments, caring responsibilities, opting out of an automatic enrolment pension scheme or about any other issues which may give rise to suspicions of unlawful discrimination will not be asked.

Questions will be scored as follows

- 0 – Failed to answer the question, even with probing
- 1 – Made some effort to answer the question but does not demonstrate that meets the specifications of the role.
- 2 – Meets few of the specifications of the role. Needs prompting to draw out examples.
- 3 – Meets some of the specifications of the role. Gives examples but may not be entirely relevant for the role.

- 4 – Meets the specifications of the role. Gives clear and relevant examples.
- 5 – Meets the specifications of the role and in many instances, exceeds expectations.

We will aim to do second interviews for most roles with someone who was not on the first interview panel, and this will be stated in the recruitment packs. Interview questions will not be sent in advance for these interviews, however candidates will be given an indication of the topics which will be covered in advance.

We will ensure that the process is not unlawfully discriminatory and will do our very best to accommodate the particular needs of anyone who identifies as disabled. We appreciate them letting us know in advance if this is the case.

Interviewers will give careful consideration to their assessment of candidates. Each interviewer is responsible for ensuring that they take clear notes of each candidate's interview.

All candidates who have been interviewed will be offered feedback.

12. Appointing

A scoring system is used to establish how each candidate meets the requirements of the job/role. The interviewers will separately make their individual assessments before any discussion or comparison of candidates is made. This is done once all the interviews have been concluded.

The hiring manager will aim to notify the successful candidate, usually verbally/by phone, on the same day to let them know the outcome of the interview. Where this is not possible to inform candidates on the same day candidates will be informed as to when a decision will be made. When making an offer, hiring managers will provide a timescale on which candidates need to accept or decline the job/role offer. A written offer will be sent, via email, as a follow-up to the verbal offer. This will include the main terms and conditions and, once accepted, a contract and any relevant employment paperwork to be signed and completed.

13. Background checks, Right to work in the UK and References

Each successful external candidate will be informed if they are subject to any background checks e.g. DBS. This will normally be made once they have accepted the offer and will be dealt with in accordance with our Data Protection Policy (please see our separate policy for further details).

Job/role offers are made subject to right to work in the UK, references being obtained and a satisfactory probationary period. A UK passport or birth certificate or appropriate working visa or settled status should be checked in-person (a driving license is not adequate proof of right to work in the UK). Further details can be found on the Government website by clicking on [this link](#).

Two referees will be contacted via email after the successful candidate has given us their permission. Where possible, references should be received prior to anyone starting work and it may be that we delay the start date until the references are received. In the event of a reference being unsatisfactory to us, we may withdraw the offer but will discuss this with the candidate, and if appropriate the referee, before making this decision.

14. Recording notes and Confidentiality

Any shortlisting and interview notes and the Equality and Diversity monitoring form will be kept for 1 year in accordance with our Privacy Policy and Data Protection Policy (please see separate policies for further details). This is in case they need to be referred to if the interviewer's decision is

challenged. An employment tribunal will request that all notes of all interviewers are submitted to support any decision that was made.

Appendix 1 - DBS checks and working with staff and volunteers with criminal convictions

As our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and Recruitment policy states, NSUN aims to attract, recruit, select and appoint the best candidates for the job - staff, trustee and volunteer roles at NSUN - and to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in order to build, develop and sustain a team who achieve the objectives of NSUN and welcomes applications for paid and unpaid roles from people of all backgrounds. Having a criminal record will not necessarily exclude someone from obtaining or retaining a paid or unpaid role with us. This could be as a trustee, staff member, volunteer or associate.

NSUN's work involves working with adults at risk. In order to safeguard their wellbeing, all roles will be assessed to ascertain if a Disclosure and Barring Service (known as a DBS check) is required.

As well as the procedures outlines below, there are some useful steps at the end of this appendix. If you have any concerns about how to recruit people with criminal records fairly and safely, you can speak to [Nacro](mailto:employeradvice@nacro.org.uk) in confidence on 0845 600 3194 or email employeradvice@nacro.org.uk .

The following procedure will be used for recruitment purposes:

- Roles will be assessed for the degree of risk involved to decide if a DBS check (basic or enhanced type) is necessary.
- Line managers for these roles will also need to have a DBS check.
- NSUN will cover the costs of all DBS checks.
- Criminal records will only be taken into account where it's relevant to the role.
- It will be made clear in the recruitment pack if a role requires us to know about a criminal record.
- Applicants will not be asked to disclose convictions which are 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Applicants will be asked for details of past 'unspent' convictions and to provide all relevant information which will improve understanding and aid fair decision-making.
- At the interview any disclosures can be discussed if necessary and relevant. We may ask for more information if appropriate (e.g. from a probation officer).
- Having an unspent conviction will not necessarily exclude someone - it will depend on the nature of the role and the circumstances and background to the offence(s).
- With their permission, a DBS check will be carried for anyone who has been offered a role.

The following procedure will be used during the period of employment or volunteering:

- DBS checks will be renewed periodically, at least every 2 years.
- Anyone with a DBS check will be asked to register with the online [DBS Update Service](#), which NSUN will pay for.
- If a criminal record becomes known during this time, the Interim CEO (or for Trustees, the Chair of the Board of Trustees) will follow the process set out in Step 5 below. This is to help decide on the relevance of the conviction or caution to the role, and on what if any further action should be taken.

The following procedure will be used for storage and access to information:

- The Interim CEO is responsible for ensuring that the management and use of Disclosure information complies with GDPR and that any third party carrying out DBS checks for us has appropriate data security systems and policies in place.
- DBS checks will:
 - be stored securely, in line with our Data Protection and Privacy policies.
 - be shared only with people who are entitled to access it for recruitment and vetting processes.
 - not be photocopied, photographed, scanned.
- The following DBS check details may be securely kept:
 - the date of issue of a certificate
 - the name of the subject
 - the type of DBS check (basic or enhanced)
 - the position for which the certificate was requested
 - the unique reference number of the certificates
 - the details of the recruitment decision taken.
- DBS check information will not be kept for any longer than is necessary (e.g. once someone has left NSUN or decides not to take up the role they have been offered) and securely destroyed.

Steps for taking DBS decisions

1. Risk assessment of role - is a DBS check needed?
 - If 'No' - continue as per NSUN Recruitment policy
 - If 'Yes' - decide the type of check needed (basic or enhanced). Factors to take into account include:
 - Whether the role involves regular contact with adults at risk?
 - Is this one-to-one, unsupervised, off the premises?
 - What levels of support and supervision will apply during day-to-day work?

2. Recruitment pack - specify that a DBS check is required for the role, request disclosure of 'unspent' convictions in the application form, include a statement on the DBS process and the fact that unspent convictions will not necessarily stop an applicant from being offered the role.
3. Interview - ask the applicant if they want to discuss any convictions or give further (explain why you are asking this question). Explain the next step i.e. if they are offered the role, a DBS check would be carried out.
4. DBS check - we use Care Check
5. Has the DBS check shown any criminal convictions, cautions or reprimands?
 - If 'No' - confirm role offer subject to satisfactory references
 - If 'Yes' - does the information on the DBS check match that given by the applicant?
6. If it doesn't match, discuss the following with the applicant, giving them an opportunity to explain:
 - Are they aware they had a criminal record?
 - Did they understand the nature of the conviction?
 - Is the DBS disclosure information accurate (e.g. could it relate to a different person of the same name)?
7. If the applicant knowingly gave false information - decide whether the conviction is relevant to this role, consider the following:
 - The seriousness of the offence
 - Its relevance to the safety of others
 - The length of time since the offence occurred
 - Any other relevant information offered by the applicant (e.g. circumstances which led to it, such as domestic or financial difficulties)
 - Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed, making re-offending less likely?
 - Was it a one-off, or part of a history of convictions?
 - Has the offence since been decriminalised?

If the conviction is not relevant to the role, then the applicant may join NSUN.

8. If the conviction is relevant to the role decide if it is either feasible or realistic to put in place measures to reduce risk to an acceptable level.
 - If 'No' - the applicant is not suitable join NSUN. Other roles may be considered. This should be explained fully, and the reasons put in writing if requested.

- If 'Yes', confirm the role offer subject to specified safeguards being put in place. This must be put in writing, and they must provide written agreement.