



**Suffolk Artlink**

**Recruitment Policy and Procedure**

**Introduction**

Suffolk Artlink aims to attract and recruit people with diverse backgrounds, skills and abilities who will enhance the charity's quality of service and reflect the communities with which we work.

Suffolk Artlink values difference and diversity for the benefits this brings to the organisation, our charitable mission and beneficiaries. The charity is committed to providing an inclusive work environment.

There is a need to have a clear policy and workable practices to ensure that recruitment of employed staff is legal, fair, encompasses good practice, considers Suffolk Artlink's Equal Opportunities Policy, and is consistently applied.

This policy and practice will be followed through for recruitment to all employed posts, except where exceptional circumstances prevail. In these cases, the reason for not following the policy will be approved by the Director, communicated to the Chair of Trustees and explained to staff prior to any action being taken.

The whole recruitment process should be followed through by the same group of staff/managers/ Directors/external 'experts' in order to ensure consistency of approach.

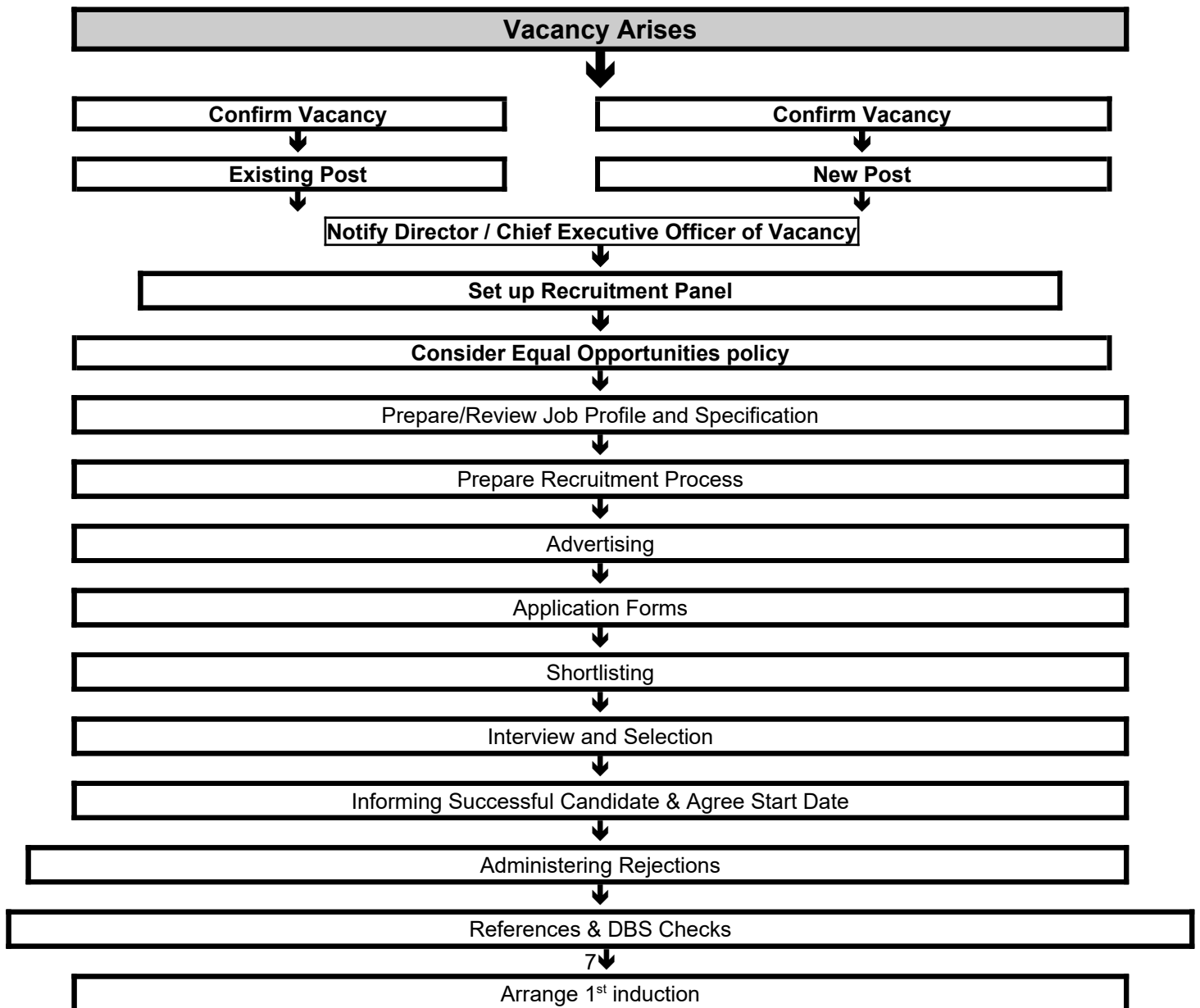
The contracting of suppliers and freelance staff is not covered by this policy.

Trustees wishing to apply for employment with Suffolk Artlink must stand down from the Board of Trustees before submitting their application. This does not affect trustees providing services as a supplier or freelance

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## Process diagram

The recruitment process within Suffolk Artlink will generally follow the following guidelines.



## Recruitment and selection procedure

It is recommended that the Suffolk Artlink format, detailed, be followed.

### Job Profile

All posts will have a full job profile prepared, detailing: -

- Job title
- Salary
- Work location
- Accountability
- Responsibility
- Main function(s) of the post
- Working hours
- A full description of the duties
- Duration e.g., fixed term, fixed term maternity cover, permanent

The Job Profile should be kept up to date, which will involve regular reviews between the postholder and line manager.

### Person Specification

From the job profile a person specification can be drawn up. This will detail the minimum: -

- Qualification
- Experience
- Knowledge
- Skills and Abilities
- Other

required by the postholder. The majority of these will be essential requirements, but there may also be some desirable criteria. The criteria will be listed in the order of importance.

Essential criteria are those without which the postholder could not undertake the job. Desirable criteria are additional areas which the postholder will need to have, but not necessarily in order to be appointed. The criteria must be fair and not contain any element which could be discriminatory.

Because the minimum essential requirements are stated in the person specification, they must be met for an individual to be considered for interview/appointment (otherwise they cannot be considered an essential requirement of the post).

Note: Both the Job Profile and Person Specification will be prepared by the line manager in conjunction with the Director. This will ensure consistency of standard and style across the organisation.

### Preparing the Recruitment Process

The recruitment schedule should be carefully planned and timed, bearing in mind the

following factors:

- Leaving date of previous incumbent in the post
- The preferred date for the start of the new appointee. If this is a new post the date may be influenced by budget considerations
- Dates for advertising taking account of the issue dates of monthly and weekly publications
- Closing date and time for applications
- Shortlisting
- Interviews and selection
- Rooms to be used and their availability

## **Advertisement**

Careful consideration needs to be given to the wording and placement of the advertisement. The content of the advertisement should be based on the Job Profile (main function of the post) and Person Specification (detailing the main appointment criteria).

Suffolk Artlink may advertise opportunities internally. This may be particularly relevant for short duration opportunities or opportunities providing professional development for our workforce.

Positive action in regard to shortlisting for interview is permitted in law. For example, an offer to interview all disabled candidates meeting the essential criteria of the job description.

There may be circumstance where a genuine occupation qualification (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) exists which will require the appointment of a particular sex or race or for staff of a particular racial or cultural background (for appropriate support for the relevant racial or cultural group).

Informal discussions and visits by interested applicants will not be offered, unless all applicants have this opportunity (most likely at interview stage). However, information sought by an applicant will be responded to.

When placing advertisements, reduced costs should be negotiated with the journal, particularly a charity discount, VAT exemption and early payment discount.

Advertisements should contain the following:

- Job title
- Suffolk Artlink details, including charity number and logo/strapline
- Broad aims and responsibilities of the job
- Salary and benefits
- Duration of contract e.g. fixed term, maternity cover, permanent
- Manner in which applications are to be made
- Closing date for applications
- How to apply
- Whether a DBS check is required for a regulated activity

- Reference should be made to Suffolk Artlink's commitment to safeguarding and the Disability Confident Employer scheme.

## **Application Form**

An application form may be used and if so a guidance sheet for completion will be issued. C.V.'s will not generally be accepted as the sole method of application and this will be explained in the covering letter sent with the application pack and on the application form.

To extend opportunities to more diverse candidates Suffolk Artlink may invite applications by other methods such as video applications. This may be particularly beneficial for entry level posts, apprenticeships, and internships.

## **Monitoring Form**

Candidates for all recruitment will be invited to complete an online diversity monitoring form, which will be anonymous. The monitoring will be used to measure the diversity of applicants in response to Suffolk Artlink's recruitment.

Where Suffolk Artlink is undertaking positive action to increase the diversity of applicants at interview, for example, guaranteeing to interview candidates with particular characteristics who meet the essential recruitment criteria, these questions will be asked within the application form.

## **Rehabilitation of Offenders**

As Suffolk Artlink works with young people and vulnerable adults, it is appropriate to ask applicants for some roles to declare criminal convictions. This is permitted under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. A separate form will ask for details of criminal convictions, and this will only be made available to the line manager in the event of an appointment being considered.

All prospective employees/volunteers will have to go through the enhanced DBS checks for appointments that involve regulated activities.

## **Application Pack**

The following are standard items that will be included in the application packs to be sent out to applicants: -

- Application form and guidelines
- Job Description and Specification, which should include qualifications if required, expected level of experience and the essential and desirable attributes.
- Current Annual Report
- Any other items the manager deems necessary to include.

## **Closing Date**

The advertisement should be allowed to run for a minimum period of two weeks, to allow

time for individuals to request an application form and to return it within the time scale stated. No returned applications should be considered until after the closing date.

Applications will be recorded when received, and the response to journals monitored. Declaration of Convictions Forms will be removed from the application form prior to shortlisting.

If a candidate has a disability, then reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made where requested, to try to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged at the recruitment stages because of their disability.

## **Shortlisting**

The shortlisting and interview panel should comprise the same people. If this is not possible, then at least a core majority should be involved in both parts of the process. Panel members must have sufficient knowledge of the area of work of the post to be able to assess the applications.

The shortlisting and interview panel should include at least one member of Suffolk Artlink's senior management team with experience and / or training in inclusive recruitment. Other panel members must be familiar with Suffolk Artlink's recruitment policy and should be offered training and / or additional support as required.

The panel will be provided anonymised applications and will shortlist on the criteria indicated on the Person Specification. All members of the shortlisting panel should have the opportunity of reading the applications fully to assess whether each applicant does or does not meet the criteria (both essential and desirable).

A form will be prepared to enable consistency of approach. The form will detail the selection criteria which can be judged from the application form. Only the information contained in the application form can be considered. Any personal knowledge of an applicant or information which is implied cannot be considered.

Once each member of the shortlisting panel has had the opportunity of reading all the application forms and has reached their own decision about whether or not to shortlist each applicant, the whole panel should meet together to finalise the shortlist.

Panel members must declare their knowledge of any of the applicants to the other panel members. Initially, the panel should consider only the essential criteria, and where there is full agreement that an applicant meets the criteria, they should be considered for interview. Where there is full agreement that an applicant has not met the essential criteria, it should be confirmed what areas it was considered that the applicant failed to adequately meet (for feedback if requested) and the application rejected.

The shortlisting meeting should also meet to determine any pre-interview tasks/tests and the interview questions. Panel members, particularly the line manager, should come to the shortlisting meeting having prepared some question areas for consideration.

## **Shortlisted Candidates**

Shortlisted applicants must be informed by phone, or their preferred communication preference, at first before sending a confirmation letter. All care must be taken to arrange convenient times for each applicant, but this may not always be possible.

Confirmation letters should include:

- the date, time and location of interviews.
- a location map for in real life interviews
- notice of the requirement to provide three forms of identity one which should be a photo card driving licence, passport, or birth certificate, if proof of their right to work is required it should also be produced at this stage.
- a requirement to provide evidence of any qualifications included in candidates' applications
- who the members of the interval panel will be
- the duration of interview, whether there will be any tests, and any other information that will help to give candidates a realistic expectation of the interview experience

Suffolk Artlink may choose to inform all interview candidates of some or all of the interview questions in advance. This may make the interview process more accessible and more open to candidates from diverse backgrounds. Providing questions in advance should always be considered and should be the generally preferred approach,

Additional information can be supplied to shortlisted candidates, and this should be sent with sufficient time for it to be read or alternative formats as preferred.

If applicable, tours of Suffolk Artlink project(s) should be arranged. Information gleaned by the 'guide' must not be passed on the panel or used in the decision-making process.

Suitable rooms should be booked for tasks/tests. The interview candidate should be seated at the same level as the panel (unless someone needs to sit on a particular type of chair).

## **Selection Tasks (if applicable to post)**

For some posts it may be appropriate to set pre or post interview tasks or tests. For example, for an Accounts Officer position to be sent some financial information or a scenario and to ask them to prepare a report or comment on the information. These can then assist the interviewing panel in measuring how well a candidate meets the appointment criteria. The time allocated to pre-interview tests significantly reduces the time spent during the interview covering the same question areas.

Selection tasks and tests must be very carefully designed to ensure that they are job related, fair, can be managed within the time set, applied consistently and are measurable. If 'failing' at a test means that the candidate does not go forward for interview, shortlisted applicants must be informed of this possibility.

## **Interviews**

If a task has been set for the applicant to bring to the interview, sufficient information must be supplied to enable the task to be completed, or if personal research is required, that sufficient time is given for this to be undertaken.

The interview panel should comprise the same members as the shortlisting panel wherever possible.

A panel of two to three people will interview applicants and where possible try to have a panel incorporating a balance in gender, race and specialist knowledge of the job. Applicants should be informed if more than three people will be involved in any part of the interview process and the reason for this.

Interviews may be held in person or virtually or hybrid. Offering virtual attendance may be a necessary access adaptation or may be offered to all candidates. All candidates must receive a consistent interview and be treated equally.

Question areas must relate directly to the job description and person specification and no new criteria can be introduced at this stage. All interview candidates must be asked the same question areas, although the way the question is asked may be amended slightly to reflect the differing experiences of the candidates. Supplementary questions on the same question area to clarify or go into more depth are acceptable.

Questions unique to an individual may be asked, for example, where there is uncertainty about information on an application. Question areas outside of the appointment criteria cannot be used for interview scoring. On no account must questions be asked which may be discriminatory, directly or indirectly.

It is the responsibility of the panel chair, who will normally be the Director, to ensure that the interviews are consistent and run as near to time as possible.

All the criteria on the personnel specification must be tested, whether from the application form, by direct question or task/test performed.

Each panel member should keep notes of the interview. An Assessment Form should be used by each individual panel member to rate their scoring of each applicant on the various questions asked. The scoring is based on a scale of 1-10 with 10 been excellent and 1 been poor.

At the end of the interview, when a decision has been reached on who to appoint, all interview notes, scoring sheets, copies of application forms etc. must be retained by the General Manager for processing appropriately in accordance with the Data Protection Policy. Suffolk Artlink will ensure that applicants' details remain confidential and are used only for the purpose of the recruitment process.

## **Making the Decision**

At the conclusion of all interviews the panel will discuss each candidate, total up scoring sheets and judge the responses to questions in order to assess whether each candidate has met all the essential criteria or not. The panel are matching the candidate to the person specification, not comparing one candidate to another.

Where it is agreed that a candidate did not meet the essential criteria and therefore cannot

be considered for appointment, notes should be made on their application form detailing the reasons for non-appointment.

Where there is only one candidate, this person may be offered the post. If there is more than one candidate who meets all the essential criteria, the desirable criteria should be examined and the candidate who meets most of the desirable criteria should be the successful applicant. If in the interview panel's opinion, no candidates meet the criteria sufficiently the panel may choose not to appoint and may review the recruitment and re-advertise the post.

It must be clear on the interview notes why a particular candidate was selected for appointment and why the others were not, in case there is an enquiry from one of the candidates as to why they were not selected. The panel notes and summary will be kept in case feedback is requested by an unsuccessful candidate.

Where more than one candidate meets all the essential and desirable criteria, the criteria should be examined more closely to ensure accuracy and fairness.

Where more than one candidate is considered suitable for appointment, the unsuccessful candidate(s) can be held as reserve candidates should the successful candidate not take up the post, or if another identical post becomes vacant. The 'reserve' candidates can be held for a period of three months. If a vacancy occurs after that time, the recruitment process should commence from scratch.

## **Offering the Post**

The General Manager or the Director should make contact with the selected candidate. A provisional start date should be agreed with both parties during this phone call. Any offer of appointment is subject to receipt of satisfactory references and to satisfactory medical clearance (if applicable) and DBS check. The verbal offer will be followed up with an offer letter.

## **References**

Two references should be used only to confirm an offer of appointment. They must not be used as a basis for selecting the appointee from a number of possible candidates. A poor reference should be queried by the General Manager or the Director and this can be a reason for withdrawing an offer of appointment.

## **Appeal Process**

Both successful and unsuccessful candidates are able to request and to receive feedback on their application form, tasks/presentation and interview. This should be provided by the line manager present during the interviews. They can also request to see any written notes.

Where a candidate considers that they have not been dealt with fairly, at any stage of the recruitment process, their complaint must be put in writing, initially to the Director. If the Director has been involved in the recruitment process, then the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Trustees.

Note: All documentation relating to the recruitment process will be retained following completion of the process for a maximum period of six months, following which all papers will be destroyed as confidential waste.

## Induction

The Line manager will arrange a full induction programme.

## Policy Verification

The Board will review this policy on an annual basis

<b>Date Adopted / readopted</b>	<b>Dates amended</b>
July 2011	September 2012
22 September 2014	22 September 2014
March 2016	March 2016
September 2017	September 2017
June 2019	June 2019
November 2020	November 2020
15/11/2021	15/11/2021
17/10/2022	17/10/2022
11/10/2023	11/10/2023
08/04/2025	08/04/2025
17/03/2026	17/03/2026