



MHS Recruitment and Selection Policy

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 A strategic and professional approach to recruitment and selection is essential to ensure that the MHS continues to attract, appoint and retain staff with the necessary skills and attributes to meet business needs and secure the delivery of its strategic objectives and stated purpose. In addition, the recruitment and selection process is a key part of MHS' external communications – and the job application process often creates a lasting impression of the organisation with the candidate.
- 1.2 The MHS is committed to ensuring that equality of opportunity prevails in all aspects of its work. Decisions relating to recruitment or selection will not be based on any of the prohibited grounds, including sex, marital status, racial grounds, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation or on the grounds of age. The MHS is committed to ensuring that potential candidates are treated fairly and to ensuring transparency in the recruitment process.
- 1.3 The implementation of this policy is supported by *MHS Recruitment and Selection Procedure: Guidance Notes*. Professional advice and guidance is available from the Human Resource Advisers (HRAs) and the HR Support Unit.

2 Effective Date

- 2.1 This policy is effective from: 3 July 2006.

3 Approval Status

- 3.1 Approved by MHS Management Board and UNISON.

4 Purpose

- 4.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework that enables all staff involved in the recruitment and selection of staff to recruit the best possible person to a vacant post. It will assist in ensuring that appointments are made on merit through fair and open competition in compliance with the Civil Service Order in Council, the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code and also in compliance with the legislation and case law governing this area.

5 Scope

- 5.1 This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all permanent staff in the MHS with the exclusion of those exceptions set out in the Civil Service Commissioner's Recruitment Code, including, short-term appointments, secondments, re-appointment of former Civil Servants; transfers into the Civil Service; and other exceptions listed within the Code. All decisions regarding

exceptions to the MHS recruitment and selection policy will be recorded in writing and a copy of the record placed on the recruitment file. A full copy of the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code can be viewed or downloaded from:
http://www.civilservicecommissioners.gov.uk/publications_and_forms/recruitment_code/index.asp

6 Principles / Aims

6.1 This policy aims to ensure:

- that the recruitment and selection process meets the business needs of the MHS;
- consistency of application and equality of opportunity for all applicants at all stages of the process;
- that the MHS appoints applicants in a fair and open manner based on merit using criteria that are without discrimination, prejudice or unfair assumption;
- all recruitment exercises are transparent and auditable;
- compliance with UK and European employment law, MHS policies / values and the Civil Service Commissioner's Recruitment Code.

7 Policy Statement

7.1 The recruitment and selection process will not commence until:

- (i) a clear need for the role has been established, i.e. it is part of the Region's or HQ Directorate's strategic and / or business plan; and
- (ii) a recruitment plan has been developed that identifies a timetable and secures involvement of all necessary staff, especially those involved in the short listing and interviewing stages.

7.2 A person specification (describing the key qualifications, experience, qualities and attributes required) and a job description (detailing the purpose, tasks and responsibilities of the job) will be produced for all job vacancies. Both documents must be approved by the Regional Director / Head of Department.

7.3 MHS recruitment and selection exercises shall provide equality of opportunity for all applicants. Selection criteria will be objectively justifiable, non-discriminatory and directly related to job requirements. The criteria will be applied without exception to all prospective applicants.

7.4 The short-listing of applications should be completed by at least two people from the interview panel.

7.5 Recruitment and selection interviews will be conducted by at least three people. As far as possible the same panel will conduct all interviews for a

particular vacancy For posts up to and including Grade 7, interview panels should be structured as follows:

- the Chair of the recruitment panel must be at least one grade above that of the vacant post;
- each panel must have one HR representative, for example the regional / HQ HR Adviser or a member of the HR Department;
- at least one member of the panel must be from outside the immediate region / department of the post being recruited to;
- for interviews in respect of specialist posts, for example, Regional Veterinary Advisers, it is expected that at least one member of the panel should be a senior member of the profession. In some cases, this may mean that the panel comprises four members, as opposed to three;
- all members of the panel, with the exception of the HR representative, must be at least the same grade as the vacant post.

- 7.6 Recruitment and selection decisions will be based on the evidence obtained from the application form and during the selection process. Additional information that has not been requested but that has been provided by the applicant, such as a CV, shall not be taken into account. Where a recruitment exercise is exclusive to internal MHS applicants, the applicant's most recent annual appraisal report may be requested and taken into account in the short listing and interview process. (If appraisal reports are to be taken into account, all candidates must be asked to provide a copy of their latest report). Where a recruitment and selection exercise is open to applicants from outside the MHS and / or Civil Service then, in the interest of equal treatment, annual appraisal reports must not be requested or considered.
- 7.7 Offers of employment will be conditional upon receipt of two satisfactory references (including one from the individual's current / most recent employer), medical assessment and any other appropriate checks, for example, educational qualifications and nationality checks. A verbal offer of employment (conditional or unconditional) is legally binding on the MHS and must only be made with specific reference to the receipt of satisfactory references, medical and other appropriate checks.
- 7.8 The opportunity for feedback will be provided to all successful and unsuccessful applicants who attend an interview. The chair of the selection panel will provide written and / or verbal feedback to those applicants who have requested feedback on their application.
- 7.9 No prospective employee should commence employment until a signed copy of the Principal Statement has been received and all necessary pre-employment checks have been successfully completed, including, satisfactory references, medical clearance and, where applicable, a Work Permit and / or Alien Certificate has been obtained.
- 7.10 All papers from recruitment competitions must be retained for 12 months from

the end of the competition. The term "papers" includes the advertisement, application forms, sift criteria, selection panel report including order of merit, campaign summary, statistics and other relevant papers. All records of decision making, including short listing records and panel member's interview notes should also be kept (For fixed term appointments / short term contracts, evidence must be retained for the duration of the appointment).

7.11 There is no formal appeal process for recruitment decisions. Internal candidates may raise a formal grievance using the MHS Grievance Procedure (HRP9) if they can reasonably demonstrate that they have been unfairly treated at any stage in the recruitment and selection process. Complaints from external applicants must be dealt with in accordance with the MHS' complaints procedure.

7.12 The MHS recruitment and selection process is summarised at Appendix 1.

8 Roles and responsibilities

8.1 **Regional and HQ Directors** are accountable for ensuring that vacancies are filled in accordance with this policy framework and the *MHS Recruitment and Selection Procedure: Guidance Notes*. In particular they need to ensure that authority to recruit is given prior to advertising a vacancy and that the flexibilities available are used responsibly and for documented objective business reasons.

8.2 The **HR Adviser** is responsible for:

- providing professional HR advice to managers and staff;
- ensuring that the line manager updates or prepares a new job description and person specification as necessary and, where appropriate, ensuring that new or revised job descriptions are evaluated using the MHS Job Evaluation and Grading (JEGs) methodology before the advertising process is implemented to ensure that the appropriate grade and salary apply;
- developing and managing the recruitment plan, including securing the involvement of panel members and ensuring that they have undertaken appropriate training and / or have relevant experience and are familiar with the *MHS Recruitment and Selection Procedure: Guidance Notes*;
- advertising positions;
- responding to requests for application packs;
- receiving applications;
- producing the short listing criteria and interview questions;
- countersigning the short listing form;
- acting as the HR representative on interview panels;
- advising all candidates of the outcome of the interview;
- requesting references in respect of the successful candidate and ensuring that all necessary pre-employment checks are completed and relevant documentation obtained;

- issuing contracts of employment;
- evaluating, monitoring and reporting on the recruitment process; and
- safeguarding fairness and ensuring reasonable standards of behaviour throughout the recruitment and selection exercise.

8.3 The **recruiting manager**, i.e. the line manager of the vacant post, is responsible for:

- reviewing the need for the recruitment exercise and obtaining an authority to recruit from their Head of Department / Director;
- updating or preparing a new job description and person specification as necessary;
- liaising with their HRA in respect of the development and management of the recruitment plan;
- participating in the selection panel.

8.4 The **chair** of the selection panel is responsible for:

- managing and leading the short-listing meeting and the selection interview;
- ensuring that appointments are made on merit;
- providing feedback to applicants (using input from other panel members);
- ensuring that all paperwork is passed to the HRA to ensure that the MHS has a record of all stages of the recruitment and selection process, including the reasons for selecting / rejecting applicants

9 Monitoring

9.1 Recruitment into the Civil Service is regulated by the Civil Service Order in Council 1995. The Order in Council requires that the Civil Service Commissioner audits recruitment policies and practices within the Civil Service to establish whether the Civil Service Recruitment Code is being observed. In addition, the MHS Verification and Audit Unit will conduct regular independent checks of recruitment systems for compliance with the Code.

9.2 HRAs will collect and record details of ethnicity, disability and gender at all key stages of the recruitment and selection process, namely, application, interview and appointment stages.

10 Review of Policy

10.1 The MHS and UNISON will jointly review this policy on a periodic basis.

11 Further Advice

11.1 Further advice on any aspect of this policy is available from the HRA or HR Support Unit.

Appendix 1 MHS HQ Recruitment & Selection Process





