

Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we attract diverse talent, with a focus on recruiting those who align with our PACE values. It is important every individual has a great recruitment and onboarding experience.

The policy is also in place to ensure 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 and that this is done in an inclusive, consistent and fair basis.

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

Legal Obligations

- 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

- Recruitment and selection practices will be fair, consistent and effective, with the aim of attracting and selecting the most suitable candidates: those who can support the achievement of Orwell's strategic goals, mission, vision and values, operational requirements and organisational culture.
- Job Descriptions and Person Specifications will be set out in clear and accessible ways, clearly outlining requirements for the role and organisational and behavioural expectations.
- We always aim to be a welcoming, supportive, and accessible employer and in our commitment to assist prospective applicants in developing the skills and confidence needed to progress in their careers, we provide a dedicated Career Hub on our website - [Career Hub | Orwell Housing](#).

- 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.
- As a Disability Confident Leader, we actively promote disability inclusion and continuously review and improve our recruitment practices.
- We are committed to providing fully inclusive and accessible recruitment and selection processes.
- In line with inclusion best practice all roles follow a consistent recruitment approach, except where reasonable adjustments are required to remove barriers and ensure that candidates requiring reasonable adjustments can participate equitably throughout the process.
- To achieve positive action, we will take measures to support individuals from underrepresented groups (eg race, gender, age, socio-economic or disability) enabling them to compete more effectively.
- Our career microsite ensures that all vacant role and relevant company information are available and accessible to all prospective applicants and presented in clear and straightforward language in accessible formats.
- Any role that requires a DBS check and/or Statement of Good Conduct (see Criminal Record policy) will specify this within the job description and on the advert.
- No information will be requested 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).
- Candidates will be assessed using different methods to consider both skills and values-based behaviours.
- If requested, constructive feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants and candidates in the format most accessible to them.
- Underrepresentation among our workforce will be addressed by stating on adverts that we 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).
- Colleagues who refer someone for a permanent or relief advertised position will be rewarded through the “Introduce Someone You Know” referral scheme
- Pre-employment checks will be undertaken 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 – see Criminal Record policy). We will also attempt to obtain references which comply with Care Quality Commission regulations and are assessed as satisfactory by us.
- We will 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 every new colleague has a positive and supportive onboarding experience, guided through our onboarding portal by the Talent team.
- We will train our hiring managers in recruitment and selection best/practice and internal activities and ensure they are fully aware of our Disability Confident Leader commitments.
- We will review all recruitment and selection data, practices and activities on a regular basis and take appropriate action.

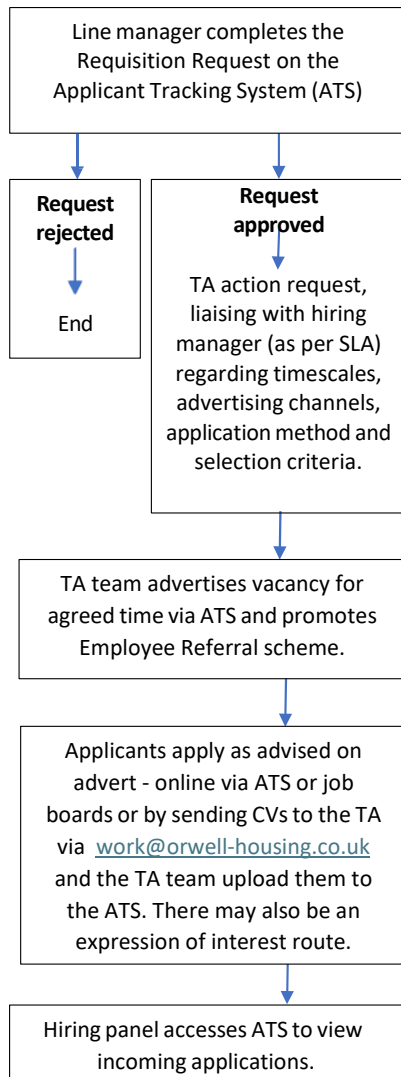
The procedure follows this Policy Statement.

Procedure

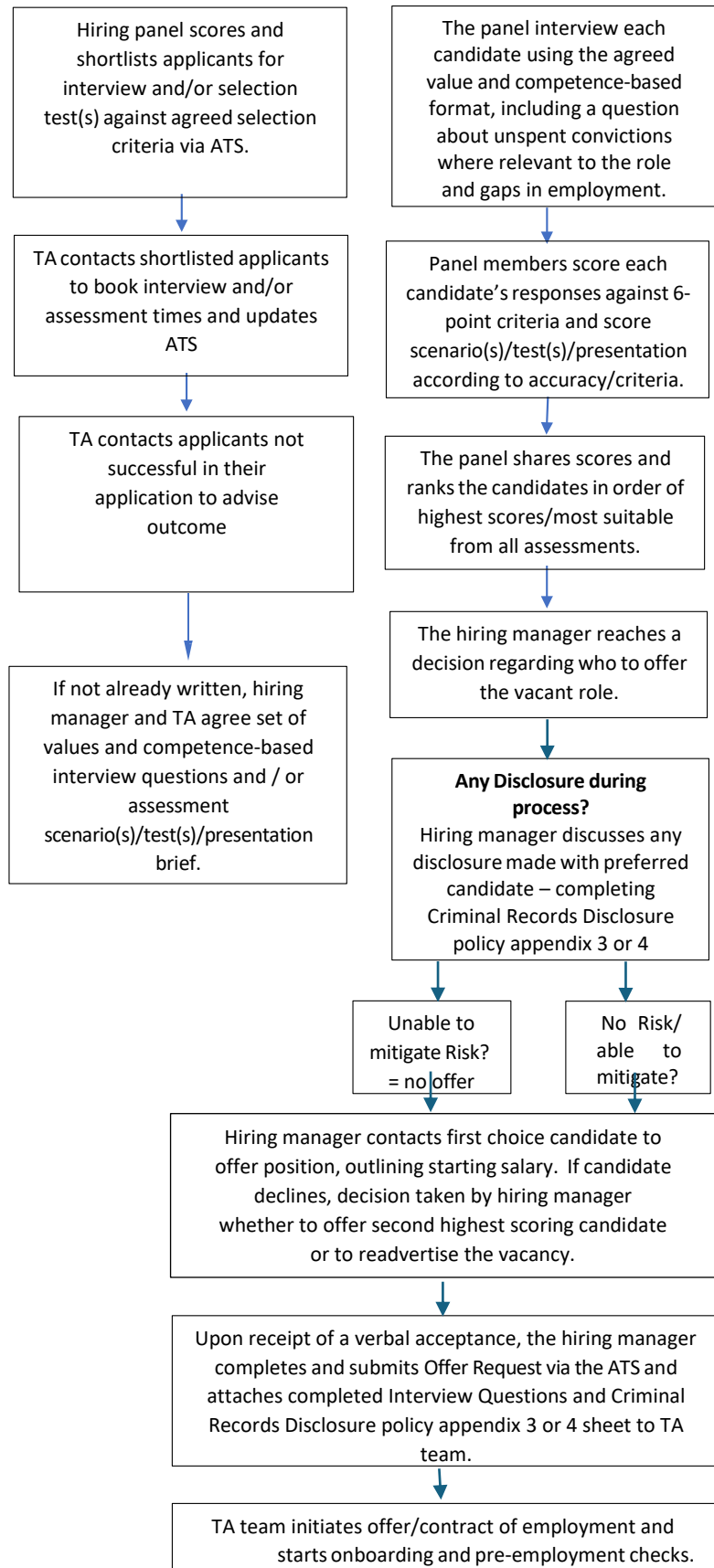
This Procedure provides guidance on the stages of recruitment: advertising a vacant role, selecting applicants for interview, scoring candidates and offering a role.

Quick Guide

Advertising a new/vacant post



Shortlisting Applicants Interviewing Candidates



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 create a requisition request ([see Sharepoint - Leader Guides \(People Manager\) – Guide for Recruitment Managers](#)).

We will advertise job vacancies via sourcing channels which offer the highest potential attraction rate. These will include specialist websites 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, 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) and offering work experience placements for local students and apprenticeship opportunities.

Requisition Request

When creating a requisition request for a new position, hiring managers must first seek approval from their Director and include an approved business case/confirmation of budget request to an email to work@orwell-housing.co.uk.

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 creating a requisition request for a role a workflow will automatically seek approval from the Director of People and Culture primarily and the Head of Department secondarily. Once approvals are received, the Talent Acquisition team will start the advertising process.

Once the job advert 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 the Talent Acquisition team will agree on the most appropriate application method for each vacancy, which may include anonymous applications, an online application form, a CV with a supporting statement, or an expression of interest. If candidates experience any difficulty using the agreed application method, they should contact the Talent Team at work@orwell-housing.co.uk so that alternative and accessible application formats can be considered and provided where appropriate.

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 (on the ATS) by the Talent Acquisition team.

Applications are viewed and scored for short-listing (as per pre agreed essential job-related criteria) by the hiring panel via the ATS.

Applicants are assessed objectively and on merit at each stage of the selection process. Shortlisting decisions are based on the essential criteria outlined in the Person Specification of the job description, as these represent the minimum requirements needed to perform the role. Desirable criteria may be considered to support decision-making where a high volume of applicants meet all essential criteria, but they must not override the requirement to shortlist candidates who clearly meet the essential standards. 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) asking candidates if they have needs to be met. The hiring panel must provide their available dates and times for interviews to be booked.

Reasonable adjustments will be achieved, wherever possible, to support candidates with disabilities in attending interviews and/or assessments. This may include offering accessible or alternative formats of interview materials, as well as other adjustments tailored to individual needs to ensure an equitable and inclusive selection experience.

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, competence 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. If deemed a reasonable adjustment, interview questions will be provided in advance upon the candidate's request to support equitable participation in the selection process.

We will, where possible, offer extended interview times or 'working interviews' to ensure that candidates with a learning disability have the opportunity to fully demonstrate their abilities. In line with our commitments as a Disability Confident Leader, interview questions can also be provided in advance, on request, to support candidates who may benefit from additional preparation or alternative assessment approaches.

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

We will encourage hiring managers, as part of the interview process, to include at least one exercise or scenario-based question designed to assess practical, professional, or technical capability, as well as alignment with our 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 supplied by the Talent team 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 activity is complete 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, qualifications (where relevant), experience and cultural fit (demonstrated through behavioural questions) and reasonable adjustments (eg job carving, adjusted hours) - subject to regular review to ensure effectiveness.

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 (Appendix 3 or 4) 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 Offer Request 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 Head of People and Culture.

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 6).

Pre-employment Checks

All offers of employment are subject to a check of right to work in the UK. This must be completed and verified prior to commencement of employment, in compliance with UK legislation. Checks will be regularly audited.

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

It is Orwell's policy to request minimum of 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 of the candidate 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 to be considered. We will explore with the colleague ways in which additional support (to that provided by Orwell) can be provided via government approved providers via the Access to Work scheme ([Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: What Access to Work is - GOV.UK](#)).

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 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 6), obtain Director approval and sign off.

The Talent Team 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

Our equal opportunities statement is prominently displayed on all adverts to reinforce our commitment to inclusive recruitment.

Information presented on our microsite can be available in alternative formats on request to our Talent Acquisition Team via work@orwell-housing.co.uk.

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 is delivered 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.

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.

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 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 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.