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| <b>Policy Name</b>                         | Recruitment & Selection Policy  |
| <b>Policy Category</b>                     | Corporate   |
| <b>Policy Number</b>                       | HR018   |
| <b>Officer Responsible</b>                 | Chief Executive   |
| <b>Date to Board of Management</b>         | 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2024  |
| <b>Scottish Housing Regulator Standard</b> | 5.1, 5.3 and 6.7  |
| <b>Equality Impact Assessment Complete</b> | Yes   |
| <b>Application</b>                         | Lochaber Housing Association; LHA Property Services; Lochaber Care & Repair |
| <b>Next Review Date</b>                    | August 2029   |

## Introduction

The Lochaber Housing Association (LHA) Group recognises its staff are fundamental to fulfilling the strategic aims and supporting the core values of its business. The LHA Group seeks to recruit the best candidates with the necessary skills and attributes to fulfil the roles. The LHA Group conducts business underpinned by Equal Opportunities legislation and strives to maintain a diverse staff team. We encourage excellence at all levels in our organisation and are not influenced by age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins and citizenship), religion/ belief, sex and sexual orientation nor any other factor irrelevant to achieving successfully and performing our jobs.

## Aim of the Policy

The LHA Group encourages good practice and equal opportunities in line with legislative requirements to which all staff are required to adhere to. During the recruitment and selection process, the aims of LHA Group are:

- To attract candidates with the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience for consideration for employment with the LHA Group.
- Ensure that access to employment opportunities are based on fair, objective and consistent criteria in line with the LHA Group's Equality Diversity & Inclusion policy.
- To ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are clear and adhered to by all staff and committee members involved.
- To develop a suitably qualified workforce committed to the aims, values and service delivery requirements of the LHA Group.

## Equal Opportunities

Equal Opportunities are aimed at removing barriers to access and opportunity, with positive results for individuals and the LHA Group. In the context of recruitment and selection, equal opportunities refer to equality in the attraction and selection of candidates, promotion or training in line with terms and conditions of employment. In seeking suitable candidates for new or vacant posts, the LHA Group will not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race (including colour, nationality ethnic or national origins and citizenship), religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation nor any other factor irrelevant to achieving successfully and performing our jobs.

The LHA Group's recruitment decisions will be based completely on the merits and abilities of candidates in line with those set out in the job description and person specification and no other criteria will be used. In order to achieve this, equality and diversity practices will be integrated into every stage of the recruitment and selection process.

A fair recruitment process will remove barriers where possible to the employment of individuals from different backgrounds. This will enable the LHA Group to recruit from the widest pool of talent, thus raising the standard of candidates and therefore increasing the opportunity of a more diverse workforce which reflects the community it is serving. A more diverse workforce should improve the LHA Group's service delivery, as it will include staff with varied knowledge and experience about meeting the needs and aspirations of service users and potential service users.

To highlight the LHA Group's commitment to promoting equality and diversity from the beginning of the employment relationship, all vacancies will be aimed at as wide a group as possible and any advertisement for a vacancy within the LHA Group will include an equality and diversity statement. In addition, the advert will also display any signs of equality bodies that the LHA Group is affiliated with. The information contained in the advert and all vacancy literature will be clear and accurate to attract the most appropriate candidates from all groups across society, to allow them to decide their own suitability for the vacancy and whether they wish to apply. For those that wish to apply, the LHA Group will ensure that clear instructions for completion are provided within the application pack. We will ensure that applications forms are free from personal questions that are not relevant to the vacancy or may lead to discrimination.

The LHA Group has decided that it is entirely appropriate that we welcome CV's for some of the roles that we advertise. CV's will be anonymised in the same way application forms are for short listing purposes.

The LHA Group will ensure that all staff involved at any stage in the recruitment and selection process have received equality and diversity awareness training. This will ensure that those involved in the recruitment process will not discriminate either knowingly or unknowingly by asking any questions which may lead to discrimination.

### **Identifying the need to recruit**

When either a job becomes vacant or a new job is created, there is an opportunity to fully consider what the LHA Group requires. The following questions should be considered:

- Is there a requirement for this post to be filled?
- What would be the adverse effect/s of not filling the post?
- If the post is to be filled, is this required on a like for like basis or are there alternative considerations?
- Does this vacancy provide an opportunity to look at the wider team roles?

At this point, agreement should be reached about the future of the post. If it is agreed that the vacancy will be filled or a new job is created, the procedure below will be followed prior to the recruitment and selection process taking place:

- A job description and person specification will be developed for the role detailing the duties, skills, knowledge and experience required. If a current job description and person specification exist, these will be reviewed by the line manager to ensure it accurately reflects the role.
- If this is a new role or you deem an existing role to have significantly changed, job evaluation may be carried out to determine the correct salary/ grade for the role. The LHA Group may seek to engage specialists such as EVH to carry out this work prior to the recruitment process taking place.
- A recruitment panel will be identified and have delegated authority to make an appointment to the post.
- A reasonable timescale for the entire recruitment and selection process should be agreed by the recruitment panel. This will take account of selection checks and notice period for the successful candidate.

- All paperwork required during the recruitment and selection process – the job advert, application paperwork, shortlisting and interview paperwork will be agreed in conjunction with HR.
- The same people should be involved throughout unless a conflict of interest arises at any point during the process. In this circumstance, the recruitment panel will discuss if it is appropriate for an alternative individual to join the recruitment panel.
- Depending on the seniority of the post, the recruitment panel may seek advice from recruitment advisors, such as EVH, prior to progressing a recruitment and selection process if deemed necessary.
- The recruitment panel will identify the most suitable individual to support the administration of the process.

### **The Recruitment Panel**

It is recommended that three individuals make up the recruitment panel where possible. Those individuals identified as suitable for the recruitment panel will depend on the post being filled. Below is an example:

- Staff only for posts which currently exist and are not of a senior nature.
- Staff and Board representatives for senior posts within the LHA Group.

The LHA Group recognises that the Board will require support when recruiting for the Senior Officer. In this circumstance, they will seek support from an independent organisation such as EVH prior to commencing the recruitment and selection process. The Board will decide who will be involved in the process alongside the Chair.

Any individual serving on a recruitment and selection panel will have the relevant experience in recruitment and selection training along with equality and diversity awareness training.

### **Attracting Candidates**

The LHA Group understands the importance of attracting suitable candidates through the most appropriate and cost-effective means. HR will discuss the best internal and external advertising methods in line with the agreed advertising budget. The knowledge and skills required for the job should ensure suitable candidates are attracted to apply for the job and the advert should outline the main details of the post:

- Job title
- Salary/ Grade
- Hours per week
- Location and if appropriate if hybrid working forms part of the role
- Nature of the contract – permanent, fixed term
- Main duties
- Closing date and proposed interview date
- Information on how to apply and any other relevant information.

### **Advertising**

#### **Permanent Recruitment**

The LHA Group will advertise all permanent posts via a variety of methods:

- Internal advert – this will be in conjunction with another advertising method.
- Specialist recruitment sites demonstrating our commitment to Equal Opportunities.
- The LHA Group's website.
- The LHA Group's social media platforms.

All candidates will receive an application pack that will include the following:

- An application form (where relevant)
- Equal opportunities monitoring form
- Job description and person specification

- Any other relevant information deemed necessary for the post e.g., summary statement of terms and conditions of employment, relevant information about the LHA Group which cannot otherwise be accessed via our website and is relevant to the role.

An exception to this, will be in cases of restructuring or redundancy where it may be necessary to appoint candidates into vacant posts as alternatives to redundancy rather than advertising the vacant posts. If this situation arises, the LHA Group will seek HR advice on the process.

### **Temporary Recruitment**

Short-term appointments of less than one year e.g., maternity leave cover, may be advertised internally and filled by a current employee where appropriate to do so, or by candidates engaged from suitable employment agencies.

### **Internal Recruitment**

All existing staff will be notified of permanent and long-term temporary vacancies. The LHA Group will ensure that those employees on sick leave or any type of other leave are notified and will be eligible to apply for any post advertised.

For very short-term posts of a few weeks, internal advertising will not normally take place as line managers have discretion to seek a temporary candidate from an employment agency if there is no suitable internal candidate identified.

### **Modern Apprenticeships**

Candidates for modern apprenticeships will also be required to submit application documents, which will be subjected to fair shortlisting procedures. Successful shortlisted individuals will be invited to attend an interview and the most suitable individual/s will be selected.

### **Shortlisting**

Once the post has closed, only then should shortlisting take place by the recruitment panel. At least one panel member must possess skills, experience or knowledge most closely related to the post for which candidates are to be shortlisted and interviewed. The individual responsible for the administration of the process will number all applications or CVS, remove all personal and equal opportunities information making applications unidentifiable before passing all applications to the recruitment panel.

If a panel member can identify a candidate via the information contained in the application form, resulting in a conflict of interest, they should declare this to the other members of the recruitment panel. That recruitment panel member should exclude themselves from the panel if the candidate is to be shortlisted. This decision will be made by the panel before progressing to the next stage and where possible, another person will be appointed to the recruitment panel.

Essential criteria will be applied in the first instance to shortlist candidates. Candidates who do not match all the essential criteria will not be called to interview. Candidates who do not possess all the desirable criteria may still be called to interview. However, desirable criteria will only be applied, where there has been a large response to the advert, to reduce fairly the number of candidates called for interview.

The recruitment panel will meet collectively to decide on the final shortlist of candidates for interview.

Those candidates shortlisted will be invited to interview. The LHA Group will also contact candidates not shortlisted to advise that their application will not progress to the next stage of the process. Those candidates not shortlisted for interview have the right to request feedback on their application and the reason/s for not being shortlisted.

## **Skills Assessment**

As part of the recruitment and selection process, the LHA Group may ask candidates to carry out a test/ skills assessment. This is not applicable for every role, but the recruitment panel will decide what is necessary to determine suitability for the role. This may take the form of a practical exercise, management test or presentation to the recruitment panel. Where this is required, candidates will be informed in advance of their interview to allow suitable time to prepare as necessary.

## **Disability Confident**

As a disability Confident employer we will ensure the following commitments are met:

- Recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- Communicate and promote vacancies using our Disability Confident badge
- Offer an interview to disabled people – if they meet the minimum criteria
- Anticipate and provide reasonable adjustments as required

## **Interview**

All shortlisted candidates will be offered an interview and the recruitment panel will decide if interviews are to be held face to face or virtually. The interview process will consider the following:

- Each candidate will be asked the same questions, based on the job description and person specification.
- Each candidate will be asked the questions in the same order by the relevant members of the recruitment panel.
- If appropriate candidates will carry out a suitable skills test and/or presentation topic.
- Typically, interviews will be 30-60 minutes duration depending on the nature of the post.
- Each recruitment panel member will complete an interview assessment form for each candidate, recording brief notes to assist with panel deliberations upon the conclusion of the interviews.

The recruitment panel will decide which panel member will Chair the interviews on the day. The Chair of the recruitment panel will be responsible for:

- Introducing the panel members to candidates.
- Explaining the format of the day, ensuring timings are adhered to.
- Informing candidates about when they should expect to be contacted about the outcome of their interview.
- Ensuring panel members state and document justifiable reasons for the rejection of each unsuccessful candidate.
- All interview paperwork being accurately completed.

Upon conclusion of the interviews, the recruitment panel will score each candidate and discuss them in turn to identify if they have an appointable candidate.

## **Job Offer**

Once the recruitment panel has made a decision, a conditional offer will be issued to the successful candidate subject to the following terms:

- Receipt of two satisfactory references.
- Original qualifications stated on the candidate's application form being verified.
- Proof of eligibility to work in the UK being provided.
- A satisfactory PVG membership/Disclosure Scotland check where appropriate.

Appointment will normally be made at the bottom of the salary scale; otherwise, an appointment will be made on a suitable salary within the scale paying due consideration to a candidate's skills, experience and current job role. The initial offer can be verbal and followed up in writing. The terms of a written contract of employment will be confirmed and issued

noting that the aforementioned conditions must be satisfied before confirmation of the job offer can be issued.

If the job offer is declined, the recruitment panel should indicate if the next highest scoring candidate was suitable and may be offered the post subsequently. If there is not a suitable candidate, the recruitment process should be revised and a rerun of the whole recruitment process should be considered.

Once the job offer has been accepted, the interview outcome should be issued to unsuccessful candidates. It is the intention of the LHA Group where possible, to inform candidates of the outcome of the interview as quickly as possible and within a few days of the interview having taken place.

### **Feedback**

The recruitment panel will record their collective reasons for unsuccessful candidates and agree the feedback at the end of the interview process. All candidates will be advised of the outcome of their interviews by letter and constructive feedback on their interview can also be made available to them, if they desire via telephone.

### **Selection Checks**

#### **References**

The LHA Group will carry out reference checks for the successful candidate only once the verbal offer has been made and the candidate has informed the LHA Group that it is suitable to do so. Two references will be required, one from the candidate's current employer and another from a previous employer. These will be requested in writing along with a copy of the job description. This will provide the referees with the knowledge and skills required for the post to allow them to give an informed opinion about the preferred candidate. All references will be checked on return to ensure employment dates match those stated on the application form of the preferred candidate and there is no information which would make the reference unsatisfactory.

#### **Right to Work in the UK**

The LHA Group has a responsibility to prevent illegal working therefore we will carry out a right to work check before confirming employment for the successful candidate. This will ensure the candidate is not disqualified from carrying out the work in question by reason of their immigration status. The successful candidate will be informed what is required to satisfy this check.

#### **Disclosure Scotland Criminal Records Checks**

The successful candidate may be asked to complete a criminal convictions declaration form. Depending on the nature of the role, they may also be asked to undergo a PVG/ Disclosure Check. If following these checks, information arises which the candidate has not disclosed or raises concern with the LHA Group, we will discuss further with the candidate.

#### **Interview Expenses**

Reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed to candidates for non-local journeys. Any reasonable interview travel expenses paid to candidates for new or vacant posts will be in accordance with the LHA Group's Expenses Policy.

#### **Equal Opportunities Monitoring**

As part of the LHA Group's recruitment process, equal opportunities monitoring will be undertaken from any completed equal opportunities forms and reported. The LHA Group will analyse the report to inform future recruitment.

#### **Data Protection/ Retention**

Candidates will be entitled to access any notes taken during the recruitment process, presuming that they contain personal data which will relate to them. If any candidate asks for access to this information, their enquiry should be directed to the Director of Customer Services.

All recruitment documentation associated with the vacancy, will be stored confidentially for a period of 6 months. After this time, all documents will be confidentially shredded and deleted from our electronic folders.

The successful candidate's recruitment documentation and all associated paperwork will be made into a personnel file and retained in line with our Data Retention Schedule.

Special consideration will be given to storing the results of any criminal record check or health questionnaire/medical report. The LHA Group will make a record of all checks and whether the result was or was not satisfactory. The original will then be promptly destroyed. The record of the results will then be stored in accordance with our Data Retention Schedule. There may be exceptional circumstances where this information should be kept if it is clearly related to the ongoing employment relationship.

The LHA Group Employee Privacy Notice outlines how we will process your personal data.

### **Induction**

The LHA Group staff will welcome a new staff member by providing initial induction training in the organisation, which will be organised by HR staff in advance of the successful candidate taking up post. This will help to settle the new staff member, convey our aims, objectives, policies and procedures thereby encouraging the individual to make a valuable contribution to our work.

### **Complaints**

If a complaint is received about any stage of the recruitment and selection process it should be resolved promptly in the first instance and verbally where appropriate to do so. If the complainant wishes to further pursue the matter, they should be advised to put the complaint in writing and address it to the Chief Executive who will investigate the matter and further liaise with the complainant.

### **Exit Interviews**

Exit interviews will be carried out by the Director of Customer Services. Exit interviews will be carried with all employees who have resigned from their post. The purpose of the exit interview is to allow the LHA Group to gain further information about the employee's reason for leaving. Furthermore, it provides additional information in relation to,

- The employee's perception of the organisation in relation to its employment practices.
- Management style and treatment perceived by employees as being unsatisfactory or unfair.
- Identifying reasons for turnover and improvements the organisation can make in the future.
- Whether there are any learning points or improvements the organisation can make on the working environment and culture.

Employees who have resigned from their post will be invited to attend an exit interview prior to their termination date.