

North Kent Mind Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

It is the policy of North Kent 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 (North Kent Mind Policy No 11)

The procedure must be adhered to by all with relevant responsibility for recruitment. 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.

North Kent Mind operates an Equalities and Diversity policy (North Kent 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 is a core training need for all those staff/Trustees who will interview for paid staff. It is policy that at least one member of each interview panel will have training in this.

2. Preparing of Application Packs

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. New posts will require a new job description. These are agreed by the CEO and Business Manager. A person specification will be written, using the job description as a basis and specifying the essential and desirable criteria, i.e. skills, abilities, knowledge that the prospective postholder should have.

Application packs will be prepared to 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. Posts offered may be time-limited or open ended, depending on the needs of the organisation. This decision is made by the CEO, ratified by the Finance and Personnel Committee.

3. Creating an interviewing panel

Recruitment to all posts in North Kent Mind is to be via a panel, composed as appropriate of members of the Senior Management Team and/or the Board. 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. a written piece, presentation, role play, service user panel. The policy on involving service-users and beneficiaries (North Kent 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, where appropriate.

4. Advertising the Posts

The interviewing panel will need to decide whether recruitment will be external or internal. The latter is applicable where there is strong reason to believe suitable candidates already exist within the paid staff, sessional staff and volunteer pool, and the CEO has the right to make this executive decision. Where this decision is made, the CEO must justify this to the Finance and Personnel Committee.

Even where posts will be advertised externally, it is policy to notify these workers, by individual memo, of the vacancy.

Application forms and application packs will be available and accepted in both hard copy and electronic format. Returned equal opportunities monitoring forms are to be separated from the application and kept by the Business Manager for monitoring.

5. Shortlisting for Interview

After the closing date, the members of the interview panel will individually score each application on the evidence of how far the application meets the person specification. The panel will pool their results to find the best candidates to interview, using the scores as a guide. Shortlisting records are to be kept for two years in order to deal with any future queries from unsuccessful candidates, who might wish to contest the fact that they were not shortlisted.

6. The Service User Panel

As expressed in North Kent Mind Policy No 5, most interview processes will include a session where the candidates meet and talk to service users/beneficiaries. For some admin posts and therapists post it might not be possible to locate appropriate service users.

Service User panels are facilitated by a suitable member of staff or other person involved in the organisation. 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.

7. The Interview

The Interview Panel will work to a set of questions to be asked of each interviewee. These questions will reflect the criteria of the Person Specification. Each panel member will score the answers of the candidates as the questions are asked, but are free to ask further follow-up questions as the need arises.

On completion of all interviews the panel pool their results and debate who is the best person for the position, using as a guide: the interview score sheets, application forms, the results of any additional exercises, and feedback from any service user panel facilitator. Where a suitable candidate has not been identified it is preferable to re-advertise, rather than to make an appointment where there is some doubt. If the panel is undecided between two or more 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 DBS check.

8. Post-Interview Work

A letter should be written to the successful applicant confirming their appointment to the position advertised subject to references and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. This should state the starting salary, starting date and any other information that is relevant to the post and should be signed by the CEO.

Letters should also be written to the unsuccessful candidates as soon as possible, offering verbal feedback from the interview lead. It is North Kent Mind policy to reimburse the travel expenses of applicants attending for interview.

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

Interview records are to be kept for two years (see Policy no 9: Confidentiality) in order to deal with any future queries from unsuccessful candidates, who might wish to contest the fact that they were not shortlisted.

9. Procedure for dealing with items arising from DBS Checks

Where a person intending to work for North Kent Mind is found to have negative items on their DBS report, the procedure is as follows:

a) The person will be interviewed on this topic by 2 senior members of staff, They will be asked to convince the interviewers that the items revealed should no longer be of concern to the organisation. The interviewers will probe for issues of: likely repetition, time since negative issue, person's attitude to the issue, personal circumstances at the time of the issue, potential trigger factors which might encourage repetition.

b) Where the interviewers are satisfied that it is still appropriate to take on the person onto the paid or unpaid workforce, the person will be asked to write a short piece for their personnel file which states why the organisation should no longer have concerns over the issue, and any signs of which the organisation should be aware if the person were to be relapsing into inappropriate activity.

c) This document is held in the highly confidential section of the personnel file.

d) Where DBS checks are updated, the process does not need to be repeated for negative items which then predate the person's commencement of work with the organisation, but any items dated from that time need to be subject to the above process.