

The SUN Network Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Recruitment Policy

Purpose

The most valuable asset to The SUN Network is its staff.

Our approach to recruitment and selection reflects on the importance of people to us.

It is important that we continually strive to achieve a fair, consistent, and systematic approach to recruitment and selection. This document provides information and procedures for everyone involved in the recruitment and selection process.

All representatives of the organisation are expected to support and adopt the approach outlined in this document.

In addition, all staff concerned with recruitment will have reference to the policies on:

- Equal Opportunities
- Confidentiality (including Data Protection)

Recruitment Checklist

- Job vacancy
- Job assessment
- Prepare job description and person specification
- Plan the selection process
- Prepare job pack including monitoring forms
- Advertise and publicise
- Dealing with enquiries
- Receipt of application form
- Shortlisting
- Preparation for interviews
- Interviewing
- Selection decision
- The conditional offer
- References, and other checks
- Feedback to unsuccessful applicants
- Confirm appointment
- Equal Opportunities monitoring and other documentation
- Induction

Job Description and Person Specification

When a job vacancy occurs, the Executive Director should consider:

- Whether there is still a need for the position
- Whether funding is still available

- Whether re-organisation of the work and redesigning the key tasks of the post should be considered
- Whether any employees are being made redundant. In these circumstances, if they could be suitable to the post (with training) they should be considered for the post on a permanent or trial basis.

The job description should be a simple and clear statement of the duties expected of the post and forms part of the post-holder's contract of employment.

It is recommended that all job descriptions include:

- Job title
- Location – where the post holder will be based
- Accountable to – who has responsibility for managing the post
- Overall purpose of job – a brief summary of the main purpose of the job (one or two sentences)
- The key responsibilities of the post and standards of performance for each of these responsibilities

It is recommended that, where appropriate, the key responsibilities should include details of: management responsibilities, service to the public, administrative and financial records, internal co- ordination, liaison with other organisations and a general statement (requirement to participate in training and to undertake reasonable other duties).

Each interview panel will be chaired by the Executive Director unless they have declared a conflict of interest. The panel may then include someone with lived experience and if required a third person.

Each job description must be accompanied by a person specification. This identifies the essential and desirable requirements for the post and provides the basis for:

- Advertising
- Shortlisting
- Interview questions
- Selection
- Training requirements

The person specification is designed to promote good, fair, and lawful recruitment practice. The essential requirements of the person specification should contain only requirements which are necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the post (i.e., the duties and responsibilities contained in the job description)

Desirable requirements will also be included in the person specification, but they should only be used to help the panel shortlist if there are a large number of

applicants meeting all the essential requirements. Desirable requirements must relate to the duties and responsibilities contained in the job description.

Job descriptions will be reviewed, by the Executive Director, on a regular basis to ensure that these continue to reflect the work to be done. Job descriptions can be amended to reflect new workstreams and responsibilities.

The person specification should cover the following areas:

- Education and Training: - consider what qualifications and training are essential before a person can carry out the job. Those without formal qualifications may still be able to demonstrate appropriate skills and knowledge.
- Experience – this may include non-waged experience and must relate to the duties of the post. The quality of a person’s experience is important rather than the length of their experience.
- Special skills and knowledge – this includes what a person needs to know or skills they need to have rather than what can be learned. Knowledge can include awareness or understanding that is not applied in their current role. This section can include awareness of equal opportunities, confidentiality, and customer care.
- Personality and disposition – this includes aspects of a person’s values and outlook, but only those qualities that directly relate to the job description.
- Special Circumstances: - this includes any other requirements that are essential for the post. For example, current driving licence and access to a vehicle, flexibility on working hours, obtaining a police record check (DBS), would all appear in this section, if appropriate.

If a candidate fails to meet the essential selection criteria, no matter how well they meet other criteria (including desirable requirements) they should not be short listed.

The Recruitment Panel

The recruitment panel should be established at the start of each recruitment process.

The members of the recruitment panel will be the only people who have responsibility for the selection process.

All staff involved in recruitment and selection must have undertaken appropriate training or have relevant experience.

The selection panel should be involved in:

- Agreeing the process
- Short-listing – individually checking applicants against the selection criteria and agreeing a shortlist
- Agreeing the interview programme, including interview questions and any selection test or presentation

- Conducting the interview – coming to an agreed decision on the outcome of the process
- Making the selection

While it may not always be possible to be involved in every aspect, it is essential that the people involved in the selection process contribute throughout the short-listing, interview and selection elements.

All candidates for a particular role should be interviewed by the same panel members. Only the panel makes the final selection decision.

It is recommended that the selection panel is a minimum of two people. Given the size of the organisation, no more than three people is recommended unless it is for the Executive Director's role.

Staff should only be involved in a selection panel for posts junior to themselves unless they can offer a specialist perspective and the Executive Director is also on the board,

All members of selection panels should be clear that any detailed or personal information about the applicants and any deliberations during short-listing or at interview are strictly confidential; except where it is appropriate to report to the Board of Directors.

If the recruitment panel members know the applicant, they must not allow any such knowledge to influence their decisions. The panel must rely wholly on the information provided by the candidate.

If any panel member knows the applicant, they must inform the other panel members by making a 'declaration of interest'.

A connection to a candidate may not prevent a panel member from participating in the selection process. However, when the panel member is considering the employment of a spouse, partner, close relative, or personal friend the panel member should not take part in the recruitment and selection process.

Advertising and Publicising Vacancies

Advertising may be the first point of contact with The SUN Network for many people. It is important that the advert reflects our values and gives potential candidates sufficient information to decide whether they can do the job.

The advert must include the following:

- The logo and the location of the job
- Job Title
- Salary –quoting the actual salary for part-time posts (pro rata)
- Number of hours per week
- Whether the contract is for a fixed term
- A summary of the essential requirements of the post from the job description.

- The CIC registration number
- The email address and phone number of contact person to obtain further details
- The closing date (unless it is open ended)
- The interview date and whether subject to DBS Posts will be advertised externally unless:
 - The post is for a temporary period of not more than 6 months
 - Internal re-organisation of a specific activity or the organisation has resulted in a revised post that includes a modest variation in job content
 - The responsibilities will be incorporated into an existing post.
 - The opportunity arises, where appropriate, to develop and progress an existing member of staff

In all cases where posts are not externally advertised approval will be sought from the Chair.

When advertising, consideration should be given to encouraging a wide cross section of applicants. Local advertising might include one or all of the following:

- Local press
- Job Centre
- Newsletters
- Social Media
- Local organisations

Application Form and Job Pack

The application form is to assess whether applicants meet the person specification criteria. All applicants must complete the application form and provide a covering letter demonstrating how they meet the criteria.

The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is to enable us to assess the effectiveness of our Equal Opportunities policy and improve the selection process. The Equal Opportunities form is a separate page, included with the application form so that it can be detached from completed applications before the shortlisting process. All candidates should be asked to complete and return the monitoring form. It should be made clear that the information provided does not form part of the selection process and will be kept separately.

The Job Pack: it is essential that all applicants receive the same information about the post and about us. The suggested checklist is:

- A copy of the job description
- A copy of the person specification
- An application form
- The Equal Opportunities monitoring form
- A reminder to the applicants about the closing date and interview date

- Explain that if applicants have not heard 5 working days before the interview date, they have not been short-listed
- Refer to the monitoring form and encourage people to complete and return it with their application
- Remind applicants that they should show how they meet the person specification
- Advise that CV's will not be accepted other than as providing supplementary information unless they are accompanied by a completed application form.
- Information pertaining to enquiries and receiving applications

All enquiries about job vacancies should be responded to in a clear and welcoming manner.

Informal enquiries about the post should be dealt with by a named contact who has knowledge of the post and access to the job description and person specification. Informal enquiries must be handled carefully to ensure that all candidates have the same information, and no unfair advantage is given to any candidate.

Job packs should ideally be sent out to candidates within two working days of the enquiry.

Arrangements will be made for one person to receive completed application forms to ensure there is confidentiality.

Application forms received after the closing date should not normally be put forward for short-listing. For all applications considered after the closing date a record of the reasons for making an exception must be documented and approved by the Executive Director.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for any candidate who requires them.

Shortlisting

Applicants will only be short-listed if the panel is satisfied that they meet ALL the essential criteria. Members of the recruitment panel will individually assess applicants against the criteria. It is essential that all panel members use the same method of assessment and apply it consistently.

Only information on the application form should be used. Shortlisting assessments should use the following scoring system:

- If there are not sufficient candidates who meet the essential requirements, careful consideration should be given as to whether to interview people who meet most of them or re-advertise. (If re-advertising, review the essential requirements first)
- If a conviction has been declared, a risk assessment should be carried out to decide whether the conviction will debar the candidate from the post

A letter should be sent to all short-listed candidates as soon as possible. The letter should include:

- Date and time of the interview
- The location of the interview
- Information about any tests or presentation
- Names and positions of the interview panel
- A request that the candidate confirms their intention to attend the interview

Unsuccessful candidates do not have to be contacted if you have already explained this in the original response.

All application forms and short-listing record forms for unsuccessful candidates should be kept for six months after the short-listing. These case records are necessary to show we acted fairly if a short-listing decision gives rise to a complaint or is considered by an employment tribunal.

If informal visits are arranged to see the premises and meet staff before the formal interview, it should be made clear that the visit does not form part of the interview process.

The Interview

Effective preparation is important for successful interviewing. The panel members must meet prior to the interviews to:

- Plan the structure and timing of the interview
- Consider the environment for the interview – layout of chairs and tables, temperature, lighting, ventilation, space, refreshments
- Agree how panel members will work together to gather information about the essential and desirable criteria
- Confirm that all the relevant papers are available to each panel member – application, job description, person specification, interview timetable, interview questions and interview recording form.

The purpose of the recruitment interview (and any tests or presentation) is to confirm that the candidates do meet all the essential criteria for appointment and identify the applicant(s) who best meet those criteria.

Questions should be prepared relating to the essential criteria which must be put to every candidate. It should be agreed in advance what the answers will need to contain to give a comprehensive response.

Supplementary questions linked to the job that arise from the application form or to elicit more information during the interview should also be included. It is more important to obtain the relevant information than stick rigidly to set questions. However, care must be taken not to treat one candidate differently from another.

The interview panel should be friendly and welcome the candidate and aim to put them at ease. Each panel member should be introduced by name and position.

An explanation of the agenda for the interview should be given to all candidates.

Explain to all candidates that notes will be taken during the interview. Candidates should do most of the talking.

Make sure that the candidate understands the job and ensure there is effective opportunity for candidates to raise any questions they may have.

Types of question:

- Questions need to be open to encourage candidates to talk
- Avoid leading questions because this virtually forces the candidate to agree with the interviewer
- Open questions will give a certain amount of information, but probing questions may need to be asked to obtain a fuller answer

E.g., “Tell me about - give me an example - when – why – how – did you...” Avoid subjectivity and error

The panel needs to be aware how their own experience and attitudes can distort perceptions.

Be aware of the risks of being favourably impressed by a candidate who answers a question in the way you might have done.

Do not be afraid to probe general or “waffling” responses.

Be aware of your own prejudices and share them with other panel members so that they can help to watch out for them.

Tell each candidate when the appointment decision will be made and when they will be notified. Interview expenses are not normally provided.

Each panel member should have interview assessment forms. This can be incorporated into the interview agenda with an assessment section after each question. Each panel member should determine the extent to which each candidate has met the person specification criteria, marking on the form in a consistent way e.g.

0 = not met 1 = met in part 2 = met

Each panel member should make their own assessment after each interview.

After the final interview, the chair should ask each panel member for their marks for each candidate, why they gave those marks and whether the candidate is appointable.

When more than one candidate is appointable, they should be ranked on their skills and experience.

The panel should aim to reach a consensus decision but majority voting maybe necessary after discussion.

When the final decision is reached, the chair of the panel should record the reasons for not appointing the other candidates and collect all the record forms from each panel member. These should be kept for a least six months. If there are no candidates who meet all or most of the person specification criteria, it is necessary to re-advertise. In these circumstances it is important to review the person specification criteria before advertising.

If a similar post becomes available within three months of the interview date, the panel may reconvene to consider whether they wish to offer the post to one of the unsuccessful candidates.

After the Interview

If possible, it is good practice to phone the successful candidate after the interview. All offers must be subject to satisfactory reference, proof of qualifications, and any other special conditions e.g., driving licence, disclosure and barring record check. The conditional offer should always be confirmed in writing.

Once the successful candidate has confirmed acceptance, unsuccessful candidates should be advised they will not be offered the post. They should be given the opportunity to receive feedback on their interview performance. The feedback should focus on positive aspects of the application and where they did not meet the criteria. No mention should be made of other candidates' performance.

References and Other Checks

References are used to confirm the selection decision

All appointments (except for internal appointments) should be subject to satisfactory references before they are confirmed.

A reference should always be sought from the selected candidate's current employer (or most recent if not currently employed).

References can be sought on all candidates short-listed for interview, prior to the interview provided that the candidate's consent has been given.

The job description and person specification should be included in all reference requests.

Where references are required immediately you may speed up the process by requesting an oral reference. Oral references should be confirmed in writing wherever possible.

If references are not satisfactory, a referee may be able to clarify information over the phone.

If, after clarification, a reference gives cause for concern a conditional offer, subject to references, can be withdrawn.

If, as a result of information provided by the candidate, there are health related issues that need to be considered, a risk assessment will be undertaken on the

applicant. Medical advice from their GP, consultant or other specialist medical advisor may be obtained to assist this process.

No person should start working unsupervised without having completed a satisfactory disclosure and barring service check.

Where criminal convictions are revealed, a candidate will not automatically be disbarred. The decision to appoint will be made on the nature of the offence and the identified risks attached to an appointment.

To establish that successful candidates have a 'right to work in the UK', identification documents will be requested prior to commencement of work.

Monitoring of information and Storing of Papers

Equal Opportunities monitoring forms should be analysed.

All application forms, short-listing records and interview assessment forms should be kept for six months after the date of interview. These are centrally held by the Executive Director.

In addition, a personnel record will be set up for the successful candidate and held by the Executive Director.

Complaints Procedure

An applicant who believes that their application for employment has not been dealt with in a fair and equitable manner is entitled to submit a complaint to the Chair of the Board.

Board of Directors

Recruitment to the Board may happen in one of two ways. It may be that the chair knows the Board can potentially be strengthened and a possibly suitable candidate expresses interest although no vacancy has been advertised. In these cases, recruitment may take place following a formal interview by the Chair and Executive Director.

When recruitment to the Board is essential, a full formal competitive process will be followed. As a minimum, the following steps should be followed:

- Vacancies should be advertised supported by a role profile
- Applications should be in writing – for example, a letter of application where the candidate outlines their suitability for the role
- A formal interview will take place to assess the candidates' qualifications
- The interview panel will comprise of the Chair and the Executive Director

The board may use a skills matrix to identify what extra skills the Board needs to maximise its effectiveness. If this leads to a particular skill set being required, this will be made clear in the advertisement and the subsequent process.

Approved by The SUN Network Board of Directors July 2024

Next Review Date: July 2027

Responsible Officer: Executive Director of The SUN Network.


A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Clift".

Signed:

Kev Clift

Chair of Directors

Date: 29th July 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lois Sidney".

Signed:

Lois Sidney

Executive Director

Date: 29th July 2024