



**HEAR US**  
Croydon's Mental Health Service Users Group  
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# Hear Us

## QUALITY MANUAL



### SECTION D: People Management

#### D.1.2 Recruitment and Selection Procedure

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## Hear Us

To promote, educate, communicate and empower, for the benefit and interest of people affected by mental health issues

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### 1) Purpose

- a) Hear Us is committed to fair and open recruitment procedures in line with our commitment to equal opportunities and accountability.
- b) Hear Us acknowledges its responsibility under the Law to ensure that it does not discriminate against any individual or group within society, and also commits itself to implement best practice when recruiting new staff to the organisation.
- c) Hear Us affirms its belief in the value of recruiting appropriately qualified, experienced and skilled staff and these procedures should enable the right choice of applicant to be made for the benefit of the organisation and our service users.

To this end, this policy aims:

- a) To ensure equality of opportunity for all people applying for paid work within Hear Us to enable the appointment of the best person for each position.
- b) To give clear structure and guidance to recruitment panels on the recruitment, selection and appointment of staff.

### Scope

- 1) The policy ensures that all managers and employees understand their respective rights and responsibilities when undertaking recruitment.
- 2) This policy applies to all current and prospective employees applying for a paid role with Hear Us.

### Preparation

- 1) Basic preparation before recruiting
  - a) The recruitment and selection process should not start until a full evaluation of the need for the new or existing post has been made.
  - b) An evaluation should include the aims and objectives of the post, the service it provides and the salary attached to it.
  - c) An evaluation will be conducted by the line manager of the post and their findings will be discussed with the relevant



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management team member for the service before recruitment commences.

- d) In the case of an existing post, the outcomes of any exit interviews should be considered.
- e) In the case of new posts, the Job Description, Person Specification and salary will be discussed with the Board of Trustees.
- f) The budget and timeframe for the recruitment should be confirmed before the process starts.
- g) The Office Manager, who manages the administrative side to the recruitment process, should always be involved in the setting of timescales.
- h) Job Descriptions and Person Specifications should be evaluated against the values and organisational aims of Hear Us.

### 2) Guidance on drawing up Job Descriptions

- a) Components of the Job Description should be as specific as possible. This will help ensure clarity and accountability.
- b) Job Descriptions should be reviewed annually through the appraisal process and any exit interviews.
- c) Any requirements such as the ability to work unsociable hours, or to travel or hold a valid driver's license, should be outlined in the Job Description.
- d) If the post involves essential car use, parking permit arrangements should be outlined.
- e) The Job Description should always include the following statements:
  - i. To adhere to Hear Us's policy portfolio, including Equal Opportunities, Code of Conduct, Health and Safety and Disclosure of Information Policies.
  - ii. To accept supervision from the designated manager.



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- iii. To undergo training and development as is necessary to maintain appropriate performance in the post.
- iv. To undertake any other reasonable tasks consistent with the grade and purpose of the post.

### 3) Guidance on drawing up Person Specifications

The Person Specification should relate directly to the Job Description. The Person Specification will be used as the basis for shortlisting and interviews. Managers should:

- a) Reflect on the Person Specification carefully to ensure that it includes the qualifications, knowledge, experience, skills and ability necessary to perform the tasks of the post.
- b) Take care to ensure the elements of the Person Specification do not directly or indirectly discriminate against a minority.
- c) Keep the number of 'desirable' elements to a minimum.

### 4) Advertisement

1) The process of advertising posts should be open and public. Job adverts should:

- Be written in an accessible manner, avoiding the use of jargon,
- Make the position sound as attractive as possible, without being misleading about the nature of the job,
- Project a positive image of Hear Us as an employer.

2) The job advert should always include:

- Hear Us logo and the title: Hear Us
  - Job title, salary and any benefits e.g. annual leave allowance, flexible working and training allowance
- Main responsibilities as defined in the Job Description
  - Main criteria for applicants, as described in the Person Specification Equal opportunities strap line
  - Timetable, i.e. closing date, interview date What to do to obtain an application pack



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- Timetable, i.e. closing date, interview date, How to obtain an application pack.

### 3) Equal Opportunities Strap Line

- a) All adverts should include the following statement:  
Hear Us values diversity and difference. We welcome applicants from all sections of the community, particularly people with lived experience of mental health problems.”

### 4) The Volunteer Coordinator should be informed of upcoming employment opportunities, when suitable, and should communicate these to our volunteers.

### 5) Hear Us must ask whether an applicant needs any reasonable adjustments for any part of the recruitment process. Further, if a candidate has indicated a disability on their application form, or Hear Us becomes aware of it, or the candidate asks for reasonable adjustments to be made, the Chair must consider making them.

### 6) In recognition of structural inequality in the job market, and the barriers to the recruitment of groups of people, for example mental health service users, where possible the placement of adverts should be targeted. As far as resources allow, job adverts should be placed in publications and places that are wide reaching and accessible to all individuals and groups in the local community.

### 7) Exemptions under equal opportunities legislation

Both the Race Relations Act 1975 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1976 allow an employer to advertise for candidates of a specific ethnicity or gender under certain circumstances. This may apply when recruiting to posts for ethnically specific projects, but advice should always be sought from Peninsular HR (BrightHR) advice service. Exemptions do not allow an employer to make up shortfalls in either the gender or ethnic mix of the organisation.

### 8) Application Procedure

- a) To conserve resources, applicants should be encouraged to go to the Hear Us website for an application pack, and email the Hear Us



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recruitment address with their application. For a printed application form, applicants will need to contact Hear Us directly.

- 9) Application packs should include:
  - Cover letter, with details on the recruitment of ex-offenders
  - Job Description
  - Person Specification
  - Equal opportunities statement & monitoring form
  - General Hear Us information leaflet
  - Publicity leaflets / background relating to the service, where possible
- 10) All applicants must fill in the standard application form and all questions asked in the application form should be relevant to the recruitment process. CVs will not be considered and this should be made clear in the covering letter.
- 11) To ensure equality of opportunity, the first page of the application form will include all personal details. All application forms will be given a reference number. For short listing purposes, this first page will be removed to ensure the identity of the candidate remains unknown. The equal opportunities form will also be referenced and removed.
- 12) Personal information and contact details will only be provided to the shortlisting panel after they have shortlisted the candidates and are ready to invite individuals to interview.
- 13) Recruitment Panels
  - a) Where possible recruitment panels will include:
    - The new post holder's line manager
    - A service user who has been trained in recruitment and selection procedures
    - The panel should also reflect a balance in terms of gender and minority ethnic backgrounds wherever possible.





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- 14)** All panel members should have awareness in equal opportunities, recruitment and selection, and should be issued with this policy at the beginning of the recruitment procedure.
- 15)** The panel should always be chaired by the person who is going to manage the post holder. The role of the Chair is to:
- Ensure that this policy is adhered to at all times,
  - Ensure that all panel members are aware of their roles,
  - Ensure that all panel members have a fair opportunity to express their points of view on the candidates,
  - Keep accurate records of the proceedings,
  - Ensure that no discrimination or other bad practice occurs.
- 16)** Declaring relationships
- If a member of the recruitment panel becomes aware at any point that they have a close or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the individual's application. It would normally be necessary for this member to avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection process. Guidance should be sought from Hear Us's Employment Advice service (Peninsular HR) should this issue arise at any point.
- 17)** Shortlisting
- a) Every candidate who submits an application form will go through the short listing stage.
  - b) Each candidate will be short listed by each panel member independently.
  - c) To score, the panel member will isolate evidence in the application form that demonstrates that the applicant meets the requirements of the Person Specification.
  - d) Each element of the Person Specification will be marked on a scale of 1-6, using the scale below:
    - No discussion of the applicants will take place until every panel member has marked every application.



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1 – Nothing of merit

2 – Poor

3 – Satisfactory

4 – Good

5 – Very Good

6 – Exceptional

- When every application has been marked, the Chair should collect the total number of marks for essential elements of the Person Specification. Combining these marks will form an aggregate mark for the panel as a whole, which will give a running order of applicants.
- A discussion should then be held, chaired by the Chair of the panel, on each candidate, to establish whether or not a candidate should be interviewed.
- In the event of many candidates meeting all the essential criteria, the decision to invite to interview or not will be based on the degree to which the desirable criteria are met.
- It is not good practice to pre-set the number of interviewees before short listing. However, it should be usually no more than six, as it is accepted that there can sometimes be practical limitations as to the number of people that can be interviewed.
- Once a decision has been reached on who to invite to interview, the Office Manager will arrange to send out invitations to attend interview. Invitations can be made by telephone or email, and a confirmation of attendance should be requested. Directions and details of any timed tests will be sent to the prospective candidates with this confirmation.

### 18) Interviewing Procedure

#### a) Informal visits

The practice of offering informal visits works against equal opportunities unless all candidates are given the same experience. To ensure fairness, either no informal visits are offered, or all short listed candidates are invited to visit at the same time, on the clear





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understanding that the visit will be considered as part of the interview process.

Informal visits should be conducted by the staff and service users who will work most closely with the successful candidates. None of the selection panel may participate in this part of the process. Feedback will be given to the panel only after a preliminary decision has been made by the selection panel. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the recruitment panel to ensure that all people who are involved in informal visits are aware of the Person Specification criteria. Only feedback that is in relation to these criteria will be admissible.

### 19) Interview questions

Interview questions should relate to the Person Specification and should be set in advance of the interview. All candidates should be asked the same questions by the same person. Questions should be open and easily understood.

If a question is misunderstood or is not clear, panel members may rephrase it. Supplementary questions may be asked by panel members only if they are relevant to the assessment of the Person Specification area and aim to clarify the candidate's experience, skill etc. in that area.

### 20) The interview experience

The recruitment panel should aim for the interviews to be a welcoming and positive experience, aiming to get the best out of each candidate.

Interviews will be chaired by the Chair of the panel and will normally consist of the same people as the shortlisting panel. It is not best practice to introduce new panel members at this stage, though circumstances may occasionally necessitate doing so.

Arrangements should be made for someone to greet the interviewees and this person should be briefed on the need for confidentiality. Candidates should be treated with courtesy and each candidate, as far as practicable, should be treated in the same manner. Certainly, no candidate should be given more or less information about the interview itself than the other. It is not intended, however, that a rigorous procedure should be in place whereby ordinary human discourse is not possible and candidates should always be provided with as much support as is consistent with fairness.

There should be no interruptions and water should be made available. Panel members should ensure that every effort is made to ensure that interviews run on time to avoid the anxiety created by delays.



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At the start of the interview, the Chair of the panel should ask the panel to introduce themselves and then provide the candidate with the following information:

- The fact that the interview is an equal opportunities interview and that all candidates will be asked the same set of questions,
- That panel members will each ask questions in turn and will be taking notes whilst the candidate is speaking,
- That a particular length of time (e.g. 45 minutes) has been allocated for the interview
- That, at the end of the interview, an opportunity will be provided in which candidates can add points to answers they have already made and ask questions of the panel.

Any exercises should normally be taken at the start of the interview and should be strictly timed.

At the end of the interview candidates should be advised as to how successful and unsuccessful candidates will be notified, and when.

### 21) Scoring at interview

A scoring form will be provided to assess the candidate on each question, 6 being the highest score and 1 being the lowest. Each panel member will fill in a form independently.

An appointment can be made on the basis of the highest score if all panellists agree on the highest scoring candidate. In the event of a mixed response, the Chair of the panel should encourage the panel to systematically re-assess the highest scoring candidates and reach a consensus score, detailing the evidence agreed upon for each score. The Chair of the panel will complete a final scoring sheet detailing how the appointment was made.

No score will be allocated for questions that the candidate may ask of the recruitment panel.

A panel can decide to undertake a second interview or re-advertise a post if the field is felt to be too weak or the need to choose between the top two candidates necessitates further investigation into their skills. In the event of a re-advertisement, a decision should be made at that point about whether applications from previous applicants are welcome or not.

### 22) Interview Outcomes

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*Working Together for Change and Better Understanding in Mental Health*



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It is normal practice to telephone the successful candidate on the day of the interviews, or as soon as a decision has been reached, and to contact the other candidates as soon as possible thereafter.

- 23) When offering a candidate a post, it is very important to explain whether or not the offer is subject to any conditions. It will almost always be subject to satisfactory references and a criminal record check, but there may be other points which need to be satisfied in addition to references.
- 24) Posts should only ever be offered at the salary which they were advertised. If a band has been given then it is usual to start a person at the bottom of the band, though this is negotiable, depending on experience.
- 25) On advice from the Chair of the panel, letters of appointment are issued by the Office Manager, who should be made aware of the outcomes of interviews and a prospective employee's terms and conditions as soon as possible. The Office Manager will also request references and follow up if required.
- 26) Disclosure and Barring Service checks

Hear Us is committed to complying with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) code of practice and to having open, honest and confidential criminal record checking procedures. Disclosure and Barring Service checks should be completed by the Office Manager. Hear Us applies for Enhanced Disclosure for all employees that are going to have contact with vulnerable adults. Any recruitment where it is unclear if a DBS check should be completed, will need to be referred to the Chief Executive.

Information received from the Disclosure and Barring Service is only seen by the employee's line manager and the Office Manager. A copy of the information is sent automatically, by the DBS, to the prospective employee. Should a candidate have a criminal record, the line manager and a member of the Senior Management Team will complete a risk assessment as to how relevant this information is to the Job Description that makes up the post.

### 27) Appointment

The successful candidate will be asked to respond to the initial appointment letter with written confirmation (email is satisfactory) that they wish to take up the post. Once satisfactory references, criminal record check and, where necessary, other queries have been resolved, written confirmation of the offer,



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the employment contract and induction procedure will be sent by the line manager. The line manager for the post is responsible for agreeing a start date with the new staff member.

### **28) Feedback**

It is normal practice to give feedback to candidates following interview. The Chair of the panel will normally give feedback over the telephone, unless requested otherwise. Feedback may consist of comment on the candidate's areas of strengths and weaknesses – as detailed in their scoring sheets – and a general assessment of interview performance. All feedback should be based on actual responses given in the application form / interview and actual behaviour demonstrated in the interview.

### **29) Internal Candidates**

Applications from all internal candidates will be accepted and processed on their own merits and their applications treated in the same way as all other candidates. An internal candidate will be given the same information as all other candidates, fill in the same application form and be asked the same questions at interview. They will be offered face to face feedback with the Chair of the recruitment panel, from the short listing stage, if the internal candidate is not invited to interview.

An internal candidate may be a member of staff, current volunteer or a member of the Management Committee. If they are a member of staff, they will not need to provide references.

No internal candidate may work on the recruitment procedures for that post or any concurrent recruitment procedure.

Hear Us is committed to the development of people who use its services, volunteers and staff. Therefore if a post is for a short term contract (e.g. for less than one year) and, in some exceptional cases, (e.g. due to funding restraints), posts may only be advertised internally with a view to attracting applicants from the internal recruitment pool.

### **30) Retention Of Records**

The Chair of the recruitment panel must ensure that all records relating to the short listing and interviewing of candidates are collected, retained and handed to the Office Manager immediately after the recruitment procedure has been completed. These documents will be held securely for six months. Candidates have the right to review all recruitment



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documents relating to them, including references (unless the referee states that the reference should not be seen by a third party).

### 31) Equality And Diversity

This policy must be applied consistently and in line with Hear Us's Equality and Diversity Policy.

### 32) Monitoring and Review

- a) Reports on recruitment trends, statistics and the effectiveness of Hear Us's recruitment procedures will be provided to the Governance & Quality Committee on an annual basis.
- b) Hear Us will monitor the policy to ensure consistency and that it is meeting the organisation's recruitment needs.
- c) The Chief Executive will be responsible for producing procedures for monitoring and review.

### 33) Relevant Policies

- a) Conditions of Service Policy Confidentiality Policy
- b) Data Protection Policy
- c) DBS Information Handling Policy Disclosure of Information Policy Equality and Diversity Policy