**Introduction**

The recruitment and selection process is of paramount importance in order to recruit staff with the necessary skills and attributes to enable the organisation to fulfil its aims and objectives. The

Recruitment Policy aims to provide clear guidance to staff in relation to both the selection and appointment of staff, and outlines safe recruitment procedures in line with our commitment to protecting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. This policy promotes and supports good practice for those with responsibility for recruitment.

**Policy**

This policy aims to achieve the following objectives:

* Recruit staff with the appropriate skills, in order to meet the organisation’s current and future needs.
* To ensure that staff appointed to posts working with children or adults with care or support needs are safe and qualified to carry out such duties
* Work to a fair and effective recruitment procedure, which is consistent with employment legislation and the organisation’s Equality and Diversity policy.

Internal candidates or others personally known to the interview panel must be treated in the same way as all other candidates, with the exception of ex-Farm employees dismissed from service, who will not be considered for re-employment until a minimum of 24 months has passed.

**Considerations**

**Justification for Recruitment**

Before recruitment begins, the following will be given consideration:

* Is it necessary to fill the vacancy?
* Does the role require changes in duties and responsibilities?
* Is it appropriate to evaluate the grade of the post?
* Could the work be accommodated in other ways Or is there a true need for the additional role?
* How is the role funded, and if applicable for what length of time?
* Are there any staff ‘at risk’ of redundancy? Staff at risk within the organisation must be given first consideration for any vacancy prior to an external / internal advertisement being placed.

**Filling the Vacancy**

The recruiting manager will:

* Develop the Job Description - defines the purpose, the scope and the principal duties and responsibilities of a particular role. It provides a framework which outlines the expectations, both for the employee and the employer, and forms part of the working agreement, but is not in itself contractually binding.
* Compile any other details for the Recruitment Pack, which may include the Farm's Vision, Mission, Aims and Objectives, Project Plan, Operational Plan etc
* Map out a timetable for the recruitment process
* Compile a list of avenues for advertising and proposed budget
* Compile advert text/recruitment poster, using appropriate funders logos and seeking funder sign-off if required

The Job Description must be signed off by the Director who will ensure that it is in line with the Farm's organisational structure in terms of grade, roles and responsibilities and pay scale and remuneration.

**Advertising**

It is normal practice that all vacancies are advertised both internally and externally. However, where it is considered that existing staff or current volunteers have the prerequisite skills and experience, consideration may be given to advertising posts internally only. All positions at manager level or above will normally be internally and externally advertised to ensure due diligence is given to the management and leadership of the charity.

Staff who have been identified to be ‘at risk’ of redundancy should be considered for vacant posts prior to internal / external advert if they have the skills, relevant experience and attributes as identified on the Job Description.

For external recruitment, we will add the vacancy to the front page of the Farm website and also on the ‘Vacancies’ webpage including the Job Description and Application Form. We will share it on social media channels and advertise with appropriate channels.

Internally, we will send the Job Description to all current staff, trustees and lead volunteers, asking for an expression of interest. If more than 1 person with the relevant skills, experience and attributes express interest, we will hold interviews and appoint a candidate based on this process.

**Enquiries**

All enquirers will receive an information pack detailing the requirements of the post (the Recruitment Pack). Wherever possible, this will be provided in electronic format unless otherwise requested.

**Equalities and Diversity**

This Farm recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. All posts will be advertised as widely as possible following the Recruitment Procedure document. The Farm is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the Farm is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity.

**Recruitment Procedures**

**Procedure for selecting candidates**

It is the organisation’s policy that all applications for roles must be made by filling out the application form. Curriculum Vitae’s will not be accepted as an application. This is made clear on the application form.

**Receipt of applications**

Receipt of applications will not normally be acknowledged to individual applicants. Candidates personal information and equality and diversity monitoring forms are separated from the application forms prior to the shortlisting process. The shortlisting panel will not have access to this information. Applicant data will be stored in compliance to the Farm’s Data Protection Policy (including GDPR).

**Shortlisting**

Candidates will only be shortlisted for interview if they demonstrate the relevant skills and/or transferable experience outlined on the Job Description. Applications received from candidates whom are ex-Farm employees dismissed from service will not be considered within a 24 month period, or longer depending on the circumstances of the dismissal. If the number of candidates meeting the essential criteria is excessive, further selection must be undertaken utilising the desirable criteria to achieve a workable shortlist (suggest no more than 6). Shortlisting must be undertaken by at least two individuals who are briefed about the recruitment process and who will go on to be involved in the interviewing process.

**Invitations to Interview**

Candidates should be given at least one week’s clear notice of an interview date. The invitation should include the details of any skills assessments and related preparatory work that they will be required to undertake prior to or as part of the recruitment process. The candidates should also be asked whether any reasonable adjustments are to be made for the interview.

**Interviewing**

An interview panel will consist of a minimum of 2 people, and usually no more than 3. This will include the proposed line supervisor for the role being appointed and may include: a service user; trustee; representative of the project (when a collaborative project), and when appointing an Operational Manager or above, a Trustee.

The purpose of an interview is to facilitate the selection of the most suitable candidate for the post, although it should be recognised that this is only one part of the selection process. The interview must be conducted by the same panel (unless there are exceptional circumstances). All candidates will be asked a standard format of questions, which will have been decided by the interview panel prior to the interviews. All questions must be related to the job requirements and the candidate’s suitability to undertake the role. Follow up questions may be asked in response to candidate’s answers.

When conducting interviews every member of the panel completes a scoring sheet and must make notes of questions asked and answers given. This will provide feedback and evidence of why the candidates have been selected or rejected. These notes will be stored for 12 months, before being disposed of safely. It should be noted that applicants will normally be entitled to have access to interview notes about them which are retained as part of the record of the interview.

It is important that interviews are conducted in a courteous and professional manner and that candidates leave with a positive impression of the organisation.

**Skills assessment**

As part of the selection process the organisation may wish candidates to partake in a series of skills tests.

These tests must be directly related to the role in question and must be measurable against objective criteria. Candidates must be informed of the details in the letter inviting them for interview. Notes of the outcome of the tests should be kept as part of the recruitment process.

**Appointment**

The choice of candidate will be determined by the majority view from the formal interview panel formed by the scored interview sheets. In the case of a tied score the recruiting panel will review applications and utilise desirable criteria as a deciding vote . If the panel think that they need more information to make a decision candidates may be invited back for a second interview.

Before an offer of employment if given, it is best practice to seek at least one short verbal reference. If this are satisfactory, an offer of employment will be made by the lead staff member. It must be made clear, however, that the offer is conditional upon the receipt of satisfactory references, evidence of eligibility to work in the UK and other appropriate checks, such as Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and barred lists.

If the candidate selected does not take up the appointment, any decision to offer the appointment to the second choice applicant must be taken by the whole panel. Before the panel disbands it should agree, if possible, on the reserve name(s).

**Documentation**

At all stages of the recruitment process, it is the responsibility of the interview panel to ensure that notes are kept detailing the reasons for selection or rejection of candidates. These notes could be called upon as evidence of the fairness of the process. The notes should therefore be relevant to, and necessary for the process itself. It should be noted that applicants would normally be entitled to have access to interview notes about them (please note that applications are retained for 12 months only) as part of the record of the interview. All application details are treated with the utmost confidentiality and in line with the Data Protection Policy.

**Feedback**

Feedback will be provided by a member of the interview panel at the request of any applicant invited to interview. As a small organisation, we do not have the resources to provide feedback on candidates not selected for interview.

**Monitoring**

For equality and diversity purposes, recruitment statistics are monitored on an ad hoc basis by gender, ethnicity, disability, age and by faculty, department and job type. This information is disseminated to the

Director and the Board of Trustees with any positive action identified as a consequence.

**Post-Selection administration**

**Offer of employment and pre employment checks**

A verbal offer of employment will be made by the lead staff member on the panel. The Office Manager will follow this up by issuing a written offer of employment within 5 working days. It must be made clear, however, that the offer is conditional upon the satisfactory completion of references, satisfactory evidence of eligibility to work in the UK and other appropriate checks.

Only when all of the above have been obtained and cleared is the offer of employment legally binding. Unsuccessful candidates must be notified as early as possible of the outcome of their interview by the lead staff member. Ideally this should be no more than three working days after the successful candidate has confirmed their acceptance of the post and should be made by direct telephone conversation.

The Offer of Employment letter will also outline the candidate’s start date, and what they may likely expect within their first few weeks of work, including training dates, event attendance, etc.

The Farm is committed to implementing robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to appoint a person who is unsuitable or disqualified from working with children/vulnerable adults, or does not have the suitable skills and experience for the intended role. For newly appointed staff, the Office Manager will undertake the following pre-employment checks including:

* verification of the candidate’s identity
* verification of qualifications
* the production of evidence of the right to work in the UK
* receipt of satisfactory references (see detail below)
* a satisfactory DBS disclosure (see detail below)

**References**

The Office Manager will take up the references from the application form. Employment references should be obtained from at least the last or current employer, either in writing or by initial contact via the telephone, to be confirmed in writing. The questions and information gleaned from the reference must be relevant to the aspects of the post in question, e.g. where cash handling is involved in a post, then the honesty of the prospective employee must be discussed. If the successful candidate is an internal one the taking up of references may be ‘waived’ or an internal reference may be sought.

**Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**

All permanent staff roles within St Werburghs City Farm are subject to an enhanced DBS check due to the nature of the services we provide for children and vulnerable adults. In addition, those roles working directly with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to checking against the relevant barred lists. The Farm is committed to ensuring that people who have been convicted are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position, however this will depend on the background, nature and circumstances of the offence(s). Any Disclosure which shows a criminal conviction must be discussed with the Director before proceeding. Under the code, before withdrawing an offer of employment based on the Disclosure information, the matter should be discussed with the applicant.

A previously issued DBS certificate will be accepted only in certain restricted circumstances, for instance, sessional workers/engagement worker where a DBS check for a similar role has been undertaken by another provider so long as they are no more than 3 months old.

All staff members are obliged to inform their Line Manager in writing if they are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment with the Farm.

**Induction**

Upon the successful recruitment of a new member of staff, the Line Manager will develop an induction plan suitable to the role and responsible of the Job Description. This will include time for the new member of staff to undertake an orientation, and accustom themselves to the Farm’s Policies and procedures. The Line Manager is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the new candidate’s induction is completed within a month of their start date.

**Contract**

Upon the successful recruitment of a new member of staff, the Office Manager will create their Contract of employment in line with the signed off Job Description and the most recent contract issued. A contract will be given to a new employee within their first week of work, which will need to be signed within 2 weeks of their start date. A signed copy will be kept in the Farm's HR files and the candidate will take a signed copy home.

**Alternative recruitment procedure**

From time to time the organisation experiences staff shortages and difficulties in filling vacancies due to local skills shortages. At these times the timescales of our recruitment cycle can exacerbate the issue, e.g. a candidate will have found work before we have shortlisted. Under these circumstances we may invoke an alternative recruitment procedure as outlined below.

**Sessional posts**

The process will be carried out following the normal recruitment process except that a rolling advert will be used such that there will be no end date and it will be advertised for as long as it takes to fill the post.

In order to maintain a fair process the applications will be prepared by removing the candidates contact details before handing over to the manager for shortlisting. When a suitable candidate comes in the line manager will be able to short list the application immediately and if suitable the manager can contact the candidate and invite them to interview. During the interview they will need to answer the prepared questions which will be scored as before and added to the recruitment documents. If the manager is happy then we can offer them the contract. Once we have filled position the advert will be cancelled.

**Permanent posts**

The process will be carried out following the normal recruitment process except that the manger will be able to shortlist as applications come in. In order to maintain a fair process the applications will be prepared by removing the candidates contact details before handing over to the manager for shortlisting. If there is a person of interest then the manger will be able to contact the candidate before the deadline to establish an interest and keep them “warm” for the job. Where a strong candidate emerges we can review the recruitment timescale with a view to proceeding ahead of the deadline set. This decision will lie with the Office Manager and manager of the post to be recruited. The Director and Operational Manager posts will not be recruited under alternative procedures.

**Temporary additional hours**

Where it is required for a member of staff to undertake additional hours, these will be paid at the appropriate rate for the work undertaken/ at the level the work is required. Once commencing these hours, if it then appears that the hours are required for a more long term basis (i.e. longer than 6 months) then the Director will consider if the role should be internally advertised.