

1625 INDEPENDENT PEOPLE

Recruitment Policy and Procedure

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1. EQUALITY STATEMENT

1625 Independent People aims to design and implement policy documents that meet the diverse needs of our service users and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others. It takes into account the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality duty) and advances equal opportunities for all. This document has been assessed to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the protected characteristics of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation. Performance will be measured by the HR team and reported to Board and Senior Management annually with any recommendations for improvement.

In carrying out its functions, Independent People must have due regard to the different needs of different protected equality groups in their area. This applies to all the activities for which Independent People is responsible, including policy development, review and implementation.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

We are committed to constantly improving the performance and efficiency of the organisation by attracting and recruiting the best candidates available for the job. This Policy and Procedure provides the organisation with a set of recruitment and selection practices for the effective resourcing of employees in an efficient and fair manner and should be read with Appendices 1 (*Safe Recruitment Policy and Procedure*) and 2 (*Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy Statement*) and the *Disclosure Check Policy* in mind. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

We will recruit the best person for each vacancy regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation.

This *Recruitment Policy and Procedure* is designed to give all sections of the community the opportunity to apply for a vacancy and to ensure that throughout the process, people are judged on merit only, without direct or indirect discrimination. Each applicant's skills, abilities and relevant work experience will be considered.

All staff and young people involved in recruitment must comply with our *Equality and Diversity Policy* and must undertake training in Fair Recruitment and Selection covering equality of opportunity in recruitment, safe recruitment and recruitment of ex-offenders.

3. SCOPE OF POLICY

This Policy applies to all employees (regardless of length of service), Board Members, volunteers, Relief Workers, agency workers and job applicants.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

It is our policy that line managers in conjunction with the Directors and/or the HR Manager are responsible for recruitment. However, all employees concerned with the recruitment and selection of temporary and permanent employees must be familiar with this Policy and Procedure and ensure that they comply with the procedures, whether in a management or specialist role or by providing administrative support to a manager concerned with recruitment.

5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

Managers should carry out the recruitment and selection process in accordance with the *Recruitment Process – Guidance for Managers* and the *Recruitment Process – Managers’ Checklist*.

Job Description and Person Specification

Where the post is new, the Job Description (JD) and the Person Specification (PS) are drawn up by the line manager of the post, the Director in charge of that function and the HR Manager.

If the post already exists, the JD and PS are reviewed as and when vacancies arise, if not before. This review is the responsibility of the line manager for the post, the Director responsible for that function and the HR Manager, considering what may need to be amended, for instance, any new and relevant legislation changes or changes to contract commitments.

The JD details the main responsibilities and tasks that make up the job. The PS lists all the essential (and in some cases desirable) values, skills, knowledge and experience necessary to do the job. The HR Department is responsible for reviewing both to ensure they comply with the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality duty) and provide equal opportunities for all.

Advertising

All vacancies are ordinarily advertised internally and externally simultaneously. In some instances there is a business need to only advertise a role internally. Where there is a business need to deviate from advertising a role internally and/or externally, the Chief

Executive Officer (CEO) may waive the need to advertise and the exception and business case is noted.

We advertise the post as widely as practicable in order to attract candidates from under-represented/and disadvantaged groups.

Where there is particular underrepresentation from certain groups in a team or the organisation as a whole, the HR Department discusses with managers any alternative ways to attract applications. E.g. where the underrepresentation is from certain ethnic backgrounds, SARI support us with advice on attracting applications and targeting communities directly.

Short-listing

Short-listing is always carried out by at least two people. These may be staff members or Board members. In certain circumstances, we may decide to have an additional person chosen from outside the organisation to assist in the process of short-listing and interviews. Short-listing criteria is based on the abilities, skills and qualities as detailed in the PS. Where possible the short-listing panel are also the interviewing panel. Effort is made to have a diverse panel.

To ensure that this Policy is operating effectively and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged at any stage of the recruitment process, we monitor the ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age of all applicants, those shortlisted and those successful at interview, as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it does not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information and all personal details, such as address and telephone number, are not visible to the shortlisting panel.

Applicants' application forms are assessed and scored in line with the scoring system (see Scoring System section below) and successful candidates are then notified of the arrangements for interview. Applicants should inform the organisation at this stage if they have a disability and would like us to consider making reasonable adjustments to the interview process.

An alternative interview date is only offered to individuals in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the interview panel.

Interviews

Prior to the interviews, the panel agree relevant questions to be asked. Each interview follows the same pattern. All candidates are given the opportunity to raise questions at the end of the interview.

The interview is a mixture of competency and value based questions, designed to encourage specific work related responses and to ensure the interviewee's values are in keeping with the organisation's.

All answers are marked on a scale of one to five; these questions may include relevant weightings. During the interview, the panel make notes of the answers given so that these can be reviewed during the scoring. After the interviews, scores are noted down. No discussion of candidates takes place until all interviews have been completed. A negotiated decision is then made using the answers on the above as a guide.

Reasonable adjustments

The interview panel should not create barriers to individuals taking employment with our organisation. We always positively consider making changes to enable an individual who is successful at interview to take up employment with the organisation. For instance, if there are existing policies and practices that would make it difficult for someone to accept employment with us, the organisation will actively consider changing these, including those that affect carers. If there are changes that need to be made to buildings or equipment that would enable a disabled person to take up an offer of employment, the organisation will consider positively making such changes.

Presentations/Tests

Where appropriate, presentations or tests (e.g. word processing, proof reading) form part of the assessment. Each interviewee is notified in advance of any presentation or test requirement.

Service User Involvement

All applicants applying for roles where there is contact with young people are required to attend either a group exercise or an interview with a panel of our service users. Alternatively, we may ask a service user to attend the interview with the main panel and they are given the opportunity to ask their own questions under the panel's supervision. The group exercise or interview with the service user panel normally takes place on the same day as the interview with the main panel. We normally schedule in the group exercise/service user panel interview immediately before or after the main interview. This exercise normally takes between 10 and 30 minutes. All applicants are informed of the details of the service user involvement in advance of the interview day.

All interviews with applicants applying for non-client facing roles include a service user on the interview panel. It is likely that this would replace any group exercise or service user led panel.

At the conclusion of all interviews, the interview panel meet with the service user panel to obtain their feedback. If the interviews take place over a two-day period or longer, the interview panel meet with the service users at the end of each day. The feedback may be in the form of structured point scoring and/or further comments. The feedback obtained from service users is taken into account by the interview panel during the decision making process.

Scoring System

5 – Very skilled/experienced **4** – Good **3** – Reasonable
2 – Some knowledge/skill **1** – Not at all/unknown/not demonstrated

Where an applicant fails any part of the interview process, they are not selected for the post. The candidate with the highest score at interview is offered the post provided that this meets the 'minimum score' requirement, which is set by the panel. The post is always offered subject to receipt of satisfactory references before the start date. If this requirement is not met, we may postpone the start date and/or rescind the offer.

Payment of Expenses

If a post has been advertised in a national paper, we may reimburse reasonable travel costs incurred by candidates attending an interview and travelling outside of a 25-mile radius of Bristol (BS2 OER), based on the equivalent of a second-class rail fare. If the post has not been advertised in a national newspaper, then the organisation is unable to assist candidates with expenses. Any candidate who would like to claim travel expenses must provide proof of expenditure by way of an original receipt. We are not able to accept photocopies of receipts, but we can accept print outs of e-mail receipts if this is the only proof the applicant can provide.

6. INTERNAL APPLICATIONS

In line with our *Equality and Diversity Policy*, internal candidates are considered on an equal basis – on merit only. Unsuccessful candidates are given face-to-face feedback as soon as possible and their line manager offers support as appropriate in this situation.

Where an internal applicant is offered a job with an overlapping pay scale, for reasons of staff retention, the employee will remain on the same level of pay if this is higher than the start of the new pay band and included in the new pay band. If their current rate of pay is higher than the top of the new pay band, they will go to the top of the new pay scale.

Where the job of an existing member of staff is upgraded, the job would normally not be advertised.

7. SERVICE USER/EX-SERVICE USER APPLICATIONS

We encourage service users and ex-service users into work by providing peer support roles, apprenticeships and assistant/trainee roles. Service users and ex service users who are ready for this step are encouraged and supported to apply for relevant roles with us, alongside external candidates. If the applicant is a service user, they can only be allowed to apply for a role in a service or section separate from the one providing them with support. This ensures that issues of confidentiality and potential conflict are more easily managed. There are times where it may be considered inappropriate to employ an ex-service user in the same service that they have previously received support from, for example, if they would have contact with others they previously shared housing with, but this would be decided in discussion between the service manager and the HR Manager.

Where a service user or ex-service user is unsuccessful in getting employment, we will provide swift feedback and support or sign-posting to help them gain the skills and/or experience they were lacking for their application. Feedback will always be provided to service users/ex-service users over and above the requirements set out in Section 9 of this Policy.

8. INFORMING CANDIDATES

All candidates who attended interview are contacted by telephone to be informed of the outcome. In the event that the decision is delayed, we try to keep the applicants informed of the likely timescale of when they can expect to hear from us. The successful candidate having accepted is sent a letter of appointment.

Suitable applicants who reached the required standard but were unsuccessful at interview stage (because of a higher scoring candidate) are asked whether they would like their application to be considered should a post become vacant again in the next six months so that an offer of employment may be made. If the candidate is happy to have their details stored for this purpose, they are placed in the 'talent pool' within our electronic recruitment system.

9. FEEDBACK

With the exception of internal candidates, we are unable to provide feedback to those applicants that have not been invited to interview. When requested, we provide feedback to candidates who have attended an interview.

If an external applicant disagrees with the process of applying for employment or with the decision made by the organisation, they may use our Complaints Procedure. If already employed by the organisation, the candidate should use the organisation's *Grievance Procedure*.

10. MONITORING

All monitoring information remains anonymous and confidential. It is used only for collation of statistics for monitoring against equal opportunities and is stored securely and processed in line with our obligations under the data protection legislation.

11. PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

Qualifications, Certificates and Licences

If an external applicant is appointed, we make checks on relevant qualifications, certificates or licences presented by the applicant during their application and documents produced by the applicant are held on their personnel file. In all instances, we ask applicants to bring documentary evidence of relevant qualifications, which they have presented in their application form, to the interview.

References

We require all applicants to provide details of two referees in their application. We follow up written references with a telephone call in some cases. In addition, any number of previous employers may be contacted in relation to an applicant's employment history as part of the vetting process. In cases of internal recruitment, a reference is sought from the employee's current line manager.

There is no legal requirement for a referee to provide a reference for a prospective employer. In the event that the referee does not respond to our request for a reference within a specified time period, we may withdraw the offer of employment. In the event that the applicant has commenced employment before the expiry of the specified time period and we do not receive a satisfactory reference or we do not receive a reference at all during the specified time period, we may terminate the employee's employment with one week's notice.

Disclosure and Barring Service Check and Right to Work in the UK

All successful applicants are asked to provide their passport or driving licence, a copy of which is taken for our use. The applicant is also asked whether they are signed up to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Update Service and if they are, they are asked to give us their consent for access to the same for the purposes of carrying out a Status Check.

If they are not already enrolled onto the Update Service, they are asked to fill in an electronic form with information required for the DBS clearance application.

We then submit a DBS check application to the Disclosure and Barring Service on behalf of the applicant. All appointments are subject to either an Enhanced or Basic DBS clearance. The organisation pays for this application. If the outcome of the check is unclear, the applicant is asked to provide a copy of the certificate. Further, if applicable, the applicant is asked to enrol onto the DBS Update Service in line with the requirements set out in the *Disclosure Check Policy*.

We are required, by law, to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status are not made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, are asked to produce original documents, such as a passport, before employment starts to satisfy current immigration legislation (see Right to work in the UK guidance – in recruitment folder on shared drive). The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency.

12. DATA PROTECTION COMPLIANCE

All personal information generated in the course of the recruitment process is stored securely and confidentially and processed in line with our obligations under data protection legislation.

1625 Independent People

SAFE RECRUITMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Appendix 1

1. INTRODUCTION

Independent People is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Independent People acknowledges that recruitment procedures play a key role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Independent People are committed to ensuring effective planning for the recruitment and selection process, allowing time throughout the process to enable a thorough and robust approach to selection and minimising the risk of making an unsuitable appointment.

2. ADVERTISING

Careful consideration is given to identify the appropriate values, qualities, skills and qualifications that are required for every post advertised, and that these are reflected in the Person Specification (PS) and assessment criteria, Job Description (JD) and advertisement.

Applicants are made aware from the outset, through advertisements and information packs, of Independent People's commitment to safeguarding and by making clear that appropriate vetting checks are carried out.

PSs and JDs include specific requirements relating to the safeguarding of children and young people. A statement about Independent People's commitment to safeguarding is included in all recruitment and selection materials.

3. SELECTION

Independent People uses standardised online application forms and in most cases does not accept CVs. Application forms require full personal details, the full employment history of applicants, qualifications, including gaps and is

considered signed by the applicant upon its submission. Any gaps or inconsistencies in employment histories are followed up.

Resources are allocated to ensure the effective co-ordination and collation of candidate information. Careful consideration is given to ensure that staff with the appropriate values, skills, experience, roles and responsibilities are involved in short-listing and interview panels, including the use of external expertise when recruiting for specialist posts.

Each application received is scrutinised in a systematic way based on the PS by the short-listing panel, in line with our *Recruitment Policy and Procedure*, in order to agree a shortlist before sending invitations to interview.

4. INTERVIEWS

All short-listed applicants for paid or voluntary work must undergo a formal interview. In line with our *Recruitment Policy and Procedure* we ensure that a face-to-face interview is conducted for all short-listed candidates based on an objective assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the PS and JD.

We ensure that specific questions are used to gain the information required about each candidate's suitability, including their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and addressing any gaps in information supplied in the application form.

Safeguarding interview questions are used to draw out candidates' actual experience of working with children, young people and vulnerable adults to gain a picture of the appropriateness of a candidate's attitudes and future behaviour. If the answers given do not demonstrate the positive behaviours, values and attributes required, an appointment is not made.

5. OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate is always conditional on all pre-employment checks having been satisfactorily completed, including the receipt of at least two satisfactory references, verification of the candidate's identity, receipt of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and checks on qualifications and certificates.

6. USE OF AGENCY FOR RECRUITMENT

Where Independent People are using any agency to provide staff or volunteers, we will ensure that the agencies concerned use the same safer recruitment standards and apply them rigorously.

7. SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT

Independent People involve service users in the recruitment and selection process, including involvement in interview panels. Service users are provided with appropriate training to play an active and meaningful part in the recruitment process.

8. CHECKS GENERAL

Independent People ensure that arrangements are in place for appropriate checks on new staff and volunteers and adoption of best practice in the recruitment of new staff and volunteers. Verification of relevant qualification documents is carried out.

9. DBS CHECKS

All Independent People posts are risk assessed with regard to the level of DBS check required. Where the role requires an Enhanced DBS check, the applicants are required to complete a criminal record declaration disclosing all past convictions or pending cases against them, including spent convictions.

Where the role requires a Basic DBS check, applicants are required to complete a criminal record declaration disclosing any convictions, which are 'unspent'. Independent People treat this information in a confidential manner, and only offences that put children or young people at risk are considered as a reason to refuse employment.

DBS Status Checks are carried out every 3 years.

10. REFERENCES

Wherever possible we obtain a reference relating to a previous post or role where the candidate worked with children, young people or vulnerable adults and we always get a reference from the current employer (where applicable). In cases of internal recruitment, a verbal reference is sought from the employee's current manager.

Referees are always asked to comment on the candidate's suitability for the post with explicit reference to the JD and PS, and in particular, their suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

11. RECORD KEEPING

Checks are documented and/or photocopied, e.g. qualification certificates, and retained on the individual's personnel file. In the case of DBS Status Checks, a record is maintained of the date the disclosure was obtained, by whom, the level of disclosure and the unique reference number.

12. ACTION ON CONCERNING INFORMATION

Where concerning information emerges from any of these checks, such as the DBS disclosure show that s/he is barred from working with children; the candidate has provided false information; or there are serious concerns about the candidate's suitability to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults; an appointment will not be made. The concerning information is acted upon by seeking advice from the HR Manager and where false information is provided, this may be reported to the Police. If there is evidence of an allegation having been made but not dealt with, advice is sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or local authority safeguarding adults lead as appropriate.

This Policy/Procedure should be read in conjunction with Independent People's *Volunteering Policy*.

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RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS POLICY STATEMENT Appendix 2

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, Independent People complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

Further, we are committed to the fair treatment of our staff, potential staff or users of our services, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation.

This policy statement, on the recruitment of ex-offenders, is available to all DBS check applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their values, skills, qualifications and experience.

The level of DBS check required is ascertained after careful consideration of which level is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. All application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs contain a statement that a DBS check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Since a DBS check forms part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process.

For roles which only require a Basic DBS check, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as updated by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (section 139). New Guidance was created in March 2014 on spent and unspent convictions.

We ensure that all managers 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 the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Where criminal convictions, cautions or other relevant information is disclosed, a full risk assessment process takes place with successful candidates to ensure that the matters are given full regard and to determine whether risks can or cannot be safely and confidently managed within the role. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or termination of employment at a later date once the information comes to light.

We make every subject of a DBS check aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS check with the person seeking the position before proceeding with or withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.