

**Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Mind
Recruitment and Selection Policy**

1. Introduction

It is the policy of Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Mind to ensure that paid staff and volunteers are recruited for their ability and competence to do the job as specified, and that no applicant who meets the relevant criteria for a position within the organisation is treated less favourably than any other on grounds of race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or sensory disability, age, mental disability or mental health problem.

The following written procedure (Section 2-10 below) sets out the recruitment and selection process for paid staff. Procedures for Volunteers are contained within the Volunteering Policy (DGSMind Policy No 11)

The procedure must be adhered to by all with relevant responsibility for recruitment and will be reviewed yearly. The purpose of recruitment is to get the best person for the job. The way in which we do this, set out below, is designed to give equal opportunity to all.

Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Mind operates an Equalities and Diversity policy (DGS Mind Policy No 1), which explains the equal opportunities stance of the organisation, and must be adhered to when interviewing prospective candidates for a position within the organisation. Training in equal opportunities interviewing is a core training need for all those staff/Trustees who will interview for paid staff. It is Mindø policy that at least one member of each interview panel must be trained in this.

2. Identifying A Vacancy

When an existing paid position becomes vacant the job description for the post should be reviewed to see if any changes need to be made. This should be done by the supervisor of the post, in conjunction with their Line Manager. If a new position is created, a Job Description must be written by the supervisor of the position, this will then go to the Line Manager and where necessary the Finance and Personnel Sub Group for approval. The post can then be advertised.

At this stage an interview panel is to be chosen. One of the members of the panel should take on lead responsibility. It is important that the panel be as balanced as possible in terms of gender and ethnicity. A timetable should then be drawn up consisting of:

Advert in press and specific internet sites	
Closing Date	3 weeks after advert printed
Shortlisting of Candidates to be interviewed	As soon as possible after closing date
Interview Date	2 weeks after shortlisting
Start date of new staff member	Approximately 1 month after job offer

3. Preparing Paperwork for the Position

A person specification needs to be written using essential and desirable criteria, i.e. skills, abilities, knowledge that the prospective postholder should have. This is written using the job description as a basis. The person specification needs to be specific, as this will be later used in the shortlisting process.

An application pack should be put together before the recruitment advert is placed. This should include a covering letter, an application form, guidelines on how to fill in the form, job description, person specification, equal opportunities monitoring form and return envelope, and any information about the organisation relevant to the post. Terms and conditions of service for the position should also be sent. This includes remuneration, holiday entitlement, pension details etc.

The interviewing panel will need to decide on the precise format of the interview day: for instance the formal interview might be supplemented with other forms of assessment i.e. written scenario, presentation. Depending on the skills being tested, the candidate may be informed in advance of the subject matter of any additional test. It is also important to ensure that the test is administered in the same environment for all candidates, and has exactly the same content. The policy on involving service-users and beneficiaries (DGS Mind Policy No 5) should be consulted, especially section 2.5. to ensure the views of service-users are also taken into account and built into the day.

4. Advertising

Once the Job Description and Person Specification have been agreed the recruitment advert needs to be written by the Interview Panel Lead.

The wording of recruitment advertisements is extremely important. It should be sharp, to the point and attractive to potential candidates. It should show the organisational name, title of the post being advertised, salary and any enhancements, job summary and some of the most important criteria for the position. Closing date, telephone number and address to return application forms to, and the organisations equal opportunities statement should also be shown.

Senior positions should be advertised in the national as well as local press, but this is at the discretion of the Interview Panel. See chart below for guidance.

CEO, Business Manager, Housing Manager, Carers Coordinator, Counselling Coordinator and any other member of the Senior management Team	The Guardian on Wednesday, Kent Messenger and Free Papers, DGS Mind flyer to all local organisations, service users, volunteers and other stakeholders. National Mind Website
All other vacancies	Kent Messenger and Free Papers, DGS Mind flyer (as above), National Mind Website

The closing date for applications is generally three weeks after the job is advertised.

As well as advertising externally it is Mind policy to distribute flyers to our service users, staff, volunteers and other local voluntary organisations, to give as wide a coverage as possible. The flyer should contain the same information as the published advertisement.

5. Responses to the Advert

The names, addresses and telephone numbers of people who respond to the advert should be logged by admin as soon as they come in. Application packs should be sent out as soon as possible, again by Admin.

When application forms are returned, the equal opportunities monitoring form should be separated from the application and kept by the Business Manager for monitoring. (A report is compiled yearly for the Board of Directors from this information).

Application Forms are normally addressed to the Business Manager. These will be date stamped, then be passed onto the interview panel lead, who will keep them locked away until selection.

It should be remembered that applications are private and confidential and must only be seen by the interview panel and Business Manager.

6. Shortlisting

Once the closing date has passed, the selection panel meet to look through the returned application forms. Selection for interview should be assessed on whether the candidate has shown evidence of meeting the essential and desirable criteria.

A standard selection form will be used for this purpose . Each interviewer will be provided with copies of the returned application forms, a selection form for each candidate and copies of the job description and person specification.

Each application form must be read through to check if each candidate has met each essential and desirable criteria. Achievement or not of these criteria will be scored on the selection form.

For each criteria, each candidate is awarded a score by each member of the interviewing panel, on a scale which has been agreed by the panel. Once each panel member has gone through each application form and graded them accordingly. The panel will pool their results to find the best candidates to interview, using the scores as a guide.

The shortlisting is a very important part of the selection process, especially from a legal point of view. It establishes a clear record to deal with any future queries from candidates, if they wish to contest the fact that they were not shortlisted.

Shortlisting will make up the list of candidates for interview.

A member of the administration team will then contact each shortlisted applicant, informing them of the interview date and the time they should attend for interview. A letter to confirm the details, how long the interview will last, appropriate details of any other exercises which are to be part of the overall selection process, will follow this up. It is Mind policy to reimburse the travel expenses of applicants attending for interview; this should also be explained in the confirmation letter. Candidates not successful in being shortlisted will be informed by letter.

Two references should be taken up for each shortlisted candidate. The letter should have attachments, including a job description, person specification and a stamped addressed envelope for the reference to be returned. **N.B. DGS Mind will respect the wish of candidates who do not want a referee to be contacted before interview.** Once references have been received, the person supplying the reference should be telephoned to make sure the reference is legitimate. References should then be initialled to show that they have been checked.

7. The Service User Panel

As expressed in DGS Mind Policy No 5, most interview processes will include a session where the candidates meet and talk to service users/beneficiaries:

POSITION	SU PANEL COMPOSITION
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	SERVICE USERS/BENEFICIARIES FROM THROUGHOUT THE ORGANISATION
BUSINESS MANAGER	SERVICE USERS/BENEFICIARIES FROM THROUGHOUT THE ORGANISATION
HOUSING MANAGER	TENANTS
HOUSING OFFICER	TENANTS
COUNSELLING CO-ORDINATOR	SERVICE USERS FROM THROUGHOUT THE ORGANISATION
CARERS SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR	CARERS
COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER	COMMUNITY SERVICES SERVICE USERS
MIND SUPPORT WORKERS	COMMUNITY SERVICES SERVICE USERS
ADMIN AND OTHER STAFF NOT INCLUDED ABOVE	SERVICE USERS/BENEFICIARIES FROM THROUGHOUT THE ORGANISATION WHERE APPROPRIATE

Service User/Beneficiary panels are facilitated by a member of staff/student on placement/volunteer. The role of the facilitator is to brief the members of the service-user panel, to support them to express themselves, to facilitate good communication between the members of this panel and the candidates, to gather the opinions of the members of the service-user panel, to observe the quality of interaction between this panel and the individual candidates, and feed this information back to the formal interview panel, who take these into consideration with the other information they have received by the end of the process. Service-user panels may be based on structured questions, or more free-flowing.

8. The Formal Interview

8.1 Before Interview

Before the interview date, admin prepares interview packs for interviewers, which consist of a timetable of candidates, scoring sheets, job description, person specification, application forms, copies of any references received and a copy of the Terms of Conditions of service for the position.

The environment in the interview room should be made welcoming and comfortable. Try to make the candidate feel at ease, as you will get the best from them if you do. The Interview Panel draws up questions for Candidates, normally a few weeks before interviewing takes place. The questions need to reflect the criteria of the Person Specification.

8.2 Day of The Interview

One of the panel members should meet each candidate in the Reception area and lead them to the Interview Room. Each panel member should be introduced and the candidate asked to sit down. The panel lead must explain the format of the interview.

During the interview each candidate should be asked the same questions, to give equal opportunity to all. These questions will have been put together by the lead of the panel at the earlier stage. The same time should be given to each candidate to answer the questions. Each panel member will score the answers of the candidates as the questions are asked. Answers should be scored against how well they meet the criteria of the Person Specification.

When the interview has ended, the panel lead should ask if the candidate has any questions, thank them for coming and explain, how and by when they will hear if they have been successful or not.

9. Selection

When all the interviews have been completed, the panel pool their results and debate who is the best person for the position, using the interview score sheets, person specification, results of any additional exercises and the views of service users involved, as a guide.

The interview panel do not have to appoint. Where a suitable candidate has not been identified it is preferable to re-advertise, than to make an appointment where there is some doubt.

If the panel is undecided between two candidates it is possible to ask them back for a second interview for further assessment.

Once the panel have decided on the successful candidate, this person should be called on the same day, to ask if they would like to take up the offer, subject to satisfactory references and CRB check. If they say yes, a mutually agreeable start date will be set.

10. Post-Interview Work

A letter should be written to the successful applicant confirming their appointment to the position advertised subject to references. This should state the starting salary, starting date and any other information that is relevant to the post and should be signed by the Chair of the organisation.

Letters should also be written to the unsuccessful candidates as soon as possible, offering verbal feedback from the interview lead. The members of the service-user panel should receive a letter of thanks.

Work should then take place to prepare the Induction Programme. This should be prepared by the Line Manager and cover all areas of Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Mind. Please refer to the Staff Development Policy (DGS Mind Policy No 14).