

Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we attract diverse talent into Orwell who align with our PACE values and a great hiring experience is enjoyed by all.

To ensure that all colleagues involved in the recruitment and selection of others select the most suitable candidate for each job vacancy or volunteering opportunity, regardless of age, disability, race, religion or (non) belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, trade union membership or non-membership, on a consistent and fair basis.

'Most suitable' is defined as possessing the knowledge, skills, qualifications, expertise, and technical competencies to perform the role being applied for and living our PACE values every day via our recognised behaviours; making a positive contribution towards Orwell's aims through both skills and behaviour.

This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all permanent, fixed term and temporary colleagues, casual (relief) workers and volunteers.

Legal Obligations

Orwell will ensure compliance with laws relating to the employment of people under 18 years of age, ensuring that people are fit to work with young people and adults at risk (see Criminal Record policy) in addition to its legal responsibility to comply with the following legislation:

- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975
- Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Defamation Act 1996
- Working Time Regulations 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018

Orwell's Commitment

- We will ensure our recruitment and selection practices are fair, consistent, effective and legal, with the aim of attracting and employing the most suitable candidates who have the ability to support the achievement of Orwell's strategic aims, mission, vision and values operational requirements, as well as enhancing organisational culture.
- We will advertise job vacancies via sourcing channels which offer the highest potential

attraction rate. These will include specialist websites (eg Housing Diversity Network,) and we will always advertise on the Job Centre Plus website. We will be proactive in investing in future talent and creating pipelines by attending jobs/career fairs in and for educational establishments and support the work of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) by attending local and regional Job Centre Plus events (eg Disability Confident job fairs).

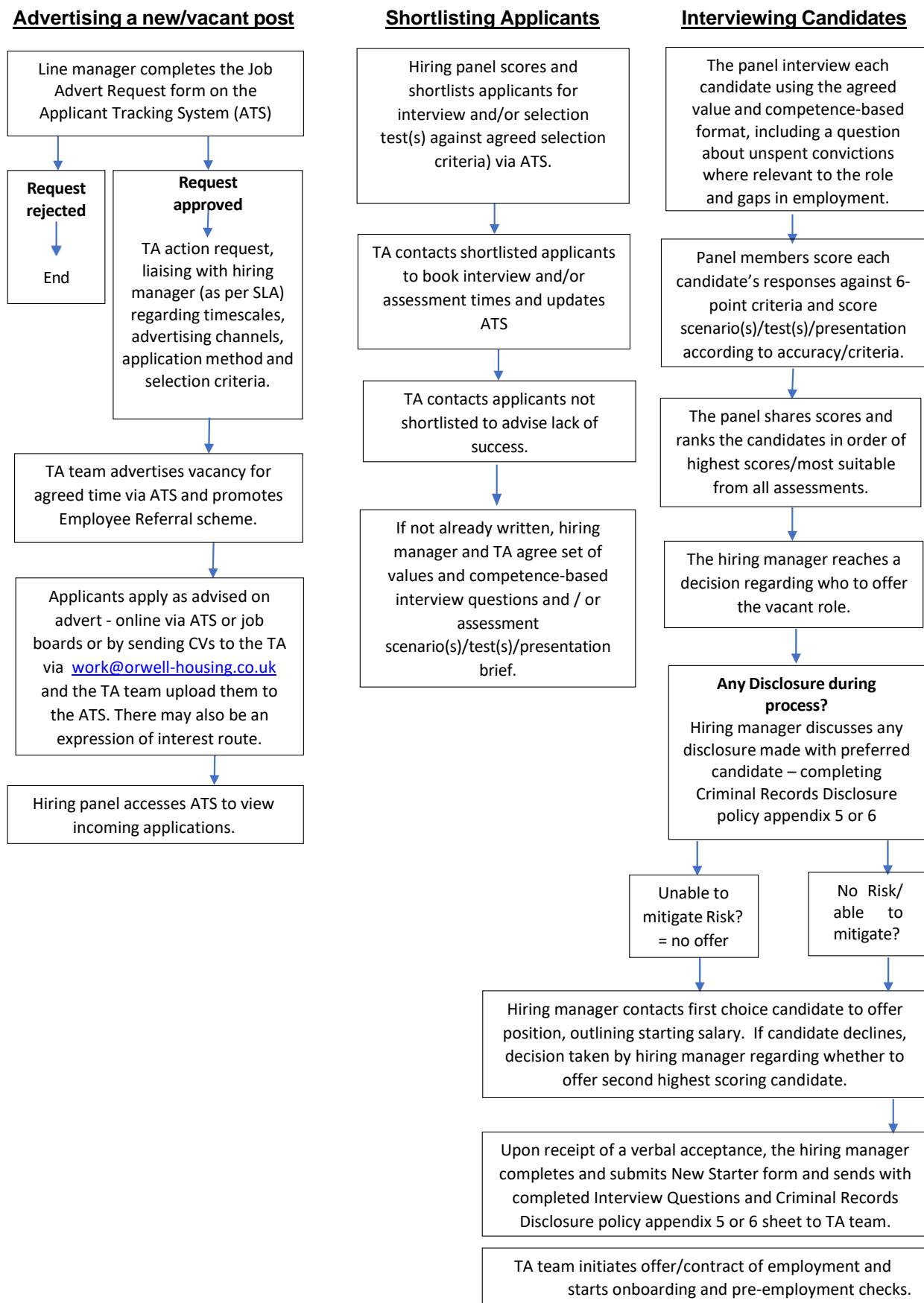
- Our career microsite ensures that all roles and company relevant information is available and accessible to all prospective applicants.
- Orwell recognises the importance of achieving equity by removing barriers to employment. We will describe roles in clear and accessible ways and will make applicants aware on job vacancy adverts whether a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and Statement of Good Conduct (see Criminal Record policy) is required. We will not request any information relating to “spent” convictions unless the job role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 (see Orwell’s Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders, Appendix 1).
- Orwell is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and we will ensure there is no discrimination (direct, indirect, associative or perceived) in any of our recruitment and selection material (including adverts), tools or assessments either by written word, verbal language or imagery used. We will make reasonable adjustments wherever possible for any job applicant where it is known or can be reasonably expected to be known that they have a disability.
- To achieve greater diversity, we will address underrepresentation among our workforce by stating on adverts that we particularly welcome applicants with specific backgrounds, experiences, or gender (in the case of recruiting to our hostels and refuges housing female customers, via a permitted Genuine Occupational Requirement).
- Orwell recognises the value of personal connections as a source of potential good quality and committed candidates and as such promotes an “Introduce Someone You Know” referral scheme to encourage and reward Orwell colleagues who refer someone for a permanent or relief advertised position within Orwell (see Reward policy).
- We want to recruit talented people into #TeamOrwell and will adopt competency and behavioural interviewing techniques and practical skill application to assess candidates for expertise, strengths and alignment with our PACE values.
- Orwell will conduct pre-employment checks to ensure all new colleagues are legally entitled to work in the UK, have a clear Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (where relevant – see Criminal Record policy), provide a Statement of Good Conduct (where relevant - Criminal Record policy). We will also obtain references which comply with Care Quality Commission regulations and are assessed as satisfactory by us. We will also ensure Work Health Assessments are completed by new colleagues, assessed by qualified occupational health professionals and recommendations are reasonably actioned.
- We will strive to ensure that each new colleague has a positive on-boarding experience during the period leading up to their employment via our on-boarding microsite and support provided by the Talent team.
- We will train our hiring managers in recruitment and selection best practice and internal activities.

The procedure follows this Policy Statement.

Procedure

This Procedure provides guidance on the stages of recruitment: advertising a vacant role, selecting applicants for interview, scoring candidates and offering a role.

Quick Guide



Process

Advertising a Vacancy

For each vacancy (existing or new), line managers should consider whether there is a need to replace it, whether that need is a like for like replacement, an amended role or a new role to fulfil business requirements.

In a case where a colleague wishes to relinquish their higher-level responsibilities (eg Supervisor, Team Leader) and pursue an unadvertised vacant role without the same level of responsibility (eg Care Assistant), they are permitted to request a move to a vacant post (stand down), advertised internally / without it being advertised internally, subject to available hours, possessing the required skills and no other internal expressions of interest from other team members. Standing down from any position is likely to result in a reduction in pay/alteration in terms commensurate with the new role.

Where a colleague has been performing at least 70% of a role (existing or new), has demonstrated at least 70% of the role's competencies for a significant period of time and is the only colleague to do so, it is not necessary to advertise the role internally. In this case, the colleague can be directly promoted into the role (of higher responsibility), or the job title can be re-designated, with a review of associated job description and consequent salary benchmarking, to better reflect the role being performed.

Where a vacant position is not being recruited, hiring managers must obtain their Director's signature on the Orwell Leaver form associated with the colleague leaving the role.

In order to advertise a vacancy, hiring managers are required to complete the Job Advert Request form (see SharePoint – Blue Octopus – [Creating Authorisation Request.](#))

Job Advert Request

When raising a job advert request for a new position, hiring managers must first seek approval from their Director and include an approved business case/confirmation of budget request.

In all cases a clear, objective, appropriate and relevant Job Description and Person Specification that includes desired values and behaviours and has been salary benchmarked must be provided. This will be used to shortlist applicants for interview.

When raising a Job Advert Request for a replacement role hiring managers must seek approval from their Department Manager, ie Head of Service. Once approval has been sought and confirmed, this then goes to the Talent Acquisition team to start the advertising process.

Once the job advert request has been approved the role will be advertised on the advertising mediums outlined on the job advert request form or as agreed with the Talent Acquisition team. All externally advertised roles will also be communicated internally alongside reference to our 'Introduce Someone You Know' referral scheme (see Reward policy). It is recognised that on occasion, a job may warrant being performed by colleagues with particular protected characteristics as a Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR). In these circumstances GORs are necessary to deliver appropriate and quality services and therefore proportionate and legitimate (for example employing female colleagues to perform a support worker role in a women's refuge).

Application method

The hiring manager and Talent Acquisition team will agree an appropriate method of application for the vacant role in terms of anonymous applications, online application form composition, CV submission plus statement or expression of interest.

Personal information relating to equality, diversity and inclusion will be collected and used only for monitoring purposes and forms no part of the selection process. This information is only accessible by those analysing the information. Submission of this information is voluntary.

Shortlisting

Online applications to externally and internally advertised roles (except for expressions of interest) are held within the Applicant Tracking System (ATS). Manual applications are received via work@orwell-housing.co.uk and added to the relevant campaign by the Talent Acquisition team.

Applications can be viewed and scored for short-listing by the hiring panel via the ATS Dashboard.

Applicants will be considered equally on merit at each stage of the selection process. Scoring applicants for interview/assessment is based on essential and desirable criteria in skills, knowledge and behaviour linked to the job role and alignment with organisational values (see person specification). Applicants meeting the essential criteria detailed in the Person Specification will go into the shortlisting process. It is important the hiring panel captures this exercise within the ATS so that decisions are clearly visible to both the hiring panel and the Talent Acquisition team.

Once this exercise is complete the Talent Acquisition team will receive email notification that a shortlist of candidates has been created and the team will commence booking interviews/assessments (or set up the self-service booking system if this has been agreed). The hiring panel must provide their available dates and times for interviews to be booked.

Reasonable requested adjustments will, wherever possible, be made to support candidates with disabilities attend for interview/assessment.

Selection

The selection stage will include at least one interview or assessment stage led by at least two interviewers, one of whom must have completed Recruitment and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training. The interview will consist of skills, competency and values-based questions, focusing on behavioural examples. The Talent Acquisition team holds a bank of appropriate interview questions and also checks new questions to ensure inclusivity and promotion of PACE values.

Dates of employment as stated on CV or application forms must be confirmed during interview. Gaps of employment and reasons for leaving previous employment must be checked and recorded accordingly by panel as part of the interview stage.

Usually the interview will include at least one exercise or scenario based question to test practical, professional, or technical ability and alignment with PACE values. The Talent Acquisition team has a library of appropriate selection assessments and can advise on appropriate new assessment type and composition.

Interview answers must be on the question template to ensure consistency and pre-determined questions will be scored by each member of the hiring panel against 6-point scoring criteria. Assessment results will be scored by each member of the hiring panel, again, using pre agreed criteria. Once the process is finished the scores will be combined and the hiring panel must agree the successful candidate(s) (based on the combined scores of all assessments).

The highest scoring candidate will usually be the candidate offered the vacant role, subject to skills, knowledge and cultural fit demonstrated through behavioural questions.

The interview panel must send all interview notes to the Talent Acquisition team regardless of the outcome of each interview.

Where a DBS check is required for the role a self-declaration form will be requested to be completed by the candidate at interview stage.

Offer of employment

The hiring manager verbally offers the successful candidate the role, offering starting salary, confirming relevant terms and conditions and giving information about pre-employment checks.

The hiring manager confirms this offer to the Talent Acquisition team by completing the New Starter form via the ATS and submitting all completed interview/assessment papers via the work@orwell-housing.co.uk email address (if not via the ATS).

Reasonable relocation expenses in accordance with HMRC guidance will be considered for approval by the successful candidate's line manager and the People and Culture Manager.

Disclosure regarding Recruitment of ex-Offenders

Candidates attending interview/assessment are encouraged to present information regarding any convictions at this stage, in confidence. Information will only be shared with those for whom the knowledge is necessary. If a DBS check is required for the role, candidates will also be asked to complete the criminal records self-disclosure form.

Any disclosure by a candidate who has been offered a role will prompt a full discussion with the recruiting Manager to give the candidate the opportunity to respond to any concerns as part of the risk assessment only in relation to the role for which the candidate has applied (see Criminal Records policy appendix 7).

Pre-employment Checks

Offers and contracts of employment will clearly state whether they are conditional upon further information (eg Work Health Assessment, Right to Work in the UK, Disclosure and Barring Check/Statement of Good Conduct, references and relevant background checks).

It is Orwell's policy to request two detailed written references for each new recruit, ideally covering 3 years of employment and to make all offers of employment conditional upon

those references being satisfactory to Orwell as determined by the hiring manager. References should include the most recent employer. In the case of a candidate applying to work within Care and Support, a reference from the last care employer must be obtained.

Checks will be carried out in respect of a prospective employee's health, qualifications, previous work record and criminal record once the conditional offer of employment has been issued.

If a job requires it, or a work health assessment deems it necessary, an assessment or medical examination by an occupational health practitioner will be arranged to establish whether the prospective employee can perform the role and/or whether reasonable adjustments are required and are possible.

Offers of employment can be withdrawn in the event any check is unsatisfactory or if the colleague under offer has supplied information about convictions (relevant to the role) which is inconsistent with the DBS check. Any disclosures which are relevant to the role will be assessed to determine the resultant risk allowing the candidate to respond to any concerns before a final recruitment decision is made by the hiring manager (see Criminal Record policy).

Any criminal convictions will not be viewed as automatic grounds for refusal of employment or volunteering opportunity but will be assessed (as above).

The hiring manager will be advised of completed pre-employment checks and will be invited to review completed references. If one or both completed references are unsatisfactory, the colleague under offer will be invited to offer replacement referees. All references must be approved by the hiring manager.

Start Date and DBS checks

When a clear DBS check (if required), two satisfactory references have been received and right to work confirmed, the Talent Acquisition team will ensure related information is saved accordingly. The hiring manager can agree a start date with the new colleague and advise the Talent Acquisition team so that a contract of employment can be raised. Once confirmation is received, the Talent Acquisition team will create a new colleague record on the HR System and save all relevant information following pre-employment checks.

If a hiring manager wishes to start a new colleague without a completed DBS Check (where required), they must complete a Risk Assessment (see Criminal Record policy appendix 7), obtain Director approval and sign off.

The People Partners will review the DBS Risk Assessment every 2 weeks, where continued Director approval will be sought, until the completed DBS Certificate is received.

Information and training

Every stage of the process for each vacancy will be clearly documented by the Talent team for accountability, monitoring and planning purposes. All information will be stored in line with GDPR regulations.

Orwell will ensure that interviewers are competent to undertake the selection process. Training will be available in interviewing techniques, recruitment and selection best practice, and equality and inclusion. At least one panel member on each panel must have undertaken this training.

Colleagues involved in a recruitment process that includes an application from a close personal or family relationship, must declare this as soon as they are aware of the submission of an application. The employee must be replaced in the process to avoid any potential conflict of interest (see Code of Conduct).

Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Orwell complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.

Orwell undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed. Orwell can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that Orwell are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended).

Orwell can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.

Orwell is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

Orwell has this written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process.

Orwell actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. Orwell selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

Orwell consults the DBS eligibility guidance and DBS eligibility tool to determine which roles require particular levels of DBS check. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Candidates who have never lived in the UK or have lived outside the UK for a continuous period of 6 months or more in the past 5 years will need to provide a criminal record check from the country (or countries) that they have lived in during that period. Orwell calls this a Statement of Good Conduct (SOGC) but the actual name can vary from country to country.

Orwell ensures that all those in Orwell who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences and that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, eg the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, Orwell ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place about any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment. Orwell undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Orwell makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the

existence of the code of practice and makes a copy available on request.