



OUR PLACE GROUP

Recruitment and Selection Policy



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Recruitment and Selection

1.0 Introduction

Our Place fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding its children / young people in residence/education. Our Recruitment and Selection Policy applies to all staff, governors, consultants and volunteers working at Our Place.

The general principle of this policy is to ensure that we practice safer recruitment and selection and applies to the appointment of all staff, including, governance and leadership team, consultants and volunteers to work with our residents/pupils.

Recruitment and selection within Our Place will be based on sound and objective assessment criteria throughout the whole process. Requirements identified within current job descriptions and role profiles will form the basis of the assessment criteria. Our Place will ensure that the best candidates are selected based on their suitability and ability to fulfil the job requirements.

Our HR and Leadership Team involved in recruitment and selection decisions will have been appropriately trained and regularly updated on current legal requirements. Our Place has a comprehensive Recruitment and Selection Procedure that will be followed at all times. The Equal Opportunities Policy will also be followed at all stages of the recruitment process.

The success of Our Place will depend on the quality of our people, our aim is to always recruit the best possible person for the post, in doing this we may use any number of selection techniques such as, structured interviewing, psychometric testing, personality profile questionnaires, and task based assignments.

Adhering to this policy and procedure will ensure consistency, rigour and thoroughness in Our Place recruitment practices.

This policy has been written in conjunction with requirements under 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'

1.1 Recruitment and Selection Procedure Overview

This procedure must be read and followed by all those responsible for recruitment and selection decisions within Our Place. If you are unsure of any of the points raised, please speak to a member of the HR team.

This policy and procedure is a controlled document and should not be amended in any way. Updates will be issued by the Senior Management Team as and when required. The templates and forms mentioned throughout the procedure can be emailed and can be modified slightly to suit the individual requirements of each position.

This procedure will be followed for all external and internal appointments - whether full time, part time, fixed term or relief/casual employment.

Staff vacancies will be advertised internally and externally where appropriate.

2.0 Assessing a need for recruitment

Other avenues for fulfilling a post will be considered prior to advertising a vacancy to determine:

- If the post is necessary.
- Whether tasks could be performed elsewhere within the current staff team.
- Whether the post can be filled by an internal promotion or transfer, before advertising externally.

The job description/role profile will be revisited and any updates made; a discussion with the leaver will determine whether updates should be made. If appropriate, they may be asked to complete a work diary in their final few weeks. This will highlight exactly what the current role involves. Consideration will be given as to whether the job needs:

- Redefining
- Alterations in hours/salary
- New skill levels

2.1 Preparing to Recruit

For the creation of new posts, authorisation will be required from the Head of the relevant area or Head of HR for Management roles, this authorisation may be either verbal or written.

Identify who will be on the interview panel/appointment team. This will depend on the post but should involve a member of the HR team and ideally the direct line manager of the post.

Set up a Recruitment File this may be electronic utilising the ATS in place at Our Place.

The interview panel will prepare the assessment criteria (using the job description/role profile) on which panel members will short list candidates.

Prepare a series of interview questions (if not already in place) to allow the use of a scoring system against the answers where appropriate and consider whether other selection techniques will be used in addition to the interview such as testing, or tasks.

Prepare a suitable advertisement (may be internal or external or both) and consider the target audience. Ensure the statement regarding safeguarding and Our Place's commitment to it is present on every advert.

3.0 Information for Candidates

It is important to Our Place that potential applicants find the application process straightforward and positive. To support this, we will ensure that all requests for job details and an application form will be handled promptly. All enquirers will be directed to the website, where they can complete an application form or upload a CV (we will always ensure an application form is completed if a CV is received at initial contact) .

They will also find on the website the following information to support them in applying:

- Job Advert
- Job Description/Role Profile
- Information about the School/Home/Supported Living facility
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Employment of Ex-Offenders Statement
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

All applications received will be responded to - whether successful or unsuccessful.

All vacancy details will be kept in the Recruitment File, applications (successful and unsuccessful) and authorisations etc together. A vacancy number will be allocated so that all associated paperwork can be identified. Once the vacancy has been filled, only the successful candidates' paperwork will be removed and transferred to a personnel file - everything else should remain on the vacancy file and kept for 12 months subject to written authorisation from the applicant.

The Equal Opportunity Monitoring documents should also be retained in this file.

Reasonable requests for travelling expenses from candidates invited to interview may be considered.

4.0 Applications and Shortlisting

Once the closing date has passed, the appointment team/interview panel (which will be no less than 2 people) will shortlist the candidates using the criteria established during preparation.

If candidates fail to meet any aspect of the essential criteria, they should not be invited for interview.

Whilst Our Place will not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of age, it is important to refer to any regulations or standards set by organisations such as the Care Standards Commission with regards to the minimum age of staff if they are to be employed to look after children or young adults. Our Place will also refer to the regulations/standards on age when promoting staff to senior posts with direct responsibility for others looking after young people.

Candidates have the right to request copies of the selection information.

Our Place will inform unsuccessful candidates that they have not been invited to interview.

Internal candidates not selected for interview will be seen personally to discuss where their application did not meet the required criteria. This is an opportunity to discuss their future development and career aspirations and how they can improve for the future.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited in for interview explaining that referees will be contacted. Candidates will also be given the opportunity to advise of any special needs or adjustments needed for the interview.

All documentation with regards to recruitment and selection will be kept for a period of 12 months. All candidate documentation and information will be treated in confidence and restricted to those members of staff so authorised both during and after the recruitment process.

5.0 The Interview Process

The interview will be a standardised format appropriate to the position applied for but will also consist of questions that relate to safeguarding whereby candidates' values and judgement are questioned in view of the fact that the young people and children at Our Place are extremely vulnerable.

Interviews will be conducted by a minimum of 2 panel members.

Facilities will be made available for those with special needs.

Each panel member will keep their own interview record and scores. Interview records will identify the candidates' strengths and weaknesses and indicate clear and objective reasons for appointment or non-appointment.

The interview process may consist of more than one stage dependent on the position applied for and the process may include selection testing relevant to the position and it's responsibilities /accountabilities. Our children/YP's will be involved in the recruitment process in a meaningful way.

The candidate will not be informed of the decision on the day of the interview as Our Place wish to allow time to discuss and consider the applicant and also allow the candidate time to think about whether the job is suitable for them.

Once a decision has been made, Our Place will endeavour to inform the candidate and confirm the decision in writing as soon as possible. Any offer made should be a provisional offer subject to satisfactory references, employment health

questionnaire and DBS clearance. All candidates who are unsuccessful in interview will be informed in writing at the earliest opportunity.

Our Place will offer external candidates interview feedback (whether successful or unsuccessful), on request.

6.0 References / Referees

A complete and thorough reference check will be completed before any candidate is offered the post unconditionally. Obtaining references for candidates seeking work with Our Place is an essential part of a robust Safer Recruitment process.

Our Place will obtain at least two references one being from the current or most recent employer, and any other previous employers we feel necessary (if they have been in current post for a short period for example). A written record must be kept on the personnel file for any reason for a break in service in the care profession. Once Our Place have received the references, the referees will be telephoned for verbal verification of the reference. If a person employed for our Care teams has previously worked in a position involving work with children or vulnerable adults, verification so far as reasonably practicable of the reason why the employment or position ended will be sought.

The interview panel must consider the references before making any firm offer of employment.

References are requested to be written on headed paper or have an attached business compliments slip, or be accompanied by a business stamp or be sent from a business email address with the credentials of the individual supplying the reference.

7.0 Familiarisation Tour

As the field we work in is a specialised one, candidates for Support Worker or equivalent roles, who are invited to interview will be asked to undertake a familiarisation walk around the home/school for a short period of time so that both we and they can gain a better insight into the candidates suitability and understanding of the role that they are about to carry out.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a risk assessment will be completed to ensure the safety of all candidates, employees and of course the young people in our care to check suitability for a familiarisation tour. To ensure as safety as much as possible, candidates will be asked to administer a lateral flow test and where PPE should whenever they are invited to site.

8.0 Requests to Visit

Applicants will not be permitted to visit the site unless they are selected and invited to interview, although the Director may agree to certain visits.

Any tour of the site will be supervised and offered to all interviewees as a preliminary to the interview itself. Our Place is aware that the dignity and privacy of young people within a residential and/or school setting must be respected. In addition to this, during the COVID-19 pandemic, requests for visits will be reviewed in the context of any risk posed due to the current global pandemic.

The person giving the tour will not be part of the interview panel. Any comments made by the applicant during the tour, or by the person giving the tour are relevant will be used as part of the selection process.

9.0 Pre-Employment Checks

9.1 Right to Work Checks

All employers in the UK have a responsibility to prevent illegal working. You do this by conducting simple right to work checks before you employ someone, to make sure the individual is not disqualified from carrying out the work in question by reason of their immigration status. Where employees have restrictions on their entitlement to be in the UK, basic document checks will need to be repeated at least every 12 months.

Our Place will undertake pre-employment 'right to work' checks in line with legal requirements outlined by UK Government <https://www.gov.uk/employers-checks-job-applicants>

9.2 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Enhanced check for regulated activity

Our Place gives a home and education to young people and children with severe learning disabilities and associated challenging behaviours. Our residents are amongst the most vulnerable. All staff are therefore subject to DBS clearance.

The process for this is as follows:

Following selection and the acceptance of a conditional offer of employment the applicant will be invited into Our Place where they will start the process of DBS clearance. Our Place uses Atlantic Data for its DBS clearing.

The applicant needs to bring with them:

- 1 photo proof of identity – passport, driving licence
- At least 2 other proofs of identity these can include:
 - Utility bills
 - Council tax bill
 - Bank statement
 - NHS medical card
 - National insurance number
 - Full birth certificate
 - Mobile phone bills

All of the bills must be dated within the last three months

There is no requirement for our school (Our Place School) to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate, if the person joining our school had been in employment in a school/another institution with further education in England, in a role that brought the person regularly into contact with children, for a period which ended not more than three months before the person's appointment.

The lead responsibility for the processing of the information sits with the HR Team. Although some of the Directors are registered to be able to use the system.

Once the DBS is returned to Our Place a decision is made as to whether to make a firm offer of employment please refer to the Vetting and Barring section and employing Ex-Offenders section in this policy with regard to negative disclosures.

Atlantic Data Ltd.,
PO Box 5531
Milton Keynes
MK7 6YD

Our Place can also obtain a List 99 or POCA check during the DBS process. All appointments are subject to a satisfactory DBS being received. Employees who will work with children or vulnerable adults will not begin work until the disclosure has been received back from the DBS and the Head of HR is happy with the content.

Once a disclosure is received back from the DBS, Our Place will store the Disclosures on a Personnel record which is locked away. Our Place will ensure that the personnel file shows that the Disclosure was clear or where it was not clear, the record has been discussed with the employee and we are happy with the outcomes.

DBS Renewal Checks:

Our Place Schools are committed to ensuring the safety of the children/young people that we serve. We therefore will ensure we have a robust system in place to ensure staff are obliged to report anything a DBS check would pick up.

For existing staff members, we will ask for a new DBS check if:

- There are concerns about a staff member or volunteer's suitability to work with children/young people
- A person moves from a post that was not regulated activity into work that is regulated activity
- It has been 3 years since the previous DBS check has been conducted.

9.3 Prohibition Order – Teacher Status Checks

Since the 1st September 2013, it has been a statutory requirement that a Prohibition Order check must be made for any teacher the school employs. This is different to a barred list check (obtained via the DBS). The prohibition check can be made via the Employer Access service.

Through the Employer Access service, schools can check:

- teacher's personal details
- initial teacher training qualifications
- qualified teacher status
- induction status
- supplementary qualifications
- details of any active sanctions
- a suspension or conditional order imposed by the General Teaching Council for England (prior to abolition) that is still current
- prohibition from teaching

Following selection and the acceptance of the conditional offer of employment the applicant will be asked to confirm their TRN upon which the Teacher Status Check will be undertaken.

9.4 Section 128 Checks

There is a requirement to undertake an additional check for those in management roles at Independent schools, Academies and Free schools, to ensure they are not prohibited under Section 128 provisions.

A Section 128 direction prohibits or restricts a person from taking part in the management of an Independent school, Academy or Free school. This includes Governors, Directors and Trustees.

Members of proprietary bodies, including Governors, Trustees and Directors, as well as the Headteacher must be checked.

As the term 'management' is not defined in the legislation, it is a decision for the school to determine whether a post requires this check. A school may be asked to justify a decision not to carry out a check, if an issue arises.

Here at Our Place, we will conduct the checks on the roles above and all employees party to our Senior Leadership Team.

9.5 Overseas Work Check

If a candidate has lived or worked outside of the UK for more than 12 months (whether continuously or in total) in the last 10 years while aged 18 or over we are obliged to conduct a further check which will require us to undertake a criminal record check in the relevant country and obtain a 'Certificate of Good Character'

Further guidance and information on UK Government requirements can be found at:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

There is no requirement for our school (Our Place School) to obtain an overseas work check, if the person joining our school had been in employment in a school/another institution with further education in England, in a role that brought the person regularly into contact with children, for a period which ended not more than three months before the person's appointment.

10.0 Vetting and Barring

Our Place offers a home and education to disabled children/young people many of whom have severe communication difficulties. This means that our children are extremely vulnerable, therefore our recruitment and selection process must be vigorous in its vetting of staff.

Our Place will undertake the following:

- Shortlisted candidates will be asked to provide details of all unspent convictions and those that would not be filtered, prior to the date of the interview. They will be asked for further information about their criminal history during the recruitment process.
- Offers of employment will be made subject to a DBS clearance, Teacher Status Check (where appropriate) and two written and verbal verifications. All employees will be expected to register with the DBS Update Service.
- All job offer letters will make clear that the offer is made subject to a DBS check and written references with verbal verification from those referees, one of whom **must** be the last employer.
- On return of the documents any negative disclosures will be subject to a meeting of the SMT, referral to the school's solicitor, further verification from the applicant and previous employer.
- Final decisions as to employing an applicant with a negative indicator is at the discretion of the Head of Care this will be based upon the nature of the negative incident and all the other information and legal opinion.
- Ongoing self-disclosure checks will be conducted during your continued employment.

11.0 Mental and Physical Fitness

Employees of Our Place need a sufficient standard of health and physical fitness to enter employment. Education and Care is a demanding yet rewarding career and all staff will have a duty of care for the children in their charge. The health, education, safety and welfare of our residents are an important factor in deciding on an individual's health and physical capacity work at Our Place. Applicants with a disability will not be deterred from considering employment at Our Place, and the HR team have a duty under the Equality Act to make reasonable adjustments.

Once a conditional offer is made, all successful candidates must complete an Employment Health questionnaire. This will be considered, and a decision will be made as to suitability for employment

The SMT will check any gaps in employee's employment or educational records and may raise doubts over their health and physical capacity to work at Our Place. This will be dealt with at interview by asking potential employees for an explanation of any gaps in their employment or educational history.

12.0 Offers of appointment

The formal offer and contract of employment/statement of terms and conditions will be sent as soon as possible to successful interviewees (whether internal or external).

The HR Team will administer this paperwork once the details have been agreed.

A copy of the signed Contract of Employment will be kept on the employees Personnel File.

Details of the offer and who it was made to will be kept in the recruitment file.

13.0 Employment of ex-employees of those with a DBS certificate

If previous employees are to be appointed again, the entire process detailed above will be followed.

If the break in service is between one and three months, we may use much of the original recruitment paperwork, providing we are happy with its quality and detail, we will check that address and bank details for example, have not changed. Our Place will also obtain a reference to confirm what the ex-staff member has been doing during their break.

The employee will be required to complete a new DBS Application.

If we are employing someone who already has a DBS Disclosure or there is a recent DBS Disclosure on the ex-employees file, Our Place will need to complete a new Application and ensure the employee does not work with children or vulnerable adults until this has been received back and is satisfactory.

14.0 Employment of ex-offenders

We are aware of our responsibility under the Police Act 1997 not to discriminate applicants based on their criminal record.

The Company requires you to provide details of any relevant criminal record at an early stage in the application process. Specific rules about which convictions and spent convictions you should disclose and those you need not disclose - known as "protected convictions" - are contained in legislation.

Any such information should be sent in a separate confidential letter to the designated person. Only those who need to see it as a formal part of the recruitment process will have access to this information.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent you from being appointed.

All roles that require a DBS check will outline this in the advert. An application for a DBS certificate will be submitted for all candidates once they have been offered the position.

During the recruitment process, Our Place Group will ensure that a discussion between the recruitment panel takes place to evaluate any offences or other matters relevant to the position that are disclosed. Any recruitment decision will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offence(s). The Company will discuss with you the relevance of any offence to the job in question.

Candidates will be informed that failure to reveal any information which is directly related to the post could result in withdrawal of an offer of employment. Any DBS certificates that reveal criminal information will be discussed with the individual, and their eligibility for the position will be reviewed

All applicants will be given a copy of the Groups Recruitment of Ex-offenders statement prior to the interview.

15.0 Employment of supply / agency staff

If using staff from a reputable outside agency, Our Place will obtain written assurance that all the appropriate background and DBS checks are complete and satisfactory - before they commence work. On arrival the agency staff member will be required show their DBS Disclosure to a relevant manager, the date and disclosure number will be recorded.

Our Place will ensure that an agency should be able to confirm the following to us:

- the identity of the worker has been checked and verified (name, dob, address etc)
- qualifications relevant to role have been checked
- permission received for them to work if outside EEA
- Enhanced DBS completed and satisfactory
- Dates all checks above were made.

16.0 Voluntary workers and Consultants

As with all permanent and relief/casual staff, a full record should be kept for each volunteer and external consultant working with or around children and vulnerable adults - containing the same evidence of recruitment checks, DBS Disclosure, identity and qualifications, and that all are satisfactory.

17.0 Internal staff transfers

Our Place may advertise internal placements and offer this as a secondment opportunity. The successful candidate will be 'seconded' to the post for a minimum of six months.

After the six month period:

The post may be offered on a permanent basis if the candidate has performed well within the role or, The secondment period may be extended for up to another 6 months for the SMT to decide if the candidate is suitable - perhaps give more training or supervision opportunities or,

The secondment period will end due to unsatisfactory performance within the role; the candidate will return to their original position or be offered a suitable alternative.

Service will be considered as continuous if moved to another position within Our Place and a further probationary period to the position will not apply, however an induction and development/training plan will be necessary.

18.0 Induction

Our Place believes that a well-planned induction enables new employees to become fully operational quickly and will make them feel more at ease in their new surroundings.

Once a start date has been agreed, the induction planning process will begin whether it is an external or internal appointment.

The process will include:

- The completion of any employment documentation
- A training plan
- An explanation of key policies and procedures
- Explanation of the Our Place Employee policies and procedures and where they can be found

- An explanation of the duties and how this fits into the wider context of the organisation
- A description of reporting structures
- Site orientation
- Issuing tools/ equipment/ handbook/ keys etc.

19.0 Employment of Relatives and Friends

Our Place believes that relatives should not be employed where one may have the authority to influence the discipline of, payments made to, or the career development of another.

Relatives and those in a relationship cannot be employed within the same unit/section where there may be collusion on confidential information or security issues, or where the activities of one may compromise the other.

Members of the SMT will never interview a relative or a friend for a position with Our Place - this should be undertaken by a manager not known to the applicant.

For more information you should refer to the Personal Relationships policy.

20.0 Interview Feedback

Our Place will offer feedback to internal candidates and external applicants when requested.

Feedback given will be factual and honest, succinct, based upon measurable criteria supported by evidence, focused on positives and will provide advice on where the candidate can improve or gain wider experience.

21.0 Staff Files

On appointment a staff file will be created, we currently operate both manual and electronic staff files - every piece of information relevant to the recruitment process for that individual goes on this file.

Hard copy – loose sheets will be attached and nothing be filed loosely. An Appointment Checklist will be attached to the front of the file to list administration required in order to fulfil the requirements of this policy and procedure and the requirements of Ofsted and those that inspect staff files.

As part of regulatory compliance Our Place Schools also operates a single central register which holds staff data, the single central register is checked regularly by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

22.0 Requests to supply a reference

All requests that come into Our Place for employee references (whether past or present) should be completed by the HR Team in consultation with the relevant departmental Head.

Anyone who supplies a reference on the Our Place's behalf who is not authorised to do so will be subject to disciplinary action.

Our Place will ensure that the reference given for the member of staff will state if they know of any reason why the staff member should not be employed to work with children/vulnerable adults.

23.0 Adaptations to recruitment process incorporating COVID-19 restrictions

Our Place is aware that we care for young people who may be clinically vulnerable and recognise the responsibility we have to ensure their health and wellbeing and that of our employees and prospective employees. In order to ensure this, during periods of full 'lockdowns' or when working from home is advisable we will implement our COVID-19 recruitment process.

In order to minimise footfall onsite, where possible, all interviews will take place via Zoom or Teams. The same criteria will be used as would be used for face-to-face interviews, including the selection criteria, composition of the selection panel etc.

Where possible, we will endeavour to meet with candidates prior to their start date to complete their familiarisation tour and meet each individual in person before their start date. We do acknowledge, during periods of total lockdown this will not be possible and we will endeavour to mitigate any impact resulting from this.

For the avoidance of doubt, please note that this procedure is not contractual and can be amended by the Company from time to time without notice. For the purposes of these rules and procedures, reference to the Company mean Our Place Group and any subsidiary of that organisation.