

RECRUITMENT

& SELECTION

POLICY

Document Control

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1.0 Aims and Objectives

1.1 As a good employer, Mahdlo Youth Zone is committed to providing a positive team working environment focussed on achieving its mission:

To deliver high quality activities and experiences for young people from Oldham, aged 8-21 (25 with a disability) to enhance the quality of their lives and provide support services for those who need additional help to achieve their potential.

1.2 This mission is supported by a set of core values which define the way in which we will achieve our mission. The values form a common thread throughout everything we do:

- Passion
- Respect
- Inclusion
- Dependability
- Excellence

1.3 In support of this mission, as a good employer, Mahdlo aims to recruit the best employees by using a professional, fair, and cost-effective recruitment and selection process linked to safer recruitment best practice. We aim to recruit, develop, and retain colleagues who possess the skills, attitudes, expertise, and motivation to meet our business objectives. We believe that this is best achieved by a 'recruitment for attitude' approach which focuses on our values and the competencies and behaviours required to achieve them.

1.4 This policy aims to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, equality of access to job opportunities for all sections of the community and is in line with our Equality policy. Mahdlo is an equal opportunities employer and will ensure that no form of discrimination takes place through the recruitment process. We aim to ensure that no applicant is placed at a disadvantage based on a protected characteristic as defined in the Equality Act 2010. In fulfilling this policy Mahdlo Youth Zone will comply with the Data Protection Act and GDPR (2018) (as laid out in our Data Protection and Retention Policy) and our Equality Policy at all times.

1.5 In times of change such as restructurings or loss of funding, other arrangements may supersede the provisions of this policy but employees will be consulted about this in advance should it become necessary.

1.6 Mahdlo recognises that its responsibility for safeguarding young people is paramount, and is therefore committed to implementing a safer recruitment approach, backed by appropriate training for those staff involved in recruitment.

2.0 Safer Recruitment - Protection of Vulnerable Adults and Children

2.1 Mahdlo Youth Zone has a vital responsibility to create a safe and positive environment that keeps young people safe from harm. We are dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable groups. All employees and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.

2.2 Mahdlo will do everything it can to safeguard and protect young people and has a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy and procedure in place.

2.3 This recruitment process has been designed with safeguarding as a priority and a robust approach will be taken at each step of the process to ensure that the necessary checks are carried out and that all candidates and employees are fully aware of the requirement to abide by the established safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures and to fully co-operate with employment

enquiries and checks including obtaining an enhanced DBS check and reference checks. All enquiries and checks must be satisfactorily completed before employment with Mahdlo can commence.

- 2.4 We are also committed to adhering to statutory guidance such as Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) to ensure that we work effectively and safely with other relevant agencies to protect young people.
- 2.5 This policy complies with safer recruitment guidelines and reference to safer recruitment will be made throughout.

3.0 Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

- 3.1 Mahdlo Youth Zone actively promotes equal opportunities for all, with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential. We welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. Mahdlo Youth Zone uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicant's suitability for positions and complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice. We undertake this so as, not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
- 3.2 A Disclosure will be requested for all Youth Zone staff and volunteers; however, we will only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. All application forms and job adverts will contain a statement that a DBS Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- 3.3 There are occasions when certain cautions or convictions will be filtered and not appear on the DBS certificate. The rules as to when a conviction or caution will be filtered are set out in legislation; there are also a list of offences that will never be filtered from a criminal record check which includes a range of offences which are serious, relate to sexual or violent offending or are relevant in the context of safeguarding. In addition, the legislation covers equivalent offences committed overseas. Where an individual is aware that they have committed an offence overseas which may be equivalent they should seek independent expert or legal advice to ensure that they provide information that is truthful and accurate.
- 3.4 Mahdlo Youth Zone will keep records of the reasons for any employment decision (and in particular rejections), including whether any spent convictions or cautions were taken into account and, if so, why.
- 3.5 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (2013 and 2020) gives employees or prospective employees the right not to disclose any criminal offences that are spent. However, those roles involving contact with children or vulnerable adults are exempt from the Act and therefore prospective employees, volunteers, etc. are obliged to disclose any previous offences, whether spent or unspent, including cautions. New amendments to the Exceptions Order (2020) provide that certain 'spent' convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be taken into account.
- 3.6 Applicants who are invited to interview will be asked to complete a self-disclosure form (appendix 1); this will allow applicants to decide which (if any) caution(s) or conviction(s) they need to disclose.
- 3.7 Further guidance can be found in the Recruitment and Selection toolkit.
- 3.8 If the prospective employee fails to disclose any spent convictions or cautions when required by law

to do so, he/she will not be protected from the consequences of this (i.e., the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act will not apply).

- 3.9 At the interview, or in a separate discussion, an open and measured discussion will take place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Knowingly giving false information or failing to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment or may render the employee liable for dismissal.
- 3.10 Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent individuals from working at Mahdlo Youth Zone; it will depend on the nature of the position and the nature and circumstances of the offence and a thorough risk assessment will be carried out. We commit to following existing guidance and conducting a case-by-case analysis of any spent convictions and cautions and consider how if at all, they are relevant to the position sought.

4.0 DBS Check

- 4.1 All offers of employment are subject to an enhanced DBS check for a Child and Adult Workforce and checks must be carried out by Mahdlo Youth Zone. The HR and Business Support Coordinator or appropriate departmental manager who is registered with Mahdlo Youth Zone's DBS checking service, must check the identity of a job applicant as part of a DBS check and process the check as soon as possible, following a conditional job offer.
- 4.2 All DBS checks must be renewed every three years (from the date on the certificate), in line with recommended guidance. Where a person holds a valid Enhanced DBS certificate and is on the DBS Update Service, Mahdlo Youth Zone will require consent to view the certificate online and will need to see the original certificate prior to commencing employment.
- 4.3 Mahdlo Youth Zone can withdraw a job offer if the results show anything that would make the applicant unsuitable. DBS checks apply to both prospective employees and volunteers.
- 4.4 Following the legislative changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (2013 and 2020), new guidance on filtering rules affecting safer recruitment procedures have now come into effect.
- 4.5 The following is now in place:
- warnings, reprimands, and youth cautions will no longer be automatically disclosed on a DBS certificate
 - the multiple conviction rule has been removed, meaning that if an individual has more than one conviction, regardless of offence type or time passed, each conviction will be considered against the remaining rules individually, rather than all being automatically disclosed.

5.0 Procedure

- 5.1 The Recruitment and Selection Procedure provides a framework and best practice guide that will assist managers in ensuring that Mahdlo Youth Zone attracts, selects and retains the most suitable candidate for a post, using appropriate, fair, open, effective and safe methods. It is also based on Safer Recruitment methods and is designed to address any safeguarding concerns that may arise from pre-employment to appointment. It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the recruitment and selection of employees to ensure that all applicants and potential applicants are treated fairly and that all decisions made within the process are objective and based on the requirements for the job.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 For the recruitment process to be successful HR will work in partnership with managers to ensure the recruitment and selection process is effectively targeted and is carried out in accordance with the law and equal opportunities principles.

The responsibilities of HR are:

- Providing standard proformas for job descriptions and person specifications which will be populated by line managers
- Designing competency frameworks
- Drafting advertisements in conjunction with managers
- Maintaining a mailing list
- Responding to recruitment enquiries and liaising with candidates, including making offers of employment and providing interview feedback
- Advising on and arranging selection processes appropriate to the job role
- Assisting managers with sifting and shortlisting applications
- Taking part in interview panels
- Ensuring that all pre-employment enquiries are robustly carried out
- Ensuring that no employee joins Mahdlo until all the required checks are completed

The responsibilities of managers are:

- Confirming that a job must be filled and that there is budget available and completing the form included in appendix 2 and sending this to HR
- Reviewing and updating job descriptions and person specifications
- Drafting recruitment adverts with HR
- Sifting applications and shortlisting against agreed criteria
- Completing records so there is an evidence trail of all recruitment decisions
- Working with HR to design the recruitment and selection process
- Chairing or sitting on selection panels
- Ensuring that no employee joins Mahdlo until all the required checks are completed.

7.0 Filling Vacancies

7.1 All vacancies must be approved by the department manager and Chief Executive (and where appropriate the Board) prior to starting any recruitment process.

7.2 When a vacancy becomes available, the relevant line manager will first consider whether the post needs to be filled. Issues to consider are;

- Do we need to recruit?
- Budget provision;
- Workload;
- Whether the work can be redistributed through restructure or reorganisation.

7.3 Line managers must document their decision to recruit having considered these issues on the form included in appendix 2 and then send this to HR so that the recruitment process can commence.

Recruitment may happen in a number of ways:

- Internal Advertising
- External Advertising/Mailing List
- The use of Consultants or search agencies

8.0 Advertising Methods

Internal Advertising

- 8.1 Mahdlo is committed to providing promotion opportunities to existing employees as long as the criteria and requirements for the job are satisfied. With this in mind, vacancies will usually be advertised internally only within the charity first.
- 8.2 Any member of staff, with the relevant skills and experience, will have the opportunity to express an interest in a vacancy. Internal advertisements will normally have a closing date of one week after the advert is circulated, but where more time is required, two weeks at the most.
- 8.3 In circumstances where there are staff at risk, for example where external funding has been withdrawn, vacancies will be ring-fenced to those staff in the first instance so they can apply if they wish to do so. Although training will be provided to employees who are at risk to help them make the transition to a different role, they will need to demonstrate that they meet the essential requirements of the role and Mahdlo is not obliged to make an offer of an alternative role where the criteria are not met or could not be met within an agreed timescale following training.
- 8.4 If an internal appointment cannot be made, the option of advertising externally or using a mailing list will be considered. However, in some circumstances, business imperatives may necessitate internal and external advertising at the same time. This will be agreed by the relevant senior manager and HR as part of the recruitment plan.

Mailing List

- 8.5 HR will work with service managers to compile a mailing list of other like-minded organisations, groups and individuals who are interested in receiving information about job opportunities. This will allow notification of vacancies to a wide pool of potential applicants at a minimal cost.

External Advertising

- 8.6 Depending on time constraints, external adverts, via press or websites, may run concurrently with internal circulation of vacancies. External advertising can be expensive and advice is available from HR about suitable publications or websites.

Search Agencies

- 8.7 In exceptional circumstances, employment agencies may be used, for instance for posts at senior level or where there is a skills shortage. However, this is a very expensive approach and should be used only when other options have been exhausted.

9.0 Advertising Protocol

- 9.1 Job adverts will be drafted by HR in conjunction with line managers with the aim of presenting a positive image of Mahdlo and attracting the best applicants. For this reason, adverts will be in the agreed corporate style. A template is attached in appendix 3. Wherever possible, should the format of the advertising platform be compatible, the agreed corporate style will be used. All adverts will carry a message that Mahdlo is committed to high standards of safeguarding as well as the fact that the charity is an equal opportunity employer and monitoring of applicants across all diversity strands will be carried out by HR.
- 9.2 Adverts will include a closing date usually 14-21 working days after publication, although some flexibility may be required according to the circumstances. For senior posts and at peak holiday times it may be appropriate to have a closing date after 21-28 days. Where possible an indication of the interview date will be included otherwise this will be notified to candidates via the job application pack.
- 9.3 The opportunity for candidates to have an informal discussion about the role can help to generate interest especially in hard to fill vacancies as well as saving everyone's time.
- 9.4 In applying for a position at the Charity, all applicants will be asked to complete the standard application form. Detailed in the advert will be the requirement to state how applicants meet the essential criteria, as detailed in the person specification for the role. In addition, applicants will also be asked to complete an Equality and Diversity monitoring form, which will be kept separate from the individual's application. Job advertisements also detail the requirement for candidates to demonstrate both at the application stage and interview that they are able to positively identify with Mahdlo's values.
- 9.5 There is no requirement to re-advertise posts that have been advertised within the previous six months if there are candidates suitable for interview/offer from the previous recruitment exercise.

10.0 Recruitment & Selection

- 10.1 There is a standard format for all Mahdlo job descriptions and person specifications and when a post becomes vacant, HR will ensure that these are reviewed with the line manager so they are completely accurate.
- 10.2 Mahdlo operates a 'recruitment for attitude' approach so that the criteria in the person specification reflect the behaviours and competencies required for the job as well as experience and any qualifications. The recruitment process will be designed to assess behavioural as well as any technical competencies.
- 10.3 All job descriptions and person specifications contain a requirement for candidates to demonstrate the highest standards of safeguarding.

11.0 Recruitment Packs

- 11.1 HR will put together a job pack with the recruiting manager which is designed to provide the best possible impression of Mahdlo as a good employer. The job pack will consist of:

- Covering letter or email (including commitment to disabled applicants and highlighting the requirement for a DBS check)
- Job description – in the agreed standard format, including standard requirements for all employees (safeguarding, health and safety at work, personal development, positively contributing to Mahdlo’s mission and values, and adherence to the Code of Conduct for employees)
- Person specification – in the agreed standard format, including the requirement for a satisfactory DBS check and an awareness of safeguarding requirements and standards
- Equality and Diversity monitoring form
- Employment offer information
- Brief overview of Mahdlo including details of mission and values in support of the recruitment for attitude approach

11.2 Mahdlo recognises that the recruitment process is not just about identifying suitable employees for the future, it is also about candidates finding out more about the charity, and considering whether the organisation is one where they would like to work in the future.

11.3 The experience of candidates (both successful and unsuccessful) at each stage of the recruitment process will impact on their view of the organisation. For this reason, Mahdlo is committed to operating a professional recruitment process that provides the best possible impression of the organisation as an employer of choice.

12.0 Applications

12.1 Applications will usually be in the form of an application form. In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate to accept applications via CV, such as when it would represent a reasonable adjustment under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted unless exceptional circumstances apply. All application forms will be returned to the HR and Business Support Coordinator who will collate and distribute to the selection panel.

13.0 Shortlisting

13.1 A minimum of two people will conduct the shortlisting, independently of each other and a written record will be kept using the relevant shortlisting form. Shortlisting will be carried out using a scoring matrix linked to the essential and desirable criteria from the person specification. A copy of the standard scoring matrix is in appendix 4.

13.2 During shortlisting, any inconsistencies in the information provided will be identified and any unexplained gaps explored. Where a significantly large number of applications have been received, HR may carry out an initial shortlisting exercise in agreement with the service manager.

13.3 Once the independent shortlisting has been completed and the matrix has been completed, those involved will meet to go through their results and recommendations and will produce an agreed shortlist and provide this to HR.

13.4 For key specialist roles, individuals who are independent of Mahdlo (for example specialists from partner organisations) may be asked to take part in shortlisting and the subsequent selection process.

- 13.5 Staff completing shortlisting will not see Equality and Diversity monitoring forms as these are for monitoring purposes only, information will not be disclosed by HR. For applicants who have declared a disability, whilst the nature of the disability is not disclosed, any special requirements for interview will be discussed with the panel and addressed accordingly.
- 13.6 Disabled applicants who meet the minimum essential criteria will be interviewed.
- 13.7 All applicants will be informed that if they do not hear from Mahdlo within 10 days of the closing date, they should assume that they have been unsuccessful.
- 13.8 It is accepted that “long listing” and subsequent “shortlisting” interviews may be required for some posts. It is the intention that a maximum of 2 interviews (with other assessment tools as necessary) is sufficient to select a candidate.
- 13.9 Applicants will be invited for an interview with sufficient notice and asked if they have any special requirements in line with the Equality Act 2010.

14.0 Interviews

- 14.1 Interviews remain popular because as well as providing information to predict performance, they also provide an opportunity for the interviewer and interviewee to meet. For the candidate, the interview is an opportunity to ask questions about the job and the organisation and decide if they would like to take the job if offered.
- 14.2 For the organisation, the interview is an opportunity to:
- describe the job and the responsibilities the job holder would need to take on in more detail
 - assess candidate’s ability to perform in the role
 - discuss with the candidate details such as start dates, training provisions, and terms and conditions such as employee benefits
 - give a positive impression to the candidate of the charity as a good employer
 - ask pertinent questions about any potential safeguarding concerns, such as unexplained gaps in employment
- 14.3 A poorly conducted interview may leave the candidate with an unfavourable impression that they are likely to share with other potential applicants and customers. It is good practice to give feedback to candidates following an interview. In order to ensure that interviews are conducted as well as possible, they will be structured so that:
- questions are planned carefully in advance and are agreed with all panel members. As well as any job specific requirements which need to be tested, questions should be designed around the values and behavioural competencies as well as safeguarding. HR will build up a resource of example questions that may be used.
 - all candidates are asked the same questions
 - answers are scored using a rating system
 - questions focus on the attributes and behaviours needed in the job as well as relevant experience and skills

- 14.4 Mahdlo will in some cases invite applicants to a telephone interview, particularly where a high number of candidates are shortlisted for a position. All applicants will be subject to a face to face formal interview.
- 14.5 A minimum of 2 people will form an interview panel. Usually, those who have shortlisted will form the panel so that there is a consistent thread throughout the process. At least one member of the panel must be independent and this may include HR who will also act in an advisory capacity.
- 14.6 HR will also ensure the process is fair and equitable ensuring that no applicant is subject to discrimination either because of their age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, appearance, gender reassignment, or pregnancy.
- 14.7 The interview panel will be chaired by the recruiting manager who is responsible for the fair conduct of the process.
- 14.8 Written notes from each panel member must be kept in the format provided by HR and kept on file for a period of at least six months in case of any queries.
- 14.9 A copy of the standard format for interview notes is attached in appendix 5.

15.0 Other Selection Tools

- 15.1 Mahdlo recognises that in view of the nature of its work and its commitment to safeguarding and recruiting for attitude, interviews alone may not provide a thorough enough assessment to allow a selection decision to be made so other assessment tools may be used in addition. These must be fair and not exceed the requirements of the post. The tools will be selected from a menu of options:
- Psychological testing which allows candidate's test results to be compared against the scores of a normal population of similar people.
 - Assessment centres involving candidates completing a number of different tasks as part of the selection process. An assessment centre should reflect the reality of the job and the tasks set should link with the job description and person specification.
 - Depending on the nature of the job, the tasks might include individual or group work, written and/or oral input (tasks set in advance such as preparing a report or presentation), and written and/or oral outputs on the day such as in-tray exercises, analytical work, individual problem solving, group discussions, group problem solving, tasks which match business activities, personal role- play and functional role-play.
 - Job-based scenarios can be very useful for roles that deliver front line services.
 - Team based scenarios can be used where a key requirement of the job is effective team working. Such a scenario could be a simple lunch with members of the team or a team focussed work-based exercise.
- 15.2 Candidates who are not successful following the recruitment and selection process will be informed by the panel chair usually by telephone within 5 days of the process taking place. Feedback will be offered.

16.0 Pre-Appointment Enquiries

- 16.1 Due to the nature of its work and its commitment to safeguarding, Mahdlo is committed to operating a safer recruitment process and will ensure that a robust approach is taken to making pre-employment

enquiries. No employee will commence work at Mahdlo until those enquiries have been satisfactorily completed.

17.0 Offering a position

17.1 Once the interview panel have identified a preferred candidate, authorisation to appoint must be sought from the Chief Executive prior to any offer being made or other candidates being rejected. If the salary was advertised as a band rather than a fixed amount, the departmental manager should make a recommendation of the proposed salary offer which will be reviewed and approved by the Chief Executive. Once authorisation has been given by the Chief Executive to appoint, the recruiting manager will make an offer to the successful applicant, which will be conditional upon an Enhanced DBS check, proof of relevant qualifications, two successful references (see below) and evidence of Right to Work in the UK. When satisfactory pre-employment checks have been verified, a final offer can be made. When a start date has been agreed upon, the contract of employment will be issued to the candidate on or before their first day of employment, regardless of how long they are employed.

18.0 Conflict of Interests

18.1 If an employee is involved in making recruitment and selection decisions, they must declare any relationship with any of the applicants to their line manager as soon as they are aware of this. No employee will be part of a recruitment panel, either shortlisting or interviewing, where they are related to an applicant. Where a more informal relationship exists employees must still declare this. In this situation, the employee will not normally take part in the recruitment decision-making process. In exceptional circumstances where this will cause serious practical problems, the manager may allow an employee to take part in a recruitment process where an applicant is known to them. A written record of the decision and the reasons for it should be kept on file.

19.0 Eligibility to work in the UK

19.1 Mahdlo is aware of its responsibilities for checking eligibility to work in the UK. A check must be conducted to confirm that the applicant is eligible to work in the United Kingdom e.g. UK passport or National Insurance documentation.

20.0 References

20.1 Two references will be obtained before employment with Mahdlo commences. References should be from employers or ex-employers. Personal references are acceptable if no employer references are available but need to be considered carefully given the relationship between the applicant and referee. Family member references are not acceptable. If the role involves working with children, at least one reference from a previous employer where the role involved working with children should be sought. References will contain specific questions about safeguarding.

20.2 In supplying details of referees, Mahdlo will need to be provided with a work email address, or work postal address, to verify the referee details. Personal emails or personal addresses will not be accepted, unless the referee is able to provide a response using a company letterhead/stamp, or is able to submit the reference via a work email address.

20.3 When an employee leaves employment with Mahdlo and a reference request is received from another company for that individual, where relevant, details of live disciplinary warnings will be passed on to prospective employers.

20.4 References will be requested in a standard format containing an emphasis on safeguarding. A copy of the format is attached in appendix 6.

21.0 Health

21.1 All successful candidates will be asked to complete a standard medical questionnaire for health and safety purposes. If there is anything that causes concern or further advice or guidance is required this may be referred to an occupational health provider for advice. Care will be taken when dealing with medical clearance not to discriminate.

22.0 Appointments

22.1 All appointments will be confirmed by HR on satisfactory completion of pre-employment enquires.

22.2 A comprehensive induction process is in place to enable new team members to settle into their new roles and make a positive early contribution. Further details are provided in the induction procedure and checklist.

22.3 Appointments with Mahdlo are subject to a probationary period of 6 months and the reviews will be completed at three and six months. If there are any issues with an employee's performance during the first 6 months of employment these must be discussed with HR at the earliest opportunity and must not be ignored.

Appendices

- 1 Self-Disclosure Form
- 2 Recruitment Approval Form
- 3 Advert Template
- 4 Shortlisting Matrix
- 5 Interview Record Form
- 6 Reference Form