



**SCOTTISH**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

# PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY (ALL STAFF)

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## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

Our policy is to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly and consistently within our recruitment and selection processes and that the most suitable candidate/s are appointed through the use of objective selection criteria and methods relevant to the post.

## **2. SCOPE**

2.1 The policy defines the principles of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) recruitment and selection procedures.

2.2 This policy applies to applicants, both internal and external, for vacancies within the SFRS.

2.3 This recruitment policy aims to ensure that:

- Selection processes are objective, transparent and fair
- Applicants for any post within the SFRS are appointed on their own merit
- All recruiting managers must receive appropriate guidance to carry out their role within the recruitment process

## **3. PRINCIPLES**

3.1 The SFRS recruitment and selection policy has been designed to be objective, impartial and applied consistently. The key principles of this Policy are:

- The SFRS is committed to the principles of fair and open competition and equality of opportunity. This means that each recruitment and selection process will run in accordance with this commitment: no one should be

appointed to a job unless they meet the essential criteria for the role and the job must be offered to the person whose skills and experience demonstrate the 'best fit'.

- The SFRS may participate in positive action measures to encourage applications from particular groups with different needs, with a past track record of disadvantage or low participation, to apply for a career in the fire and rescue service, or to assist them to perform to the best of their ability.
- The SFRS will ensure that no recruitment paperwork, e.g. adverts, information packs and Job Descriptions, discriminate on the basis of any of the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010.
- Selection processes must be fair. There should be no bias in the assessment of candidates and, where necessary, reasonable adjustments will be made to the process to ensure that individuals with disabilities can compete fairly with all other candidates.
- Selection processes will be open. Job opportunities will be advertised to attract appropriate potential candidates and candidates will be provided with reasonable access to information about the job, its requirements and the selection process, so that they can make an informed decision as to whether they meet the criteria for the role.
- Each selection process will be based upon the criteria found within the Job Description. Human Resources (HR) staff will support each selection process to ensure the design and quality of the overall process and individual elements of the assessment are appropriately applied and assessed.
- The Chair of the Panel is responsible for ensuring the process is run in accordance with SFRS policy and procedure.

- At the inception of a process, the Chair of the Panel must confirm timescales for and, after discussion with the Workforce Planning and Resourcing Team, the selection methodology that will be used. This will act as the project plan for the process.
- Each panel member will be appropriately trained to adequately carry out their role within the process.
- Appropriate and objective evaluation criteria will be used throughout the process and will relate to the role requirements. This will allow assessors to provide robust and defensible evidence of their selection decisions.
- A range of assessment exercises have been considered in the procedure design to appropriately assess and evaluate candidate attributes against the criteria for the role.
- Feedback is an important principle and will be arranged and provided by the panel for all internal candidates, in order to help candidates learn and develop from the process. This principle will be extended to all external candidates where possible.
- This process ensures that the most suitable candidate for the role receives a conditional offer. Appointment will then be subject to the candidate completing all relevant pre-employment checks and vetting requirements.

#### **4. LEGAL OVERVIEW**

- 4.1 The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 should be considered at all times throughout the recruitment and selection process, including the advertising of posts, the assessment of applicants and consideration of whether any reasonable adjustments should be made to a selection process. Further

information about how the SFRS will ensure this is considered is detailed throughout this policy and the accompanying Guidance Handbook.

- 4.2 In addition, the SFRS has a responsibility under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the handling of all documents and personal information collated during a recruitment process will be carried out in line with the requirements within this Act.
- 4.3 The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 imposes an onus on employers to ensure that all employees are not in breach of the Immigration Rules and are eligible to work in the UK. Therefore, in line with this Act, the SFRS will carry out relevant checks and applicants will be required to provide appropriate documentation.
- 4.4 The SFRS will consider applications for employment from candidates with criminal convictions based on their individual circumstances. Our approach towards employing individuals with criminal convictions depends on whether the job is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 or involves regulated work with children and/or protected adults in accordance with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

## **5. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

[SFRS Grievance Policy and Procedure](#)

[SFRS Complaints Procedure](#)

[SFRS Recruitment and Selection Guidance Handbook](#)

[SFRS Data Protection Policy](#)

[SFRS Access to Information Policy](#)

[SFRS Employment and Criminal Convictions Policy \(All Staff\)](#)

## **6. IDENTIFICATION OF VACANCIES**

- 6.1 A vacancy will normally arise either through an employee leaving an established post or the creation of a new post on the structure. Any new post must be approved by the Strategic Leadership Team prior to advertisement.
- 6.2 Whilst it will be normal process for vacancies to be advertised on the Recruitment Portal, there are some circumstances where this is not necessary. This will include where there are employees on the Redeployment Register, where there are employees who are due to return from Career Break or Secondment who require a post, or where there are employees who have requested a transfer into a particular post/role. Additionally, for some specialist roles, it may be appropriate to advertise vacancies using wider recruitment media, e.g. national newspapers. Where any of the above circumstances exist, it is important that the person meets the criteria for the role or it is reasonable for the SFRS to develop them into the role.

## **7. ADVERTISING VACANCIES**

- 7.1 A Job Description must be produced or updated for any vacant post that is to be filled. The HR Department will provide advice and support to managers in this regard.
- 7.2 The Workforce Planning and Resourcing Team will place adverts on the Recruitment Portal and any other appropriate locations. They will be responsible for uploading advert details and information packs. In addition, the team will arrange to advertise posts in any agreed media should this be deemed appropriate.
- 7.3 All vacancies will be advertised for a minimum of three weeks. However, this may vary depending upon the post and may be extended during popular

holiday periods or where minimal interest has been demonstrated. In exceptional circumstances where it is essential for a vacancy to be filled as soon as possible, then these timescales may be shortened at the discretion of the Chief Officer. For temporary uniformed vacancies, the Interim Temporary Promotions Process may be utilised in order to fill the vacancy.

- 7.4 In accordance with our commitment to provide career development opportunities to SFRS employees, all posts will normally be advertised internally in the first instance. However, where the post is of a specialist nature and/or the manager provides supporting evidence that the post should be opened up to the external market or depending upon SFRS workforce planning requirements, this will be approved by the Director of People and Organisational Development in consultation with the Chief Officer.
- 7.5 Some vacancies may be capped at a specific number of applicants in order to assist in managing large numbers or associated costs of the process. Where this is the case, it will be clearly communicated in the advert.
- 7.6 The use of recruitment agencies will only be considered after the advertising process has been exhausted. If a successful candidate is sought via a recruitment agency, the associated costs will be paid by the recruiting Area/Directorate.

## **8. SELECTION PROCESS**

- 8.1 For all vacancies, the SFRS will provide an information pack which will contain the Job Description which includes the essential and desirable criteria for each post. The selection process will include some or all of the following: psychometric tests, practical selection tests and interviews. Candidates will also be asked to provide documentation confirming their eligibility to work in the UK and confirmation of any qualifications.

- 8.2 When recruiting for any position, it is important that the selection process is thorough and objective. However, the actual content of the selection process will be dependent upon the post and, where appropriate, operational assessment may be an initial part of some selection processes, e.g. internal uniformed promotions.
- 8.3 As part of the vacancy planning process, the relevant recruiting manager will determine, in consultation with their local HR Advisor or the Workforce Planning and Resourcing Team, the content of the selection process and the panel members prior to the vacancy being advertised.
- 8.4 Anyone involved within the selection process should declare any conflict of interest (personal relationships with the candidate) as soon as they become evident and cannot act as a referee to anyone within that selection process.
- 8.5 The selection panel will make a decision which is reliable, valid and fair by comparing evidence gathered during the selection process against the essential and desirable criteria for the post.

## **9. PROVISION OF FEEDBACK**

- 9.1 In order to support the career development of our employees, applicants may request feedback on all stages of any internal process.
- 9.2 For external candidates, we will endeavour to give feedback upon request.
- 9.3 Requests for feedback must be made within 7 days of being notified of the outcome. In order that this feedback is provided timeously and so that the candidate can reflect on their experience, managers are encouraged to provide this within 28 days of a request being made and must provide this in all circumstances within 56 days.

- 9.4 It is normally the responsibility of the Chair of the Panel to provide feedback and this should ideally be given face to face. If this is not possible, the Chair of the Panel should be encouraged to telephone the candidate requesting the feedback.
- 9.5 In the case of high volume campaigns, feedback would only be available following conclusion of the process.

## **10. REFERENCES**

- 10.1 For all internal processes, the applicant will be required to provide confirmation from their current Line Manager about their suitability for the role for which they intend to apply for.

This information will be provided to the Chair of the Panel who will consider it and make an independent decision on the progression of the application.

- 10.2 Written references will be sought for all successful candidates who are issued with a conditional offer of appointment. It will be the candidate's responsibility to provide us with referees who are willing to provide a reference on their behalf.

## **11. FIREFIGHTER TRANSFERS FROM OTHER UK FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES**

- 11.1 Serving operational personnel from recognised Fire and Rescue Services can apply to transfer to the SFRS, with each application being considered on its own merit. Recognised Fire and Rescue Services include all Fire and Rescue Services in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

11.2 To be considered, a firefighter must:

- Be a competent operational firefighter or above.
- Be able to provide two suitable references from their current Fire and Rescue Service employer.
- Satisfy the requirements of the medical and fitness assessments carried out by the SFRS Occupational Health department.

11.3 Account will also be taken of sickness and live disciplinary records when considering requests for transfer. Consideration will be given in line with current Equality Legislation where an employee is covered by the Equality Act 2010, e.g. disability or pregnancy related illness. Candidates who wish to transfer are considered on a case-by-case basis and an assessment of transferable skills will be undertaken.

11.4 This will also be applicable to Firefighters (Control) who wish to transfer into the SFRS, with the exception of the fitness assessment. Again, each application will be considered on its own merit in line with the workforce planning requirements of the SFRS.

11.5 From time to time, and in accordance with workforce planning needs, the SFRS may invite candidates from other Fire and Rescue Authorities to apply for promoted posts. In these circumstances, these recruitment and selection processes will apply.

## **12. CONFIDENTIALITY**

12.1 All documents and personal information collated during a recruitment process must be handled in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

- 12.2 Upon conclusion of the recruitment process, all documentation pertaining to this process must be forwarded to the Workforce Planning and Resourcing Team.
- 12.3 Recruitment information relating to appointed individuals will be placed in their personal file upon appointment. This includes application forms, interview assessments and any other forms of assessment and, finally, any records of decisions taken.
- 12.4 Applications and documents pertaining to unsuccessful applicants will be retained by the SFRS for a period of 12 months, following which it will be destroyed in a secure manner.
- 12.5 Individuals have the right to access any information about them that is held by the SFRS. Information on how individuals can make a subject access request will be made available at public buildings of SFRS and will be available on the SFRS website.

### **13. COMPLAINTS**

- 13.1 External candidates who are dissatisfied with the recruitment process may submit a complaint in this respect and in line with the SFRS Complaints Procedure.
- 13.2 Existing employees who are dissatisfied with a recruitment and selection process may submit a grievance in this respect through the SFRS Grievance Procedure.

## **14. MONITORING**

- 14.1 In order to appropriately monitor and evaluate the recruitment and selection processes, the People and Organisational Development (POD) Directorate will review all recruitment processes regularly by selecting data at random from recruitment and selection campaigns. SFRS is regularly audited by the Scottish Government and Audit Scotland in relation to recruitment and selection and these results are reported to the SFRS Board.
- 14.2 The POD Directorate will also continually monitor its website, application forms, psychometric tests, interview questions and documentation to ensure consistency, equality and fairness in the recruitment and selection process.
- 14.3 The SFRS will take steps to gather information on the recruitment and selection of our employees with respect to the number and relevant protected characteristics by asking all applicants to complete a monitoring form as part of the application process. This information will be kept separate and not disclosed to recruiting managers.

## **15. CONSULTATION**

This policy has been developed following consultation with Representative Bodies and has been agreed by the SFRS Board.

## **16. FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information on recruitment and selection, please contact an HR Advisor from the POD Directorate.