

# POLICY AND PROCEDURE



SoLO  
Life  
Opportunities

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Charity No. 1102297  
England Company No.  
5025939

## Recruitment

**Category:** staff

### Introduction

Recruitment of staff is an integral part of providing services to our learning disabled members, tenants and clients and if done well ensures that staff are placed in a timely way, with the appropriate skills mix and experience to ensure high quality provision.

### Policy Statement

SoLO Life Opportunities (SoLO) considers that good recruitment and selection procedures are an essential element of its Equal Opportunities Policy. The procedures are intended to ensure that:

- No job applicant suffers direct or indirect discrimination or victimisation
- Posts are advertised to encourage applications from a wide variety of communities

Monitoring systems will be used to ensure that the policy and procedures are effective.

### Authorisation for recruitment

Any recruitment process must be within the agreed budget. Any recruitment that does not have an agreed budget must be, in the first instance, authorised by the Chief Executive Officer who will determine if further authorisation from the Trustee Board is required. Only authorised personnel can instigate recruitment processes.

The authorisation process is as follows:

Job Level	Initiated by	Interviewed by
Chief Executive Officer	Trustee Board	Chair and one Trustee
Senior Management	Chief Executive Officer	CEO and Trustee
Middle Management (Project Managers)	Senior Managers	Senior Managers and CEO
Lower Management (Project Leaders)	Project Managers	Project Managers and Senior Managers
Support Workers	Project Managers	Project Managers and Project Leaders (where appropriate)
Administrative Staff	Senior Manager	Business Support Manager and Senior Manager

Policy Name: Recruitment  
Organisation: SoLO Life Opportunities  
Reviewed: 17.1.18  
Next Review Date: January 2020

## Reviewing the post

When a post becomes vacant check whether positive action needs to be taken to assist the recruitment of:

1. Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
2. People with disability – what adaptations/adjustments could reasonably be made to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged.
3. People with additional responsibilities - by offering flexible working arrangements
4. Carers – by offering flexible working arrangements
5. Gender specific – where the work requires specific support from either male or female workers
6. Any other potentially marginalised group

Also review the post to assess the appropriate level of DBS Certificate required so as not to discriminate against ex-offenders.

## Job description/Purpose statements

Job descriptions/Purpose statements will be based on a task analysis and need to include:

- The job title
- The main purpose of the job
- To whom the worker is responsible
- For whom the worker is responsible
- Main working contacts
- Key areas of the job
- Main tasks of each key area

Job descriptions/Purpose statements will be drawn up by the Line Managers, authorised by the CEO and, where appropriate, brought to the Trustees for agreement.

## Person specification/Purpose statements

A person specification/purpose statement helps to ensure that employees are selected on the basis of their relevant abilities rather than on subjective or irrelevant criteria.

The person specification needs to include all the qualities required to perform the job.

The following categories will be included:

1. Experience
2. Skills, knowledge and abilities plus an indication of the level of competence required
3. Qualifications – or ask for skills and knowledge to be evidenced via qualifications
4. Personal attributes
5. Personal circumstances (eg available in evenings etc)

The specification will be drawn up by those who have a good knowledge of the tasks in the job description – normally the line manager, authorised by the CEO and, where appropriate, brought to the Trustees for agreement.

## **Advertising**

Advertising must be appropriate for the post and take into account the desire to encourage applications from a wide group of communities.

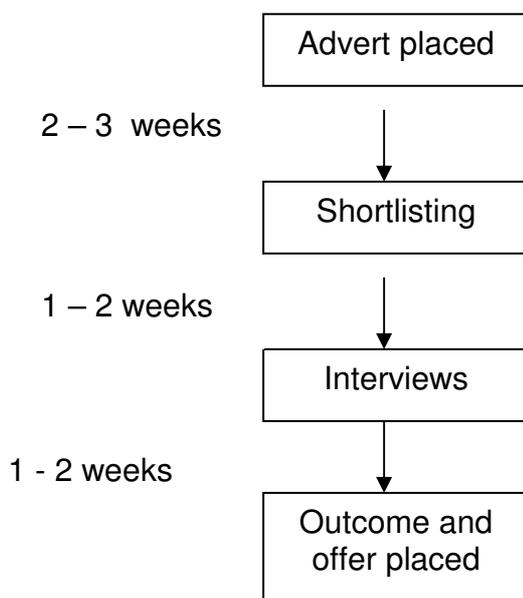
All funding bids must include adequate costs for appropriate advertising of related posts.

The advert content should include:

- The name of the organisation and the fact that it is a registered charity
- Job title
- Brief description of the job
- Brief summary of skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications
- Whether the post is only open to women or men or a particular racial group and, if so, the section of the Sex Discrimination Act or Race Relations Act under which the post is advertised.
- Salary (identifying the base salary with holiday entitlement)
- Hours and flexible working arrangements
- If post is temporary or fixed term
- Name/address/phone no. and website for enquiries and application packs
- Closing date for applications (and date for interviews if known)
- Statement of Equal Opportunities Policy operated
- DBS screening requirements of the post
- Any other relevant information, eg applications particularly welcome from...

Applicants will be given sufficient time to obtain the application pack and return it before the closing date.

A member of staff will be nominated to take telephone calls at the time when job adverts appear in newspapers.



## Age Restrictions

SoLO will not discriminate against someone on the basis of age, but recognises that some posts will have specific demands (i.e. when working with people with challenging behaviour or those who need significant medical intervention) or physical requirements (where the members are lively or challenging and the activity requires active participation).

There is no upper age limit for a worker within SoLO. All staff employed, regardless of age, must be capable of carrying out the work required within their job description.

## Other Restrictions

The employment of relatives or those in a personal relationship in the same area of an organisation is not permitted within SoLO.

The key reasons for imposing this restriction is:

- To protect individuals against potential claims of favouritism, where one has a supervisory or managerial responsibility for the other.
- To avoid individuals being in a potential conflict of interest situation, eg. If one individual has information about changes in services which may directly affect the other it would be unfair to expect them to withhold this.
- To prevent the development of situations in which other members of staff feel unable to speak openly and honestly in the presence of one

partner in the relationship or where members of staff consider that the significant personal relationships is having an adverse impact on their own employment.

- To avoid the potential for individuals to claim unfair treatment in terms of employment practice, e.g. failure to shortlist individuals for posts.
- To avoid the potential for the abuse of members.
- To protect individuals who are in relationships with colleagues by providing them a structure which supports them as individuals.
- To avoid any potential deterioration in individuals job performance.
- To avoid disturbance to and division of other staff.

For the purposes of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

Relatives of persons currently employed by SoLO may be employed only if they will not be working directly with, directly for or supervising a relative. SoLO employees cannot be transferred into such a reporting relationship.

If the relative relationship is established after employment, the Line Manager concerned will decide who is to be transferred within the notice period required for the position.

Having been informed of the relationship, the line manager will work with the individuals concerned to identify any immediate potential risks to themselves or conflicts of interests within the team. They will then work to consider the following options:

- To change shift patterns to ensure that the individuals do not work together
- To change the duties of one or both of the parties
- To change the line management (if possible)
- Redeploy either one of the parties.

Wherever possible agreement will be reached between the individuals and the manager about the reason for any move or change necessitated as a consequence of a significant personal relationship.

These restrictions would also apply to the employment of workers who are related to members within the organisation. Where practicable, we would not place staff members on the same project where their relatives (either by blood, marriage or related relationship) are beneficiaries or supported on scheme.

## **Job Application Pack**

Enquirers will be able to download an application pack from the website comprising of:

- Application form
- Job Description or Purpose Statement
- Person Specification
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Information about the organisation/project
- Interview date if known
- Summary of the main conditions of service
- DBS policy and recruitment of ex offenders policy

## **Application forms**

Application forms will be used. Comparison of applications can be undertaken without bias if information is presented in the same way and only includes information relevant to the post.

Application packs can be sent via email. This can be amended to meet specific requirements but should only ask for information relevant to the post.

## **Monitoring form**

A separate form to monitor ethnicity/gender/disability should also be included. This must be separate from the application form.

On receipt of a completed application, a code number should be assigned to the application form and monitoring form; these should be separated before the short-listing panel has sight of them in order to prevent discrimination.

The monitoring forms should be used after the selection process is complete in order to monitor:

- The range of ethnicity/gender/disability groups to which applicants belong
- The number from each group who were short listed and/or interviewed
- The number from each group who were successful

Statistical information from these forms will be used to evaluate recruitment processes.

## **Internal Candidates**

To ensure that we treat everyone fairly, the same processes for recruitment will apply to all candidates regardless of whether they are employed currently

in another role within SoLO\*. All new appointees including internal appointments would be expected to provide two referees for their new post.

\* in relation to the employment of sessional support workers, we would expect the candidate to be interviewed as a generic support worker and, once successful, they could apply for other support worker roles within the organisation with only a project specific working interview necessary for selection (this does not apply when a support worker is recruited for a project specific role, in this case, the full recruitment process would apply).

## **Shortlisting**

A panel of at least two people should be identified to undertake the short-listing process. Copies of the job description and person specification should be issued and the panel members must be aware of the work of the organisation/project and any other relevant information. Panels may include relevant senior employees and board members; whenever possible the same individuals should be used for both short listing and interviewing.

The decision to short-list a candidate for interview must be based on whether or not that person meets the essential criteria of the person specification. If further refinement is required the desirable criteria should be used to select candidates for interview.

Each member of the panel should be given a copy of all the applications or one set of photocopies can be circulated in turn to those undertaking the short-listing. Each member should short-list individually and keep a written record of his/her views on a standard score sheet. Discussion of the individual scores should inform a collective decision on whom to call for interview. A record must be kept of why each applicant has/has not been selected for interview.

After communicating with those applicants who have not been short-listed, a record of those who have been successfully short-listed should be kept for a period of 12 months, together with their score sheets.

## **Interviews**

The interviewing panel should whenever possible consist of the same members who were responsible for the short-listing or at least one of them. The panel should select a chairperson from amongst their number.

The whole panel must agree a list of interview questions prior to the interviews and the questions must relate to the skills and qualities required for the post. The panel must be sure what kind of information or response each question is designed to elicit and whether there is a 'right' answer.

Questions that are discriminatory, e.g. about childcare arrangements, should be asked only if they are relevant to the post. If such a question is required it should be posed to all interviewees in the same way, e.g. "Would working school holidays pose any problems for you?"

Interviews should be held in a place and at a time and length that is reasonable for all the candidates.

A written record of the interviews must be kept, to include scoring systems, weighting, and scores recorded by each panel member.

Discussions about the performance of candidates should be reserved until all have been interviewed. Each candidate should be assessed against the person specification rather than against other candidates. A written record of the final decision including reasons for the decision should be kept for a period of twelve months.

## **Working assessments (previously known as working interviews)**

A working assessment may be required in the following circumstances (and will form a part of the overall interview process):

- Where it is necessary to test out the practical abilities of the candidate which cannot be determined through a standard interview. This would usually occur when the post requires direct support to our learning disabled members.
- Where two candidates have scored the same at interview and a working interview is required to determine the best one for the role.

Working assessments are not remunerated and will be expected to last for approximately one hour. The candidates cannot be factored into the staffing ratio of the evening and there must be allowance made in the staffing on the night of the interview to enable the Project Leader, House Team Leader or Line Manager to give attention to the interviewee and make comments to support any judgements made.

## **Qualifications**

Where qualifications are essential to carrying out the job, for instance on Summer Activities where working with children under the age of 8 requires us to have 50% of staff qualified to NVQ level 2 in child care, SoLO will require evidence of these qualifications.

## Selection Options

The interview panel has to decide who is appointable and may be able to agree a first, second and third choice. In this case the chair of the panel should contact the choices in order, offering the post subject to satisfactory references, DBS checks and medical examination if required, until an acceptance is obtained.

If a decision cannot be reached, the following options are possible:

- Re-interview two or three possible candidates
- Re-advertise the post. In this case check that the job description and person specification is realistic.
- Consider offering the post to a less than suitable person if it seems that additional training will enable the person to do the job. This option must be very carefully considered.

Where possible, telephone contact with each interviewee should occur as soon as possible after the interviews to let them know the outcome. This should be followed up by a letter, to be sent as soon as possible.

If an unsuccessful candidate asks for feedback, a member of the interview panel can discuss the reasons for that candidate being unsuccessful, and may also give pointers for greater success in the future.

A letter to the successful candidate should include:

- Starting date
- Any conditions e.g. subject to references, medical etc
- Salary
- Job title
- Request for any further documentation, eg P45, proof of entitlement to work in England
- Request reply in writing
- A contract including details of the probationary period
- Bank Details New Employee Form
- New starter form

At the point when an unconditional offer is made to a candidate (eg when satisfactory references are received) and unconditionally accepted, a contract of employment comes into force.

Two references are required from people who have known the candidate for over 12 months; one should be the previous employer, or in the case of a young person who has not been employed for a 12 month period, a suitable professional such as head of year from school/college.

The person managing the recruitment process is responsible for notifying the Finance Manager in writing or by email the following in relation to the new starter:

- Full name
- Gender
- Full address including postcode
- National Insurance number
- Date employment commences

At the same time the Finance Manager should be given a P45 and Bank Details form. If the new employee does not have a P45, the Finance Manager will advise what other information is required to comply with HMRC requirements.

## **Accelerated procedures**

This procedure may be appropriate for temporary or short-term contracts (less than six months or pilot schemes where it is determined that going out to open recruitment will significantly impede the delivery of the scheme).

A pool of staff that has been properly recruited and selected will be maintained for staffing both long-term and short-term leisure projects and other programmes.

It is still important to follow equal opportunities procedures. The time and cost taken to recruit can be reduced as follows:

- Limit advertising to publications where an advertisement can be published within two weeks. Also advertise internally, through our own mailing lists and in job centres.
- State in the advertisement that the applicant must be able to start immediately.
- Give only a telephone number in the advertisement so that applicants telephone for an application pack
- Have only two people involved in the short-listing and interviewing procedure and diary in dates for both procedures at the start of the recruitment process.
- Contact staff from organisations with whom we work in partnership, where those staff have been properly recruited and selected.

The procedures relating to job description, person specification, short listing and interviewing must be followed in all cases.

In exceptional circumstances, staff can be brought in for time limited pieces of work that require a quick response (due to business demands), at the level of salary that they are currently working at. If these positions extend beyond 12 weeks, they will be deemed to be substantive and subject to the normal

recruitment processes. This approach must be agreed by the CEO and within agreed budgets.

## **Staff Development**

It is recognised that some existing staff members may apply for posts, perform well at interview but lack the experience and training for that particular role. Where this is the case, arrangements can be made, as part of their personal development plan, for the staff member to shadow current post holders for 3-6 months with a view to having the opportunity when another suitable opening becomes available. Where this is the case and the staff member, through shadowing, mentoring and training, displays the necessary skills and attributes which can be clearly evidenced, a second interview will not be required.

## **Temporary Cover**

Upon occasion, there will be a requirement to offer out a permanent post on a temporary cover basis. This could be to cover:

- Maternity leave
- Extended Sick leave
- Unpaid leave
- Secondment Opportunity

In these, or other similar vacancies, advertisements will be placed in the communication bulletin or through other internal networks in the first instance. If these routes do not recruit a suitable person, then advertisements will be placed externally. The posts will be offered on the basis of a fixed term contract. If, in the event, that the permanent person does not return to work, the fixed term contract will be offered as a permanent post to the post-holder, provided that they have performed at a high standard and successfully completed their probationary period.

## **Change in status**

If a post within SoLO Life Opportunities changes from temporary, fixed-term or part-time to a different status, e.g. permanent, extended fixed-term, or full time; then the following options are available:

1. Treat it as a new position and advertise etc in the normal way, with the current post-holder eligible to apply.
2. Offer the post to the current post-holder provided:
  - The post holder was recruited following the SoLO recruitment policy in the first instance, including the accelerated procedure
  - The job description remains largely unchanged

## **Progression**

Vacancies for Project Leaders/Assistant Project Leaders/House Team leaders will state whether they are open to substantive staff only (i.e. those already working in that grade), or to those seeking promotion. If promotion is offered it will exclude those who are serving a formal disciplinary penalty.

### **Linked with Policies:**

- Equal Opportunities
- Recruitment of Ex Offenders