

Human Resources

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY

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South Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue
WORKING FOR A SAFER
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

1. Recruiting and selecting the right people is of paramount importance to the continued success of South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue (SYFR). This Recruitment and Selection Policy sets out how to ensure, as far as possible, that the best people are recruited on merit and that the recruitment process is free from bias and discrimination.
2. SYFR are committed to ensuring equality and diversity is promoted across all our activities and work areas. SYFR promise that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marital and civil partnership status, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, trade union activity or political belief. We are working hard to embrace and mainstream equality legislation and good practice in our day to day business to ensure excellence for our staff and service users.
3. The Equality Act 2010 places a responsibility on organisations to monitor, amongst other things, their recruitment processes to ensure they are not discriminatory. This policy aims to achieve a fair and consistent approach that eliminates discrimination and meets SYFR's commitment to promote equality and diversity. The provisions of this Policy comply with the current legal framework relating to employment, recruitment and selection. It will be reviewed and updated as necessary when changes in legislation apply.
4. The way SYFR offers posts to communities and to staff, including promotion and training opportunities is a crucial area for ensuring direct and indirect discrimination does not occur. This Policy and the associated range of policies, procedures and guidance to staff and managers, and training, identifies key processes and requirements to ensure fairness, transparency and non-discrimination - from open communication of opportunities through crafting job descriptions and person specifications, ensuring access in all recruitment processes and reasonable adjustments in offering posts - this and associated policies specify steps which will be taken to ensure non-discrimination. SYFR has both general and specific duties to proactively promote equality throughout our recruitment & selection activities in respect of the protected characteristics. These factors together determine the approach that SYFR takes in relation to recruitment and selection which is to set out good practice in recruitment, taking account of relevant legislation and SYFR policies and procedures, particularly those in respect of equality and diversity opportunities by:-
 - providing a fair and systematic way of selecting the most suitable candidate for any given vacancy
 - avoiding indirect discrimination by using competencies (Person Specifications and Personal Qualities and Attributes) for selection to every post to ensure the accurate identification of skills
 - giving employees the maximum opportunity to develop their careers and achieve their work potential
 - utilising selection procedures which are designed to assess candidates against a range of specified criteria
 - giving clear guidance to managers involved in each aspect of the recruitment process to ensure consistency of application
 - ensuring candidates for jobs or training are not disadvantaged due to particular requirements they may have relating to religious observance, disability, part-time availability, caring or parental responsibilities. SYFR operates a guaranteed interview scheme for disabled candidates and is committed to making reasonable adjustments in employment.

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5. SYFR is committed to:
 - selecting candidates for posts on merit, ensuring the best match of job to skills of applicants
 - ensuring, through open and targeted advertisement, all communities and existing staff get equal chance to apply for posts
 - ensuring that the people we employ reflect the diverse communities we serve and have a full range of skills and competencies we need for a modern fire service
 - becoming an employer of choice to the diverse communities we serve
 - utilising a talent management and development focus which ensures equality whilst maximising the potential of all staff.
6. The Recruitment and Selection Policy serves the following purposes:
 - to set out good practice, taking account of relevant legislation and SYFR policies and procedures, particularly those in respect of equality and diversity
 - to provide practical, responsive guidance to all those who have responsibility for recruitment and selection – line managers, and Human Resources (HR) staff
 - to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in recruitment and selection processes
 - to encourage, recruit and retain the best applicants to SYFR by developing and monitoring effective and accountable administrative and selection procedures
 - to clarify our commitment to and requirement for all managers involved in recruitment or selection processes or decisions to be trained in R&S and E&D

SCOPE

7. This policy covers all the elements of the recruitment and selection process from determining if a vacancy exists to appointing a candidate, including any temporary or permanent selection or promotion process. Reference should also be made to the Uniformed Promotion Policy.
8. All those persons referred to within the scope of this policy are required to be familiar with the terms of this policy. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy must be discussed with the HR Organisational Development (OD) team prior to any action being taken.
9. Normally appointments must be made in accordance with this policy and must, therefore, be subject to advertisement and interview. The HR OD team must approve any exceptions in advance of formal appointment, for example, where 'exceptional circumstances' apply (see Exceptional Circumstances Recruitment Policy, or internal recruitment only approaches, Redeployment Procedure. Any exceptions will be time limited and reviewed regularly).
10. Financial approval for the establishment of a new post or the filling of a vacancy must be obtained before recruitment commences. Function Heads should therefore complete the relevant Business Case form and submit to the Executive team for approval.

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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

11. SYFR recognises that its employees are the key to its success. It is therefore vital that SYFR is able to attract the most suitable candidate for the post which will contribute to meeting organisational objectives.
12. Recruitment and selection decisions will be based solely on an individual's ability to do the job. Performance will be judged only against objective work related criteria.
13. The following elements apply to all recruitment and selection processes:-
 - all vacant posts will be advertised openly and as widely as practicable except when internal redeployment is available, in which case special arrangements apply as outlined in the Redeployment Policy
 - unfair barriers to applicants must be eliminated, such as conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justified
 - all staff will be dealt with fairly and consistently in accordance with the agreed procedures for recruitment and selection
 - all applicants will be assessed irrespective of race, ethnicity, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marital and civil partnership status, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, trade union activity or political belief.

DISABLED APPLICANTS

14. SYFR is a Disability Symbol user (also known as the '2 ticks' symbol), which means that it has signed up to the following commitments:-
 - to interview all disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for a vacancy, this is identified by the essential criteria on the person specification
 - to ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees their development and work related needs (PDR)
 - to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
 - to ensure all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make our commitments work
 - to review the commitments annually and to plan ways to improve.

SYFR also has a Disability Policy which outlines SYFR's approach to employment practices; that all existing, potential and ex-employees are treated fairly and without discrimination on the basis of disability.

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

15. SYFR will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to ensure selection requirements and competencies for jobs are identified to avoid unnecessary requirements, which may lead to indirect discrimination, and ensure all posts are open to all including disabled candidates. SYFR are committed to promoting disability equality and will actively consider requests for reasonable adjustments to candidates for posts, staff or customers, if they apply a provision, criterion or practice, or where any physical feature of premises, places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to persons who are not disabled.

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This can include, for example, providing special equipment, altering or removing specific tasks from job descriptions or altering the way tasks are done. Any reasonable adjustments will be based on the needs of the disabled person to perform the job well and what is considered reasonable.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

16. SYFR is committed to developing and implementing flexible working practices which will assist in the recruitment and selection of employees with the right skills and experience who are not able to work full time. This could be due to disability, childcare or other caring responsibilities. The options available include:

- Flexible working hours
- Childcare Vouchers
- Flexi time scheme
- Job share
- Career break scheme
- Parental leave

POSITIVE ACTION

17. SYFR is working hard to embrace and mainstream equality legislation and good practice in our day to day business to ensure excellence for our staff and service users. This includes taking positive action where significant under-representation can be demonstrated.

18. SYFR is committed to building a workforce that is representative of the diverse communities we serve. Where the profile of SYFR or a particular department or work area shows significant under representation of groups in the community, in accordance with the Positive Action Policy, and Equality Act 2010, SYFR will undertake targeted positive action in jobs or levels of management.

TRAINING AND GUIDANCE

19. It is recognised that in order to make quality recruitment or selection decisions the appointing officers must have the appropriate skills. Therefore a programme of training will be made available for all appointing officers.

JOB EVALUATION

20. Managers must give careful consideration to the vacancy before beginning the recruitment process via the Business case Form.

21. Once the job description (JD) and person specification (PS) has been drafted (see Guidance for Managers Restructuring) and checked by the HR OD team, the JD & PS will be analysed by using a computerised Job Evaluation system (for support staff roles) which will allocate an appropriate grade. Managers should be aware that this process will take a minimum of seven working days (see Job Evaluation policy). Operational posts are evaluated through the Rank to Role Scheme and will also take a minimum of seven working days.

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JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

22. The JD sets out the overall purpose of the job and the main tasks to be carried out and is the basis of the recruitment process, from which the PS will be derived.
23. The PS will state the necessary and desirable criteria for selection. In general specifications should include details of skills, competencies, knowledge and experience. For example, if one of the duties of the job is “to produce regular statistical reports from Excel spreadsheets”, previous experience of producing reports using Excel is likely to be a desirable requirement for the post. It is important to be specific about actual requirements of the posts and not to include any unnecessary or imprecise requirements which may lead to illegal indirect discrimination (see Guidance for Line Managers (Restructuring) for details).
24. Posts may change over time. It is expected that minor changes in the duties of a job will take place without altering the general character of the job or the level of responsibility. Such changes would not normally be expected to affect the grade of the job. Any significant changes resulting in increased duties will be reviewed by the HR OD team.
25. The JD/PS will provide information to potential applicants and act as a basis for testing, interview questions etc. during the selection process, for example when designing assessment activities and making decisions between candidates. These JD/PS will also be used to communicate expectations about standards, specifically in the PDR.
26. Support on writing the JD/PS is provided in the Guidance for Line Managers (Restructuring).

ADVERTISING

Internal Advertising

27. SYFR will advertise all vacancies, including all temporary vacancies, promotion and acting up opportunities, internally to encourage applications from suitably qualified internal candidates to ensure there are reasonable opportunities for internal promotion and career development.

External Advertising

28. When advertising externally, in support of the organisation’s equality and diversity commitments, steps will be taken to ensure that vacancies either appear in publications which are most likely to reach members of all sections of the community or are circulated to representative community groups.

GUARANTEED INTERVIEW SCHEME

29. As part of the ‘two ticks’ scheme, we are committed to interviewing all disabled applicants who meet the published essential criteria for any advertised post.

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EXCEPTIONS TO THE EQUALITY ACT

30. There are very limited circumstances when it is lawful to treat people differently because of a protected characteristic and there must be an objective justification for treating people differently. For example, a minimum age for the recruitment of firefighter employees due to the training requirements involved in the role. There could also be an occupational requirement that a person must be of a certain gender or be able to carry out specific tasks. For example, a women's refuge may want to employ only women as counsellors; its client base is only women who are experiencing domestic violence mainly committed by men. This would probably be a genuine occupational requirement.

You can also ask questions about health or disability in a limited range of circumstances;

- to find out if any applicant needs reasonable adjustments for the recruitment process, such as for an assessment or an interview or to find out if a person can carry out that function with reasonable adjustments in place
- to find out if a person (whether they are a disabled person or not) can take part in an assessment as part of the recruitment process, including questions about reasonable adjustments for this purpose
- because having a specific impairment is an occupational requirement for a particular job (for example a counselling service for people with mental health conditions requires a counsellor who has personal experience of mental health conditions)
- where the question relates to a person's ability to carry out a function that is intrinsic (or absolutely fundamental) to that job. An example could be a role that requires a lot of heavy manual handling, you could ask a candidate with a mobility impairment whether they could manage handling heavy goods (but not about how the impairment would affect them in getting to the workplace, because this is not something that is intrinsic to the job itself). For further information refer to the Disability Policy or advice from HR Employment Services /Equality and Diversity Managers.

APPLICATION

31. All candidates will be required to submit an application form for the post they wish to apply for. This will request basic information, educational achievements, training and a personal statement detailing how the applicant meets the requirements on the PS / Personal Qualities & Attributes for the post. Candidates will be provided with guidance on how to complete application forms as appropriate.

EQUALITY MONITORING

32. All personal data (i.e. name, gender etc) will be removed from the application form before it is forwarded to recruiting / short listing managers so that the sift panel are only able to view information directly related to the skills / abilities detailed by the applicant in order to demonstrate suitability for the post.
33. Candidates requiring the application form in different formats (such as different font size / coloured paper) should contact the HR OD team.

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SIFT / SHORTLISTING

34. All application forms will be collated by the closing date and provided to the sift / shortlisting panel. This will normally include two managers within the recruiting Function. HR OD will sample the sift decisions.
35. Candidates will be sifted against the PS and the highest scoring applicants will be forwarded to the interview stage. SYFR will aim to manage the number of applicants interviewed per vacant post. Once managers have completed the sift / shortlist, all documentation should be returned to HR; any delay in returning this paperwork could lead to a delay in the next stages of the process. Notes taken by the interview panel may be made available to the candidate if requested and notes are also transferred to the personal record file for successful candidates. Employment tribunals may request to see notes of all candidates from a recruitment process if a complaint is made so LM's need to ensure that the notes they take are appropriate.

SELECTION

36. Appointment decisions will be made on the basis of all the information available to the interview panel, including the results of tests or other exercises (where applicable). Tests and exercises will be used to assess the essential requirements on the person specification and will be relevant to the duties of the job.
37. Managers will not base their selection decisions around any prior knowledge that they have of candidates. Selection decisions will be based solely on performance at interview and the highest scoring candidate(s) will secure the post(s). If two are more individuals overall interview score is equal then the technical questions will be weighted higher (see Restructure Guidance for Managers)
38. All candidates will be asked in advance, in all appropriate documentation, if they require any support at any of the recruitment testing stages. Candidates will be given a telephone contact number to enable further discussion if required.
39. Reasonable adjustments may need to be made to the selection process for disabled candidates. HR will contact disabled candidates in advance to explain the arrangements and provide them with an opportunity to indicate any relevant effects of their impairment and suggest reasonable adjustments where required.
40. SYFR will make every effort to accommodate the availability of candidates, taking account of annual leave, caring responsibilities, maternity leave, religious observance issues etc. Advance notice of any dates will be advertised at the earliest opportunity.

THE SELECTION PANEL

41. Depending on the nature of the post being filled, selection panels will consist of at least two people. Panel members will have received the relevant recruitment and selection and equality and diversity guidance or training and have a good understanding of all policies and procedures which relate to recruitment and selection. Where possible (and subject to availability) a HR representative will be on the panel to ensure objectivity and consistency.

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INTERVIEW

42. Structured questioning will be consistently applied to all candidates, but slightly different supplementary questions may be asked, depending on answers previously given and to seek clarification on points from their application form. Feedback will be available upon request for all interview candidates.

APPOINTMENT

43. The highest scoring candidate(s) will be appointed to the vacant post(s). Should there be two equally matched candidates in terms of score, the most essential questions will be weighted.

REFERENCING

44. References will be taken up after selection and any appointment will be subject to the receipt of at least two satisfactory references.

RELOCATION

45. Where the most suitable candidate for a post is required to relocate in order to work for SYFR, expenses may be available. Further guidance is available in the Relocation Policy.

INDUCTION

46. The Corporate Induction policy will be issued to all new starters and completed in conjunction with their Line Manager.

FURTHER INFORMATION

47. Guidance to support recruiting Line Managers and candidates is available on the Intranet.

If you require any further guidance on this document, please contact the HR OD team.