

FORTH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

STAFF RECRUITMENT POLICY

Code: HR29

Approved: June 2024

Next review: By June 2027

Cross reference: GOV09 Equalities Policy
HR26 Terms & Conditions of
Employment



This document can be made available in various formats such as in larger print, audio-format and Braille. It can also be made available in other languages, as appropriate.

Policy Summary

This policy has been developed to provide a framework and core principles for recruitment and selection, in line with relevant legislation and equal opportunities best practice. To ensure that the most suitable person is appointed based on merit

Equalities

We are committed to applying our equality policy at all stages of recruitment and selection. We always carry out shortlisting, interviewing and selection without regard to an applicant's sex, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, skin colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity leave or trade union membership

Privacy

Forth may process personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected for recruitment and selection purposes related to this policy is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing the employment contract and carrying out employment law obligations. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with Forth's data protection policy immediately.

Policy Owner

Name: Head of Corporate Services

Date of Next Review: June 2027

FORTH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

STAFF RECRUITMENT POLICY





1. Introduction




- 1.1 Forth Housing Association is committed to equalities principles, and to ensuring that all current legislation and recommended good practice is followed in all stages of the recruitment process.
- 1.2 Forth seeks to recruit the best candidates with the necessary skills and attributes to fulfil the roles. The Association conducts business underpinned by Equal Opportunities legislation and strives to maintain a diverse staff team.
- 1.3 The policy will achieve compliance, mitigate and monitor associated risk of noncompliance as follows:
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - Immigration Act 2016
 - Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

2. Principles

- 2.1 The following principles govern the operation of this policy:
 - Be clear and understood by all individuals
 - Be fair, equitable and non-discriminatory
 - Reflect best practice, current employment legislation and regulatory requirements

3. Aims and Objectives

-  To attract comprehensive applications to recruit, select and retain the right candidate for all vacancies based on merit, abilities, and those sharing Forth's values
-  Equality and diversity practices integrated into every stage of the recruitment and selection process.
To comply with all existing and relevant legislation and codes of practice in all stages of recruitment.
-  To review all vacant posts to ensure continued business need and only recruit staff following committee authorisation and on the basis that there is a genuine requirement to employ personnel to undertake the work.
-  All permanent posts, and fixed term posts of duration in excess of 12 months, will be advertised in the press, web sites, professional publications and/or recruitment agencies. Alternative arrangements may be utilised for shorter term posts or where a planned staff redeployment or restructuring is being implemented.

-  All applicants should be treated fairly and equally and all decisions on recruitment are based on job criteria as set out in the person specification.
-  All vacancies should be accessible to all sectors of the community.
-  All prospective applicants will be given clear and accurate information regarding the vacant post and the organisation.

3.1 Equal Opportunities

Equal Opportunities are aimed at removing barriers to access and opportunity, with positive results for individuals and Forth Housing Association. In the context of recruitment and selection, equal opportunities refer to equality in the attraction and selection of candidates, promotion or training in line with terms and conditions of employment. In seeking suitable candidates for new or vacant posts, Forth will not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race (including colour, nationality ethnic or national origins and citizenship), religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation nor any other factor irrelevant to achieving successfully and performing our jobs.

Forth's recruitment decisions will be based completely on the merits and abilities of candidates in line with those set out in the job description and person specification and no other criteria will be used. In order to achieve this, equality and diversity practices will be integrated into every stage of the recruitment and selection process.

A fair recruitment process will remove barriers where possible to the employment of individuals from different backgrounds. This will enable Forth to recruit from the widest pool of talent, thus raising the standard of candidates and therefore increasing the opportunity of a more diverse workforce which reflects the community it is serving. A more diverse workforce should improve Forth's service delivery, as it will include staff with varied knowledge and experience about meeting the needs and aspirations of service users and potential service users.

To highlight Forth's commitment to promoting equality and diversity from the beginning of the employment relationship, all vacancies will be aimed at as wide a group as possible and any advertisement for a vacancy within Forth will state that an Equality policy is in place.

In addition, the advert will also display any signs of equality bodies that Forth is affiliated with. The information contained in the advert and all vacancy literature will be clear and accurate to attract the most appropriate candidates from all groups across society, to allow them to decide their own suitability for the vacancy and whether they wish to apply. For those that wish to apply, Forth will ensure that all applications have clear instructions for completion and application forms are free from personal questions that are not relevant to the vacancy or may lead to discrimination.

Forth will ensure that all staff involved at any stage in the recruitment and selection process receive equality and diversity awareness training. This will ensure that those involved in the recruitment process will not discriminate either knowingly or unknowingly by asking any questions which may lead to discrimination.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 Permission to recruit

4.1.1 For all additional or new posts, other than short term temporary appointments to cover staff absence or student work placements, the approval of the Staffing Sub Committee in the first instance must be obtained.

4.1.2 For posts which become vacant due to staff leaving a review will be carried out to ensure that the post continues to meet business requirements and if no material changes then recruitment does not require committee approval.

4.1.3 Any recruitment proposal will normally include the following:

- ☒ Why and what would be the adverse effect/s of not filling the post
- ☒ Proposed post is contained within the budget provision, or if not how the post will be funded to avoid any negative impact on budgets.
- ☒ When the post is required
- ☒ Main duties and responsibilities
- ☒ Proposed contract type and duration, hours of work grade and salary of post
- ☒ Confirmation that the proposed recruitment is the most effective method of providing the services required
- ☒ Confirmation that the proposals do not create anomalies or duplication in comparison with other staff members
- ☒ Proposals for advertising and selection procedures
- ☒ Details of whether a Disclosure Check should apply to the post

4.2 Recruitment Packs

4.2.1 A recruitment pack will be agreed with the interview and selection panel and will contain the following:

- ☒ Advertisement
- ☒ Job description
- ☒ Person specification
- ☒ Application form
- ☒ Business information sheet including staff, committee and contractor lists along with any other relevant information
- ☒ Equalities monitoring form.

4.3 Handling enquiries and applications

4.3.1 All staff involved in the recruitment and selection process will ensure that strict confidentiality is maintained at all times. Any breach of confidentiality will be regarded as a serious offence, to be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary process.

- 4.3.2 Staff who receive initial or follow up enquiries from prospective applicants should not deter anyone from applying and should avoid commenting in any way on an individual's interest in a vacancy. All contacts should be referred to the named person for chairing the recruitment panel.
- 4.3.3 All returned applications will be passed unopened to the Director, or designated chair of the recruitment panel.
- 4.3.4 Monitoring forms will be detached from the main application form and a reference number used to match forms to individual applicants.
- 4.3.5 Whilst copies of application forms may be made to assist the selection and interview process these will be shredded after use and only original forms will be scanned and retained for 6 months from the date of interview stored securely within our document management system.

4.4 Short listing & interview

- 4.4.1 The short listing of applicants will be based on comparing the application to the criteria listed in the person specification. All short listed applicants should meet the essential criteria. If the number of interviewees remains too high desirable criteria will be used and the reason for rejecting unsuccessful applicants will be recorded.
- 4.4.2 A short listing panel, recommended to be three individuals, comprising of staff at the appropriate grade and where required a representative from EVH will carry out the recruitment process for each vacant or new post.

At least one panel member must possess skills or experience most closely related to the post for which candidates are to be short listed and interviewed. Panel members who short list will also participate as interviewers to ensure consistency in recruitment.

- 4.4.3 As a Disability Confident employer we will ensure that all disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for a job vacancy will be shortlisted for interview and will be considered on their abilities. Furthermore, we commit to making appropriate arrangements or adjustments to create a full and equal participation in our selection process.
- 4.4.4 Short listed applicants will be written to and advised of the date and time of their interview along with any special requirements being placed upon them, e.g. written assessment or presentation etc.
- 4.4.5 Interview questions will be agreed by the selection panel in advance and pro forma provided for recording answers & comments. The panel will interview all short-listed candidates and agree:

 Which candidate should be offered the post (subject to references)

- FA The salary to be offered
- FA The proposed start date
- FA Any other act to be taken
- FA The reason for not selecting each of the other candidates which will be recorded on their application

4.6 To ensure no one is put at a disadvantage during the recruitment process because of disability, condition or impairment, any requests for a reasonable adjustment will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with the aim of removing any barriers where possible.

Reasonable adjustments in a recruitment process could include but may not be limited to:

- Alternative formats of the job advertisement/application form available if requested
- Applications submitted in an alternative format such as Video or Voice Note
- the location of the interview particularly for wheelchair users or those with limited mobility
- Specialist equipment provided if needed for interview tests, for instance providing a special keyboard, a larger screen or compatible software
- Giving more time for someone with dyslexia to do any written or reading tests that are part of the interview process
- Interviews to be held in most appropriate format such as online or face-to-face
- Interview questions provided to applicants in advance so they can prepare
- Interview to be held on a specific day or time, suited to the applicants' needs
- Extra time provided at any interview stage
- Adjustments to lighting/ noise levels at interview
- Provision of a support worker or BSL interpreter

4.7 Offering the job and finalising details

4.7.1 The Director, or designated person, will contact the preferred candidate by telephone to make a verbal offer of employment, making it clear that this is subject to suitable references and disclosure check if appropriate. A formal letter will be issued along with a copy of the Terms & Conditions of Employment and job description.

4.7.2 Where ambiguous or unsatisfactory references are received the Director, or designated person, will discuss the situation with members of the interview panel to agree what action should be taken. Written confirmation of the receipt of satisfactory references and confirmation of appointment will be given to the preferred candidate as soon as possible.

4.7.3 If the job offer is declined, if agreed by the interview panel, the second highest scoring suitable candidate may be offered the post subsequently. If there is not a suitable reserve candidate the recruitment process should be revised and a proposal for either an alternative recruitment process or a rerun should be considered.

4.7.4 The Director, or designated person, will ensure that unsuccessful interviewees are written to as soon as possible. Any unsuccessful candidate will be offered the opportunity for feedback, but comments should be restricted to points relating to the person specification and any subjective judgements or comparisons should be avoided.





4.8. Recruitment of Sex offenders

4.8.1 The Association will treat all applicants for positions fairly and will not discriminate unfairly against the subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

4.8.2 Disclosure checks will only be requested where it is necessary and relevant to the position. Where such a check is required, we will make this clear at advertisement, on the application form and in the information pack.




4.8.3 At interview the subject of offences will be raised, and an opportunity given for open and measured discussion.

4.8.4 Where a conviction is revealed the Association will take into consideration the following when making a decision regarding its relevance:

-  Whether the conviction is relevant to the vacant post
-  The length of time since the offence took place
-  Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
-  Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending took place

4.9. Recruitment restrictions

4.9.1 In order to ensure its recruitment practices are operated with integrity and without conflicts of interest the Association will not consider recruitment applications from the following:

-  Existing Committee Members of the Association, or their close relatives (as defined by the former schedule 7 of Housing (Scotland) Act 2001)
-  Anyone who has been a Committee Member of the Association during the preceding 12 months, or their close relative.
-  Any close relative of a staff member actively involved in the recruitment process, or a staff member with line management responsibility for the post concerned.

5.0 Monitoring of the Policy

5.1 Information regarding the application of the recruitment policy will be reported to Staffing Sub Committee. The report will cover the following:

- FA Number of applications received
- FA Source of applications
- FA Equal opportunities information
- FA Any other relevant information & trends

6.0 Complaints and Appeals

6.1 Forth Housing Association welcomes complaints and positive feedback, both of which provide information which helps us to improve our services. We use a complaints procedure developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The complaints procedure allows for most complaints to be resolved by front line staff within a five-day limit (first stage), or if the complaint is complex, a detailed investigation will be made by a manager within a 20 day limit (second stage). At the end of the second stage our response will be made by a director. If the customer remains dissatisfied, he/ she may then refer the matter to the SPSO.

At each stage we will advise the customer how the complaint should be taken forward and advise which agency would be most appropriate to consider the case.

6.2 Internal candidates may raise concerns regarding recruitment process through the grievance procedure outline in Section 14 of the EVH Terms and Conditions.

7.0 Equalities

7.1 Equality and diversity underpin all our activities and services. When delivering our services, we never discriminate on the basis of sex or marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions. Full details of our Equalities Policy can be found on our website www.forthha.org.uk or can be obtained from our office.

8.0 Data Protection - Privacy

8.1 We recognise the importance of data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation, in protecting the rights of individuals in relation to personal information that we may handle, use and disclose about them, whether on computer or in paper format. We will ensure that our practices

in the handling, use and disclosure of personal information as part of the processes and procedures outlined in this policy comply fully with data protection legislation. More information is available from our Data Protection Officer

9.0 Availability

- 9.1 This policy is available on our website and can be made available in a number of other languages and other formats on request.

10.0 Review

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years by the Staffing Sub Committee and staff are responsible for ensuring that it meets legal and good practice requirements.
- 10.2 A Privacy Impact Assessment was carried out for the Staff Recruitment Policy and no further action was required.
- 10.3 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out for the Staff Recruitment Policy which recorded a new positive impact for disabled people.