

National Autistic Society

Recruitment and Selection

Policy and Procedure

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This guidance should be read in conjunction with Recruitment Guide for Managers, Safer Recruitment Guidance and Involving People with Autism in Recruitment)

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Scope

Our aim is to recruit the right person for every vacancy across the charity. In order to achieve this, our charity has adopted a value-led approach to the recruitment and retention of staff.

This policy explains our charity's commitment to the process of recruiting and retaining staff members based on good practice and our values.

The policy complies with the requirements of relevant employment legislation in accordance with current good practice.

Policy Summary

The policy sets out how we will recruit high quality staff who share our charity's values and can demonstrate these in their behaviour.

It also explains how the charity will address any breach of this policy.

Core Principles

Our recruitment process will:

- Be values led
- Provide the opportunity for applicants to find out more about our charity
- Have autistic people either as panel members or participating in the recruitment process at different stages.
- Be based on fairness and good practice.

All staff members involved in recruitment and selection will have a duty to take action to eliminate discrimination throughout the recruitment and selection process.

Our charity encourages applicants on the autistic spectrum to apply for roles that are of interest to them, if a disabled applicant meets the minimum criteria on the advert then they are guaranteed an invite to interview.

Our Values

- **We learn from real experience.** We've spent over 50 years working together with people on the autism spectrum. No one has more practical knowledge of autism. But we move with the times and we understand that there's always more to learn.
- **We tell it like it is.** We share what we have learned about autism, so that more people can make informed decisions and lead the best lives possible.
- **We inspire.** We celebrate progress, open up new possibilities, spur people into action and motivate change.
- **We are courageous.** We won't accept ignorance or inequality, and we'll never stop pushing for more understanding, greater support and a better world for people on the autism spectrum.

Breach of Policy

The charity will consider a breach of policy as alleged misconduct or gross misconduct. The Conduct Management Procedure sets out how a breach in NAS policy is addressed.

Related Policies and Guidance

- Scottish Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme – HR-0031
- Disclosure and Barring Service – HR0023
- Safer Recruitment Guidance for NAS Schools and Services
- Induction & Probation Policy –HR-5007
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy –HR0005
- Secondment Policy – HR0017

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Where changes in employment legislation occur that directly affect this policy these will be reflected with immediate effect.

The procedure:

The procedure below explains the steps to be taken to ensure that we recruit the right person for every vacancy.

Recruitment Cycle

Vacancies will occur due to several factors:

- New services being developed
- Resignations and dismissals
- Permanent reduction in an existing employee's hours e.g. due to flexible working request creating additional hours that need to be filled.
- Temporary recruitment to cover long term absence e.g. maternity/adoption leave or secondment

Identifying a vacancy

The recruiting manager working with the HR team will determine if there is a vacancy and the best possible ways to recruit or to reorganise the role. In order to do this the recruiting manager will consider the following:

- Establish if the vacancy exists in the establishment list and in the staff budget
- Decide on an appropriate recruitment model (type 1- Assessment centres, 2 – Interviews or 3- Fresh to Autism) [Appendix 1]
- Review whether the vacancy needs to be filled and if so by what grade, skill mix, etc, and if the vacancy can be a home-based post.
- Review or prepare a job description, which identifies/outlines the responsibilities and duties of the post.
- Review or prepare a person specification that indicates the experience, knowledge, ability, skills, and competencies required for the post under the essential and desirable headings.

Any new or revised job descriptions and person specifications will need to be evaluated by HR.

Approval process

The approval process for all vacancies is as follows:

- **The Recruiting manager** completes the vacancy template using the online process
- **Local HR Teams** verifies the vacancy against the establishment and budget
- **Finance and Business Leaders** will receive the requests for approval and are responsible for approving vacancies
- **Central HR** will evaluate any new or revised job descriptions

Advertising

Once the role is approved, an advert will be placed.

- Vacancies will be posted on the website and internally using approved advert templates.
- All adverts and attachments must be of high quality and must include a role and team description; key details such as closing date, salary, and location
- If applicable consult with marketing team and/or advertising agencies with regards to specific advertisement campaigns - corporate branding must always be taken into account.

Application process

- Applicants will be encouraged to apply for all roles through our online job portal.
- Applications could either be made by following a one step process where the applicants are asked to complete a long application form.
- Alternatively, the completion of applications may follow a two-step process where applicants are asked to send in their CV's and complete a short application form. This allows them to show an interest in a role by providing basic details such as their personal information. In such circumstances the applicant will be required to complete the 'dates check for applicant's form' prior to the interview or as part of the post recruitment process. Where the applicant is invited for an interview or an assessment day, they will be required to complete the long application form prior to attending the interview.
- Where incomplete applications forms have been received, the candidate will be asked to provide the missing information within a specified time period (2 days), failure to provide this information within the time period will result in the application being marked as withdrawn.
- All completed applications will receive an automatic email confirming the receipt of the application.
- Review advert at closing date and proceed with screening/shortlisting.

Screening / Shortlisting Procedure

- The HR Admin must work with the recruitment manager to arrange a date for screening and shortlisting. This must be planned in advance and should normally be no more than two working day after the closing date of the advert.
- Applications can either be reviewed as these are received or will be reviewed within 2 working days of the closing date, in accordance with the Screening / Shortlisting templates subject to the model of recruitment by the recruiting manager
- All applications should be scrutinised by the HR team to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, and the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies. Any gaps in employment must be identified and further explored at the Assessment or Interview day.

- Recruiting managers are responsible for working with their HR teams to update the online portal with the shortlisting outcome for each applicant, selecting the relevant status.
- HR will then issue an invitation to those selected to attend an assessment day or interview – the schedule for these days must be set by the recruiting manager in advance of the invitations being issued
- Applicants not invited to attend will be sent the template outcome letter – feedback is not given at this stage in the process.
- All applicants who have a disability and meet the required criteria for the role they are applying for must be offered an interview. This practice is in line with our commitment to our disability confident accreditation. If a disabled candidate has not meet all the required criteria, then feedback must be given as to what criteria was missed.
- Where applications have not been received via the online job portal the HR team must ensure these are recorded on the online portal.

References

- The HR Team will request references from those referees named on the application form in the first instance. For all roles in the charity, the HR team will request the employees two most recent employment references. This must include their current or most recent employment.
- Good Practice – If possible, references should be sought for all candidates being interviewed prior to interview taking place.
- The online job portal reference templates must be used. For posts within schools and services, please refer to the guidance on Safer Recruitment and our charity's Reference Policy.

Invitation to Interview / Assessment centre

- Where the candidate has asked for reasonable adjustments, the HR team must contact the candidate by their preferred method of communication to discuss and arrange these and must also explore any requirements if employed.
- Only adjustments required for the interview and assessment day should be passed to the panel members. Information regarding support and adjustments that may be required if employed should only be passed to recruiting manager once a decision regarding appointments have been made.
- Applicants attending an assessment day or interviews must attend with a personal profile form and a completed "Dates check for applicant's form"
- All applicants must be advised to bring a passport/birth certificate (proof for eligibility to work in the UK) and a confirmation documents of their National insurance number, along with all relevant documents required to progress safeguarding checks. (DBS, Disclosure Scotland, Access NI). Copies of these document must be kept on the successful candidates' employee record. Unsuccessful applicants' documentation must be confidentially disposed of by shredding 6 months from interview/assessment.

- Where a professional qualification is a requirement for the job, the candidates should be asked to bring along any relevant documents to confirm their education and professional qualifications before offering the post.

Interview Panel

- The interview panel must include the recruiting line manager and at least one other panel member.
- The same panel members must interview every candidate.
- Where the vacancy is specifically working with children and young people, every panel should have at least one person who has completed their Safer Recruitment training or has a thorough understanding of our charity's Safer Recruitment Policy.

Interviewing / Assessment

- Interviews/assessments days must be structured to reflect the requirements of the role as set out in the person specification that was advertised.
- As such, the process must adhere with the following:
 - The use of pre agreed questions based on the person specification
 - The use of signed off assessment materials, (for assessment days) onepage profile, resilience quiz and skills tasks/scenarios. The assessment toolkit consists of candidate, assessors and facilitators workbooks and resource's) and Template questions.
- Ensure each candidate are asked the same questions in a competent and consistent manner. The use of probing questions is permitted to gain clarification or to obtain further information if an answer is unclear.
- Ensure any unanswered gaps in the candidate's employment history from the "dates check for applicant's form" are questioned, including any periods of time where voluntary or temporary work was undertaken
- Ask the candidate for any declaration in line with safeguarding requirements and the criminal records disclosure.
- Ask for the candidate's consent to seek references and confirm if the candidate has had any formal action taken against them in current or previous employment.
- Any notes taken during the interviews or assessment day must be given to HR for secure retention or destruction.

Interviewing family or friends

- In the unlikely circumstance that a family member or personal friend (as opposed to a work-colleague) of a panel member is to be interviewed this conflict of interest must be disclosed immediately and the panel member must stand down.
- There are no circumstances in which it would be reasonable for that individual to be on the selection panel.
- Should a family member or personal friend of a current member of the team/department be shortlisted for the vacancy then the interview panel must

include at least one member who is unaware of the connection in order to obtain transparency and fairness in the selection process.

Choosing the Successful Candidate

- Selection of the successful candidate cannot be based on appearance, health, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, political opinions or parental status.
- The person specification and job description should be used as the core guide for selecting the appropriate candidate, all candidates should be judged against the essential attributes before any other factors are considered.
- Any candidate at this stage may request feedback, so the rationale behind the selection process for the successful candidate must be clear, logical and defensible.

Providing Feedback

Recruiting/Line Managers may receive requests from unsuccessful and successful applicants for feedback on their interview performance.

- These requests should be responded to by email, telephone or letter.
- Guidance is published on the Managers Resources Page – Providing Feedback to unsuccessful candidates.
- If the Hiring Manager is uncertain of how to respond to a feedback request they must check with HR before sending out the response.
- A record of the feedback given should be maintained on the candidates' paperwork.

Offer and Appointments

- Once a decision has been made, the recruiting line manager should contact the successful candidate, and after verbal confirmation of acceptance of the offer, then contact the unsuccessful candidates.
- HR will write to all the unsuccessful candidates, using the online job portal template letters.
- Starting salaries should normally be offered at the bottom of the scale unless exceptional circumstances exist, Managers should seek guidance from HR.
- Paperwork for all candidates will be forwarded to HR within 24 hours.

HR will then issue:

- A pre-employment offer: This will include a Bank/Building Society details form, next of kin form, information regarding challenging behaviour and Hepatitis B vaccinations (contact posts only)
- A Health Questionnaire information, instructions and link. A Disclosure (DBS, Disclosure Scotland, Access NI) information, instructions and link, if applicable to the role.

- For British citizens who have been in the UK for 10 years or less and non-British citizens commence, in addition to a disclosure report, a good character reference must be obtained.
- Where an England or Scottish disclosure report is obtained, the candidate can begin working for us however the candidate's overseas Criminal Records check will be requested and must be obtained within their probation period in order for them to be confirmed in post.
- Provide instructions on how to complete Module 1 of Ask Autism and free training on autism and women and girls as well as the Too Much Information clip.

HR will proactively follow up outstanding ID if not supplied at interview and obtaining references including other post recruitment checks. (Please read reference section above)

Immigration and Asylum

- All new employees (including temporary staff, relief staff and those on fixed term contracts) need to satisfy the NAS that they are entitled to live and work in the UK.
- In accordance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, the NAS is required to make certain checks on all new employees.
- Employees must show (and HR must keep a copy of on record) a passport confirming that the individual is a British Citizen or a European Economic Area national, or which shows that s/he is entitled to live and work in the UK.
- Applicants who provide documentation in any other language than English must provide translated documents at their own expense.

Pre Placement Health Assessment

- HR Team will monitor the application and responses received back from successful candidates.
- Where a medical report has been provided by the Health Questionnaire provider this will be emailed to the line manager to take the appropriate measures e.g. Risk Assessment completed.
- Failure to complete the online Health Questionnaire within 7 days may result in the offer of employment being withdrawn.

Disclosure and DBS Application

The NAS must ensure that all members of staff who have regular access to children, young people and adults do not pose a risk to the clients they serve.

The Disclosure service provides the NAS with a means of checking the background of applicants, and provides details of a person's criminal record including convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings.

A guide to applying for a Disclosure can be found in relevant policy and websites.

(www.disclosure.gov.uk; www.disclosurescotland.co.uk; www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni-checks)

- The HR Team will monitor the DBS portal to establish when the DBS application has been made to verify the information recorded based on the details supplied and approve the application for processing.
- The HR Team will monitor the progress of the DBS application and once the certificate has been issued the HR Team will email the successful candidate with details of the DBS update service in order that they may register for the update service which is part of the offer of employment.
- Failure to apply for either the DBS or the update service within 7 days may result in the offer of employment being withdrawn.

Overseas Criminality Checks

The following links are relevant to overseas checks

- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633877/20170727_GOV_CR_GUIDANCE_A-F.pdf
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/600839/GOV_CR_GUIDANCE_G-P.pdf
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633878/20170727_GOV_CR_GUIDANCE_Q-Z.pdf

If the person has lived or worked outside the UK, the criminal record check (CRC) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-foroverseas-applicants>) for overseas candidates also needs to be carried out, where reasonably practicable. This is not required if the applicant holds a British passport. In cases where the applicant doesn't have a British passport but has lived in the UK for a long period of time we would need to explain the rationale if we are unable to complete this check (e.g. not lived abroad since a particular date). The NAS requires this check to be conducted where the potential staff has lived in the UK for less than 10 years.

Start Date & Contract of Employment

Once all satisfactory pre-employment checks have been received e.g. references, disclosure, pre-employment health assessment, HR will issue:

- Start date and Contract of Employment
- Invitation and Induction Calendar

A candidate may be able to commence employment prior to an Overseas Criminal Records check being received subject to the UK DBS checks being satisfactory.

Hiring Managers will complete the following:

- IT permission form for Q drive access and creation of email account
- Request for a swipe card or fob for the relevant building where required
- Arrange any relevant local department induction
- Arrange shadow shifts if relevant

Note: No new starters will be allowed to start employment or shadow shifts without all relevant checks being received.

Induction

HR will discuss with the line manager the on-boarding date to coincide with scheduled Corporate Induction Programmes and book the successful candidate onto the Corporate Induction Programme, copying in line managers and trainers once all re-employment checks and training have been completed.

Probation Period

All new NAS employees are on probation when they begin employment to allow time for their line manager to determine whether they have the skills and abilities necessary to do the job, and to provide the opportunity for the appropriate induction and guidance to take place.

This is usually for a period of six months, however in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to extend the probationary period. See Induction & Probation Policy – HR-5007.

Appendix 1 – Recruitment Model

Type of Recruitment	Process	Target Group
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HR

<p>Type 1-Assessment Centres</p> <p>Planned Recruitment More than 5 roles to fill (Manager/HR led)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place advert based on advice from the marketing team • Request for the completion of an assessment form • Use assessment days for the shortlisting, interview process • Ensure you can reference how we have involved the people we support • Compliance checks to be conducted by HR • Register into the NAS Academy 12 months' programme • Appointed a mentor and a buddy • Map accredited learning for experienced support workers where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who have a connection with autism • Graduates • Experienced support workers • Returning workers
<p>Type 2 (Interviews)</p> <p>Planned recruitment - Less than 5 roles – Manager led</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted adverts based on recommendation from our marketing team • Current application form • Shortlisting by line manager as applications are received • Immediate interviews (using value based activities plus involvement of the people we support e.g. meal with the people we support and shadow shift) • Compliance checks to be conducted by HR • Register into the NAS Academy 12 months' programme • Appointed a mentor and a buddy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who have a connection with autism • Graduates • Experienced support workers • Returning workers
<p>Type 3 (still being reviewed)</p> <p>Fresh to Autism Programme (HR/SDC led)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place advert based on advice from the marketing team • Request for the completion of the assessment form • Use assessment days for the shortlisting, interview process and service user involvement • Offer free training (NAS Values + 5 Autism online modules (L& D working group to confirm) which will include the involvement of the people we work with • Register into the NAS Academy 12 months' programme • Appointed a mentor and a buddy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who have a connection with autism • People interested in autism but have no connection with autism • Graduates • Returning workers • Unemployed • People interested in apprenticeships • School leavers

Appendix 2 – Recruitment Timeline – Type 1 and 2

Responsibility:	Action:	Timescale:
Recruiting /Line Manager	Review need for vacancy, job description, person specification, advert, check establishment and complete vacancy template and submit for approval using on line portal.	Day 1
HR Local	Review request for vacancy is accurate check vacancy exists against the establishment. Approve or refuse request.	Day 1/2
Finance/Business Leaders	Review request for vacancy is accurate check vacancy exists against the establishment. Approve or refuse request.	Day 1/3
HR Local	Place advert Live on portal. Handle advertisement response - deal with telephone enquiries.	Day 3 / 4 Duration of the advert (2 weeks)
HR local	HR close advert and notify recruiting manager.	Day 18/19 (Within 24/48 hours of the closing date)
HR	Send Invite letters - with details of Assessment Centre and supporting information. At least 1 week notice.	Day 19/20 (Within 24 – 36 hours)
Shortlisting panel	Shortlist - compare the information in the application form with the criteria on the person specification	Day 19/20 (24/48 hours of the closing date)
Recruiting / Line Manager	Confirm interview venue, test requirement and Details of shortlisted candidates to HR. For Head Office recruitment – arrange for the people we support to participate in the interview. This should be done for all interviews where possible.	Day 19 / 21
HR	Send Invite letters for assessment interviews - with details of presentation, tests etc. (optional). At least 1 week notice	Day 22/23 (Within 24 – 48 hours of receiving interview)
HR	Prepare for Assessment Centre: Candidate, Assessors, Facilitators workbooks, venue and refreshments. Confirm candidates attending the day before.	Day 26/27
Assessment Facilitator	Assessment delivered and outcome of Assessment provided to HR	Day 27/28

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Recruiting Manager/HR	Recruiting Managers contact successful and unsuccessful candidates from Assessment Centre.	Day 28 / 30 Within 2 working days.
	Notify HR of outcome.	
HR	HR will write to unsuccessful candidates Write to successful candidates and issue Pre Conditional Offer. Requesting completion of DBS if the position involves working with children and vulnerable adults. Preplacement Health Assessment and information of former employment and referees.	Day 28 / 30
Interview panel	Conduct selection tests and interview the short-listed candidates.	Day 29/30
Recruiting Manager/HR	HR will write to unsuccessful candidates Write to successful candidates and issue Pre Conditional Offer. Requesting completion of DBS if the position involves working with children and vulnerable adults. Preplacement Health Assessment and information of former employment and referees.	Day 29 / 31 Within 2 working days.
HR	Verify DBS Request reference Review pre-placement health assessment and submit to Recruiting / Line Manager. Refer DBS to Safeguarding Panel if disclose has entries recorded along with Risk Assessment	Day 32 – 74 Concurrent with periodic follow ups
Recruiting / Line Manager	Risk Assessment regarding pre-placement health assessment to HR	Day 32 - 74
Recruiting / Line Manager	Meet with candidate and complete Risk Assessment for Safeguarding Panel issue to HR to submit	Day 32 – 74
Safeguarding Panel	Reviewed and outcome provided to HR Team.	
HR	Issue Start Day and Contract of Employment Induction Calendar	3 days from the date of receiving satisfactory checks

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Recruiting / Line Manager	Contact candidate Make arrangements with the Mentor to meet with the Mentee Request IT permissions Organise Shadow Shifts	3 days from the date of receiving satisfactory checks
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