**Recruitment and Selection Policy**

1. **Introduction**

1.1 Recruiting and selecting the right people is of paramount importance to the continued success of New Mills and District Volunteer Centre, in order to continue to deliver service of the highest quality to the voluntary sector and our other stakeholders. This Recruitment and Selection Policy sets out how to ensure, as far as possible, that the most suitable candidates are recruited and that the recruitment process is free from bias and discrimination.

1.2 By following the policy, in addition to fulfilling employment law requirements, NM&DVC will also ensure that it continues to uphold its commitment to equal opportunities and accessible information.

1.3 This policy is designed to assist in recruiting and selecting the best candidate for a vacancy. In doing so it also ensures that account is taken of:

* NM&DVC’s Equal Opportunities Policy
* Legislation including the Equality Act 2010.
* Advice on good practice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission
* Requirements for compliance with UK Immigration legislation

1.4 It is the responsibility of the Centre Manager to ensure that this policy is carefully followed within each recruitment and selection process. The policy will be reviewed annually and amended as appropriate

1. **Scope**

2.1 Normally appointments will be made in accordance with this policy and must, therefore, be subject to advertisement and interview. The Chair of Trustees must approve any exceptions in advance of formal appointment, for example where a grant awarding body approves funding to continue a post or for a short-term specialised project.

2.2 When employing temporary or casual staff on a short-term basis, the principles of good practice outlined in this policy should still be followed. In summary these are that details of a post must be publicised in a manner relevant to the post and selection must be on the basis of appropriate criteria and merit.

1. **New Jobs and Job Vacancies**
   1. The occurrence of a vacancy is an opportunity to review the necessity for the post and its duties, responsibilities and grade. This should be conducted by the Centre Manager and a selection of Trustees.
   2. When a vacancy arises, consideration must be given to staff whose posts are being made redundant and for whom redeployment is being sought. If appropriate, vacancies can be shared internally and staff members can be invited to complete an expression of interest. If no suitable candidate is found, the vacancy should then be shared externally.
2. **Job Description**

4.1 A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the process. It should clearly set out the duties and responsibilities of the job and must include:

* The job title
* The location of the post
* The post to whom the post holder is responsible
* Any posts reporting to the post holder
* Main purpose of the job
* Main duties and responsibilities
* Any special working conditions (e.g. working patterns)

4.2 Items that should be included in job descriptions are:

* A note that indicates that, as duties and responsibilities change, the job description will be reviewed and amended in consultation with the post holder
* An indication that the post holder may, from time to time, be asked to undertake other reasonable duties commensurate with the grading of the post
* A statement that the post holder will actively follow policies including the Equality and Diversity policy
* An indication that the post holder will maintain an awareness and observation of Health & Safety Regulations

4.3 The language in job descriptions should:

* Be readily understandable to potential applicants for the post
* Avoid jargon and unexplained acronyms and abbreviations
* Avoid ambiguity about responsibilities and be clear about the post holder’s accountability for resources, staff, etc…
  1. **Person Specification**

5.1 The person specification is of equal importance to the job description and informs the selection decision. The person specification details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job.

5.2 The person specification should be specific, related to the job, and not unnecessarily restrictive - for example only qualifications strictly needed to do the job should be specified. The inclusion of criteria that cannot be justified as essential for the performance of the job may be deemed discriminatory.

5.3 The person specification must form part of the further particulars of a vacancy along with the job description in order that applicants have a full picture of what the job entails. The person specification enables potential applicants to make an informed decision about whether to apply and those who do apply, to give sufficient relevant detail of their skills and experience in their application. The person specification forms the basis of the selection decision and enables the selection panel to ensure objectivity in their selection.

5.4 The person specification details the required:

* Knowledge (including necessary qualifications)
* Skills and abilities
* Experience
* Aptitudes

5.5 Criteria which are subjective and for which little evidence is likely to be obtained through the selection process should be avoided (for example, 'a flexible approach' is often too vague to be of any help in the selection process).

5.6 For some jobs a particular qualification(s) may be essential, while for others no single qualification may be appropriate and a particular type of experience may be just as relevant as a formal qualification. Where qualifications are deemed essential these should reflect the minimum requirements necessary to carry out the job to an acceptable standard.

5.7 Required abilities should be expressed in terms of the standards required, not just in terms of the task to be undertaken. For example, avoid statements such as 'Ability to write reports'; instead, indicate the expected standard, such as 'Ability to write detailed financial reports that encompass budgeting and forecasting'.

**6. Details for Applicants**

6.1 The details of a vacancy or 'further particulars' of a post must include the job description and person specification for the post together with any other important information that a potential applicant needs to decide whether to apply.

6.2 Further particulars must include the following where they apply:

* Details of the working hours
* Guidelines about completing the application form, including the number of referees and whether there is an intention to seek references before interview
* Where applicable, a statement explaining that only candidates who are shortlisted will be contacted
* An indication of the need for a Disclosure and Barring Service check, depending on the post
* Proof of Right to Work.

6.3 Consideration should be given to making all recruitment information available electronically as this is an increasingly effective and less resource intensive method of communication. When requested and where reasonable, documentation should be translated into alternative formats. For example blind or partially sighted people may have preferred ways of receiving information e.g. Braille, large print, or an electronic format so that their accessibility software can be used.

**7. Publicising the Vacancy**

7.1 All posts must be advertised on NM&DVC’s website. The only exceptions to this are where restructuring is taking place or where staff are facing redundancy.

7.2 The majority of posts will be advertised on social media, in other specialist and national publications and in our centre window. All posts must be advertised for a minimum of two weeks to help attract the best pool of applicants and ensure compliance with immigration rules. The location of publication must be carefully considered against the requirements of the role.

7.3 The Equality and Human Rights Commission advises that 'word of mouth' recruitment is likely to be indirectly discriminatory in terms of race and/or sex discrimination. It is very important therefore that all posts are advertised as widely as possible in media that reach underrepresented groups and that all applicants are dealt with in the same way and given the same information and opportunity to make an application.

7.4 All job advertisements must be placed through the Centre Manager to ensure consistency of approach.

7.5 Should there be no appropriate applicants, or a poor number a week prior to the interviews, we will monitor the situation and make a decision whether to extend the deadline or to post the vacancy in additional places (such as recruitment websites or CharityJob). This decision must be communicated to any current applicants.

**8. Processing Applications**

8.1 Care must also be taken when initiating contacts with applicants that all are treated in the same way, for example regarding invitations to visit, informal meetings to discuss the vacancy, and provision of information.

8.2 Disabled candidates should be allowed to apply in a different form if required.

8.3 The confidentiality of applications must be respected by all of those involved in the selection process.

**9. Selecting the Interview Panel**

9.1 All interviews must be conducted by a panel. The Chair of Trustees should agree the interview panel with the Centre Manager prior to the closing date. This allows panel members to assist in the short-listing process. Familiarity with the vacancy and preparation for the interview is a key to successful interviewing.

9.2 Panels must:

* Consist of a minimum of two NMVC personnel/trustees unrelated to them. Team members or external agencies should be invited where this is appropriate (jointly funded post).
* Ideally include one member who has received disability awareness training.
* Declare if they already know a candidate
* Be willing and able to attend all interviews for the duration of the recruitment process, to maintain consistency and to ensure fair treatment of all candidates.
* If applicable include the line manager appointed to the vacancy.

**10. Shortlisting**

10.1 After the closing date has passed the interview panel should assess the applications to determine which applicants are to be called for interview. At least two members of the interview panel, including the immediate line manager, should undertake the task of short listing. Where the panel has an external member, that person should take part in the short listing wherever practicable. Shortlisting decisions should be based on evidence that the applicant has met the requirements of the person specification.

10.2 All panel members must score the applicants in private using the same documents, and then come together to compare scores. Then a decision can be made regarding those to invite to interview.

10.3 The original applications for all applicants along with the scoring process, must be retained for a minimum of 12 months from the date that an appointment decision is notified, in case of complaint to an Employment Tribunal and to satisfy Border Agency requirements.

**11. Arrangements for Interviews**   
11.1 Letters or emails should be sent to invite applicants to interview.

11.2 It is a requirement to ask all candidates attending for interview to bring with them evidence of their right to work in the UK. The line manager must take a copy of the original document. To avoid making assumptions about such permission, it is the line manager’s responsibility to ask all appointees for evidence of eligibility to work in the UK. It is unlawful racial discrimination to carry out checks only on potential employees who by their appearance or accent seem to be other than British.

11.3 The further particulars for the post should make clear that after a certain period, if they have not heard, applicants should consider themselves not to have been shortlisted.

**12. Interviewing**

12.1 Interviews should be scheduled as soon after the closing date as reasonably possible, as delays are likely to lead to a loss of candidates.

12.2 The contents of the interview must be carefully considered and the most suitable method of interview agreed. Consideration should be given to competency-based tasks, presentations and role play in additional to traditional questioning. The method along with the complexity must be appropriate for the skill level of the job opening in question.

12.3 The structure of interviews should be decided in advance by determining who will chair the panel and what areas of questioning are required to cover all the elements of the person specification. The question areas to be explored by each panel member should be agreed in advance to avoid overlap or repetition and panels may find it helpful to discuss their expectations of full answers to the questions, prior to the interview.

12.4 The same areas of questioning should be covered with all candidates and assumptions should not be made regarding the expertise or abilities of candidates because of their employment history. Interview questions should be phrased so that they do not favour any one candidate or group of candidates. Supplementary questions should be used to probe for further information or clarification where answers are incomplete or ambiguous. Care must be taken to avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory (e.g., questions about personal circumstances that are unrelated to the job). It is, for example, legitimate to ask for confirmation of whether individuals can comply with the working patterns of the post, but not to ask details of their domestic or childcare arrangements etc. It is the responsibility of the Centre Manager to ensure that such questions are not asked.

12.5 The panel should not enquire into an individual’s sickness absence record or health, either through the application form or in the recruitment interview as this is contrary to the Equality Act 2010.

12.6 Interview panels acting for NM&DVC in making selection decisions are accountable for them. Interview notes must be taken by each panelist to help the panel to make an informed decision based on the content of the interviews. Such notes must relate to how candidates demonstrate their knowledge, skills, experience and abilities in relation to the person specification. The Data Protection Act allows applicants to request disclosure of such notes in the event of a complaint and an Employment Tribunal would expect NM&DVC to have notes of every selection decision. The lack of such notes would seriously impede NM&DVCs ability to contest such a complaint. Obviously any inappropriate or personally derogatory comments contained within the notes could be considered discriminatory and are unacceptable.

12.7 Where the candidate being interviewed is disabled and reasonable adjustments may need to be considered in relation to the workplace or job, these should only be discussed if the disabled candidate is successful at interview.

12.8 It is good practice to offer internal applicants feedback after interviews and it is NM&DVCs policy to respond to requests for feedback from external applicants. Feedback should be specific, relating to the person specification, and honest. In feeding back to candidates it is good practice to balance the applicants' weaknesses with some positive points.

**13. Selection Tests and Presentations**   
Consideration should be given to using job-related selection tests or asking candidates to give presentations as part of the selection process if there are some elements of the person specification that are difficult to test at interview. If selection tests or presentations are to be used, all candidates should be given the same written information as to how long they will take, the topic area(s) they will cover, and what - if anything - they should prepare in advance. In all cases care should be taken to ensure that job-related tests are well explained in writing for candidates, in plain language, that all candidates are subject to the same tests under exactly the same conditions, (excluding any allowances made as 'reasonable adjustments' to disabled candidates) and that presentation topics do not favour any one candidate.

**14. Making A Decision After Interview**

14.1 The information obtained in the application (including the applicant’s attendance record), the interview, any selection tests and references (if obtained prior to interview) will allow candidates to be assessed against the person specification and a selection decision to be made. The Centre Manager must ensure that a written note of the reasons for selecting the successful candidate and rejecting others is made and placed on the recruitment file, together with the original applications and notes of all panel members, for a minimum of 12 months after the appointment decision has been notified to the candidates.

14.2 If a member of a selection panel feels that there has been any irregularity in the recruitment and selection procedure and the panel cannot resolve the matter at the time, they must report the matter without delay to the Chair of Trustees.

14.3 Interview proceedings are confidential and interviewers are free to divulge to others the decision reached only once the appointee has accepted the post, but they must not freely discuss the content of the interview with others unless they are authorised to do so.

14.4 A contract will only be issued once references, or other pre-employment checks, e.g. the right to work, have been completed. Provisional offers may be made, subject to certain conditions being met, for example, the receipt of satisfactory references, DBS checks and clearances being obtained.

14.5 Where the successful candidate is disabled, reasonable adjustments may need to be considered depending on their disability in consultation with them. This should be done as soon as possible after appointment. Urgent advice should be sought from an Occupational Health Service regarding adjustments to work premises, practices, equipment or the job itself. The candidate may qualify for the Government's Access To Work Programme. Where reasonable adjustments are agreed these must be recorded in writing. The candidate should also receive written confirmation of whatever adjustments have been agreed.

**15. References**

15.1 The further particulars for a post should make clear to candidates the number and status of referees required. References from relatives or friends should not be accepted. Appropriate referees are those who have direct experience of a candidate's work, education or training: preferably in a supervisory capacity and a reference must be obtained from the current or previous employer.

15.2 When requesting references, it is helpful to seek precise information and confirm facts, such as length of employment, relationship of the applicant to the referee, job title, brief details of responsibilities, reasons for leaving, unauthorised absence, attendance including sickness absence, performance, and any other relevant information. It is helpful to the referee to include a copy of the job description and person specification of the post to which you are recruiting. Do not make requests that only elicit generalisations about the candidates' attendance, honesty, or subjective information as to the applicant's suitability for the job.

15.3 When conducting telephone references, it is helpful to plan the conversation beforehand and to have a list of questions ready. A file note should be made at the time of the telephone conversation and written confirmation should always be requested.

15.4 References are confidential and must be sought 'in confidence'. References should only be used for the purpose for which they were intended and their confidentiality must be maintained, and applicants must not make their own reference requests in advance.

**16. DBS Checks**

16.1 NM&DVC will not discriminate unfairly against applicants who possess a criminal record and will not necessarily bar an applicant from employment due to an unspent conviction; the nature of the conviction and its relevance to the post will be considered. However, unspent convictions for violence, assault or damage to property are likely to be incompatible with working for NM&DVC.

16.2 Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 ex-offenders do not have to disclose spent convictions. However certain types of posts, particularly those that involve working with children or vulnerable adults or in other positions of trust or sensitive areas, are exempt from these provisions, and in these cases all convictions must be declared. See NM&DVC’s DBS Policy for further information regarding DBS applications.

**17. Appointment**The Centre Manager will issue letters of appointment, and the Centre Manager will inform payroll of the new employee. If the job offer is conditional on completion of a qualification, DBS check, visa clearance or health screening, this will be made clear in the appointment letter.

**18. Induction**

18.1 It is NM&DVC’s policy that all staff undergo an induction led by the Centre Manager, which should contain the following information:

* Buildings induction
* Health and Safety, Fire and Reporting
* Introduction to their workspace and a DSE assessment, as well as all of their computer logins and instruction on where to look for information and support
* A copy of their contract, job description and other relevant information
* Where to find the policies and procedures and how to confirm acknowledgement of reading
* Health Declaration Form
* Background of the NM&DVC, a copy of information regarding their role

18.2 The staff induction should ideally be completed on their first day but a program of events should be compiled for the first couple of weeks of employment to ensure the employee is given all the necessary and relevant information and support.

**19. Probation**  
This is followed by a probationary period of six months, during which the employee is expected to become fully up to speed on their role, completing most tasks included in their responsibilities and working towards targets set. Once this six-month period is up, the staff member will be assessed to determine whether or not they have passed their probation period. If they do not, NM&DVC reserves the right to extend the probationary period or terminate the employee’s contract of employment.

**20. Salary**   
Within the financial provision or established grading of the post, the salary offered should have regard to the applicant's experience or expertise but will normally be at the bottom of the salary scale. The most relevant issue will normally be the applicant's present salary. The salaries of other staff doing similar work with similar experience should also be considered to maintain fairness and consistency.

**21. Breaches of Policy**   
Any member of staff with concerns about the application of this policy should raise their concerns to the Centre Manager or Chair of Trustees if more appropriate.