

## **VOLUNTARY ACTION - LEEDS**

### **RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that Voluntary Action - Leeds employs the best people for its work and that it does so in an efficient and cost-effective way, in harmony with its other policies and recognised good practice as well as the relevant legislation.

#### **Equal Opportunities**

VA-L is committed to equality of opportunity, and the detail of our commitment is spelled out in our Equal Opportunities Policy. With regard to Recruitment and Selection, that Policy states that “VA-L will conduct its recruitment and selection procedures openly and fairly, and these procedures will be kept under review.”

#### **Monitoring**

All application packs will include an Equal Opportunities Statement and a monitoring form, which explains the purpose of such monitoring and the way in which the data will be controlled. These forms will not be seen by staff involved with recruitment and selection: they are returned in a separate envelope by each candidate, and are separated from application forms on receipt by Admin staff. After an appointment is made, a designated member of Admin staff will analyse the forms and compile statistics on the composition of the applicants and of those selected for interview; these reports will be considered by the Personnel Committee, and will be used to inform future recruitment and selection practice.

#### **Responsibility**

The manager of the section in which the vacancy occurs is responsible for agreeing with the rest of the Management Team the content of the job description and person specification and the advertisement.

The Admin section is responsible for the administration of the recruitment process including placing the advertisements, sending application packs, organising interviews, requesting references, etc.

## **Timetable**

When a vacancy occurs, the section manager is responsible for drawing up a timetable for the recruitment process according to the urgency required and subject to any financial constraints, which may be necessary (vacancy managements, etc). As a general guideline, a recruitment timetable may cover a period of around two to three months, allowing time to advertise, recruit, and take account of notice periods.

## **Training**

All staff/trustees involved with recruitment and selection will be given appropriate training where necessary.

## **Job Descriptions and Person Specifications**

All jobs with VA-L will have a job description and person specification which relate strictly to the post itself, and job descriptions will be reviewed annually to ensure that they remain relevant and that they do not impose any unjustifiable or non-essential experience, qualifications or conditions which may be discriminatory.

Job descriptions and person specifications will be reviewed thoroughly at the beginning of the recruitment process, particularly in view of any desired changes or predictable future changes within the organisation.

Job descriptions should include the main purpose of the post (described in one sentence), the responsibilities (including supervisory requirements, responsibility for resources, reporting responsibility, etc) and the main tasks required (these should be clearly described, using active verbs). Where possible, every task should be defined, avoiding vagueness and “catch all” sentences.

The purpose of the Person Specification is to profile the “ideal” for the job in terms of the required qualifications (if any), experience, skills, knowledge and qualities/circumstances. Care must be taken to ensure that all criteria used are directly job-related and non-discriminatory. The requirements for the post should be listed according to whether they are “essential” or “desirable”, and the person specification should be laid out in table format to show this, and should also show how requirements will be assessed.

## **Internal Recruitment and Redeployment**

It is our expectation that vacancies will be publicly advertised; however, it is recognised that there are certain circumstances (eg redundancy situations, redeployment on health grounds, etc) where posts will be advertised internally at least initially, both to comply with the appropriate legislation and to encourage staff development and promotion. Where posts are advertised externally, existing staff are welcome to apply at all times. Selection will be based on merit.

## **Job-Sharing and Secondment**

All VA-L posts will be open to job-sharing and or secondment wherever possible.

## **Advertising**

Job advertisements will be based on a standard format, and will be written in non-discriminatory language (except where there is a genuine occupational need as permitted by legislation). They will not be restricted to areas or publications, which exclude or disproportionately reduce the number of applicants from the groups listed in VA-L's Equal Opportunities Policy. Advertisements will generally include the job title and brief summary of duties, the salary, hours and tenure, and the application procedure, including closing date, interview date and contact details. If the post is subject to particular funding arrangements (eg use of a logo, or fixed-term funding) this should be included. If the post includes a Genuine Occupational Qualification as defined by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 or the Race Relations Act 1976 or subsequent legislation, the relevant section of the Act should be cited in the advertisement.

## **Application Packs**

Application packs should include: a covering letter stating the closing date/time, the Information for Applicants sheet (general information on applying to and working for VA-L), general information about VA-L such as the information leaflet, newsletter or other relevant publications, job description and person specification, further information about the particular job and or the funding should this be deemed useful by the section manager, Equal Opportunities statement, Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form, Application Form. Only the standard application form should be used, and this has a detachable front sheet allowing for the

candidate's personal details to be kept separate from their application to minimise the risk of discrimination. Applications and monitoring sheets will be confidential and will be kept securely and separately.

### **Selection Criteria**

Selection of candidates for interview will be based strictly upon the person specification and job description, and will be by merit. Applicants who meet all of the Essential requirements should be prioritised for interview before proceeding to consider those who have some but not all of the requirements. Wherever possible, applications will be sifted by the actual interview panel. The decision to shortlist any candidate should be that of a clear majority of those involved in sifting; the aim is generally to interview around six candidates. Records should be kept of this decision-making. Selection decisions at interview stage will be based on application forms, interviews and references. Where appropriate, other selection techniques (eg presentations or work-related tests) may be used, but candidates must receive prior notification of these, results must be recorded and their weighting in the selection process agreed by the panel beforehand, and the type of technique used should be considered carefully to determine both its relevance to the job and whether it may unfairly discriminate against some groups.

### **Information to Shortlisted Candidates**

All candidates should be given a date by which they will learn if they have been shortlisted, and this should be adhered to; should unforeseen circumstances delay the interview process, all applicants should be advised of this in writing as early as possible. Shortlisted candidates should then receive information on the date, time and likely duration of the interview, location with directions, whether travel expenses will be paid and if so how and when, information about any tests which will be used, and the facility for a disabled applicant to contact a named person at VA-L to discuss any arrangements which may be necessary at interview.

### **References**

VA-L always requires two satisfactory written references from a successful job candidate; the application pack offers advice about who is/is not a suitable referee. References will not be taken up until after interview, and any offer of employment is subject to receipt of satisfactory references: this will be made clear to all candidates.

## **Workplace Visits**

Candidates may choose to visit VA-L prior to interview if they so request. Such visits will not form part of the assessment process, and where at all possible the visit will be conducted by staff not involved with the selection process to avoid any pre-judgement or evaluation of the candidate. Staff conducting such visitors should be briefed so that they can provide the information needed without making or offering comments either to or on the candidate. If workplace visits are deemed useful for the assessment process, they must be offered to all candidates, and their purpose must be made clear to everyone concerned. The weighting of such visits must also be decided beforehand by the panel.

## **Interviews**

Interviews will be conducted by a panel, which will usually be composed of around three staff/trustees (never less than two or more than four). The composition of the panel will be taken into account as far as possible bearing in mind the need to reflect a balance regarding gender, ethnicity, etc, and all panel members will be given training where necessary. Interviews will be structured, and set questions will be agreed in advance, based on the person specification and job description. The same questions will be asked of each candidate, although there may be some difference in follow-up/clarification questions, or in questions relating specifically to the individual's application form. Any panel member wishing to pose an additional question should seek agreement from the panel chair, ideally in advance where possible. Under no circumstances will questions be asked which are potentially discriminatory – for example, questions about personal circumstances or arrangements: marital status, sexuality, occupation of partner, number/age of children, domestic arrangements, trade union activities, etc. Should a panel member wittingly or unwittingly ask such a question or make a comment on any such matter, the chair of the panel should apologise to the candidate and withdraw the question/comment immediately. The incident must not be allowed to have any influence on assessment of the interview.

Scoring sheets will be used to assess each candidate's response to the set questions and any test used; scoring criteria will be agreed before the interviews.

Candidates will always be allowed every opportunity to ask questions or seek additional clarification from the panel.

Interviews should be carefully timed as far as possible, to ensure that candidates following are not disadvantaged by being kept waiting or by being seen before they are ready. Candidates should be welcomed and escorted to and from the interview by a named person.

### **Decision-Making**

After all the interviews are over, the panel will consult on the selection decision using the scoring sheets as the basis for discussion. Every effort will be made to ensure that unfair bias is eliminated. The reasons for accepting/rejecting each candidate will be recorded. If there is a tie and the panel is unable to agree, the panel may decide to hold a second interview, but this should be seen as a last resort only, as candidates will not have been forewarned that this is possible. If no candidate is suitable, re-advertising will be considered. A second choice should always be made if possible in case the preferred choice rejects the offer. All candidates should be informed of the outcome as soon as possible; any offer of employment must be made subject to receipt of satisfactory references. Candidates may be offered feedback should they request it, and this should be the responsibility of a named panel member; feedback should be constructive and positive.

### **Data Protection**

Personal data gathered on job applicants will be used purely for the purposes of recruitment and selection, and will be kept securely: this will be explained to applicants as part of the application pack. Data used for equal opportunities monitoring will not be held as personal data, as it is anonymous, and will not be passed to staff/trustees involved in selection.

Other personal data (eg NI number, bank details) will be sought only from the candidate appointed, and will be held strictly according to the terms laid out in both VA-L's Terms and Conditions of Employment, and Data Protection Policy.

### **Retention of Records**

Records relating to recruitment and selection will be kept as follows: applicants either shortlisted or not shortlisted – four months from the

date of decision. Records will be stored securely as laid out in VA-L's Data Protection Policy, and records destroyed will be shredded by authorised staff.

### **Asylum and Immigration Act 1996**

All prospective employees will be asked to prove that they have the right to work legally in the UK by producing documents from the prescribed Home Office lists (either one item from List 1, **or** two items from the "either/or" categories in List 2). These are summarised as follows:

*List 1 (VA-L must check and keep a photocopy of ONE of these):*

UK or EEA passport, residence permit, EEA national identity card;

*List 2 (if none of the above is available, VA-L must check and keep a photocopy of TWO of these):*

Either: an official document showing the individual's name and National Insurance number (eg P45 or P60 AND another document such as a full UK birth certificate or an Immigration Status document or letter issued by the Home Office

Or: a work permit AND another document such as a letter from the Home Office showing that the individual is able to stay and work in the UK.

The full lists of acceptable documents can be found on the website of the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate at [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk)

### **Criminal Records**

The application pack will include information about VA-L's position on this issue and about the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 to enable candidates to complete the declaration on the application form.

### **Recruitment & Selection of Volunteers**

VA-L has separate procedures relating to the recruitment and selection and management of volunteers; these may be obtained from the Volunteer Bureau.

### **Complaints about Recruitment and Selection**

Any job applicant who wishes to complain about VA-L's recruitment and/or selection procedure in general, or about her/his experience of applying for a specific post should write to the General Manager as soon as possible, and within one month of the alleged incident if the complaint

relates to an application for a specific post. The General Manager will arrange for the complaint to be investigated, involving the relevant staff/trustees/members of the Personnel Committee as appropriate, and will give the complainant a written response including a summary of the action taken within one month of receipt of the complaint.

Should an existing staff member wish to complain about any matter relating to VA-L's recruitment and/or selection process, this should be done using the Grievance Procedure and any other relevant personnel documents (eg Training Policy...Equal Opportunities Policy, etc).

### **Review of this Policy**

This Policy will be formally reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Personnel Committee's cycle of revisiting all policies and procedures.

*This document was formally adopted as VA-L policy by the Trustee Board of Voluntary Action – Leeds on 11 February 2003. This update February 2005.*