

# TÚS LA

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

Recruitment and  
Selection  
Policy & Procedure

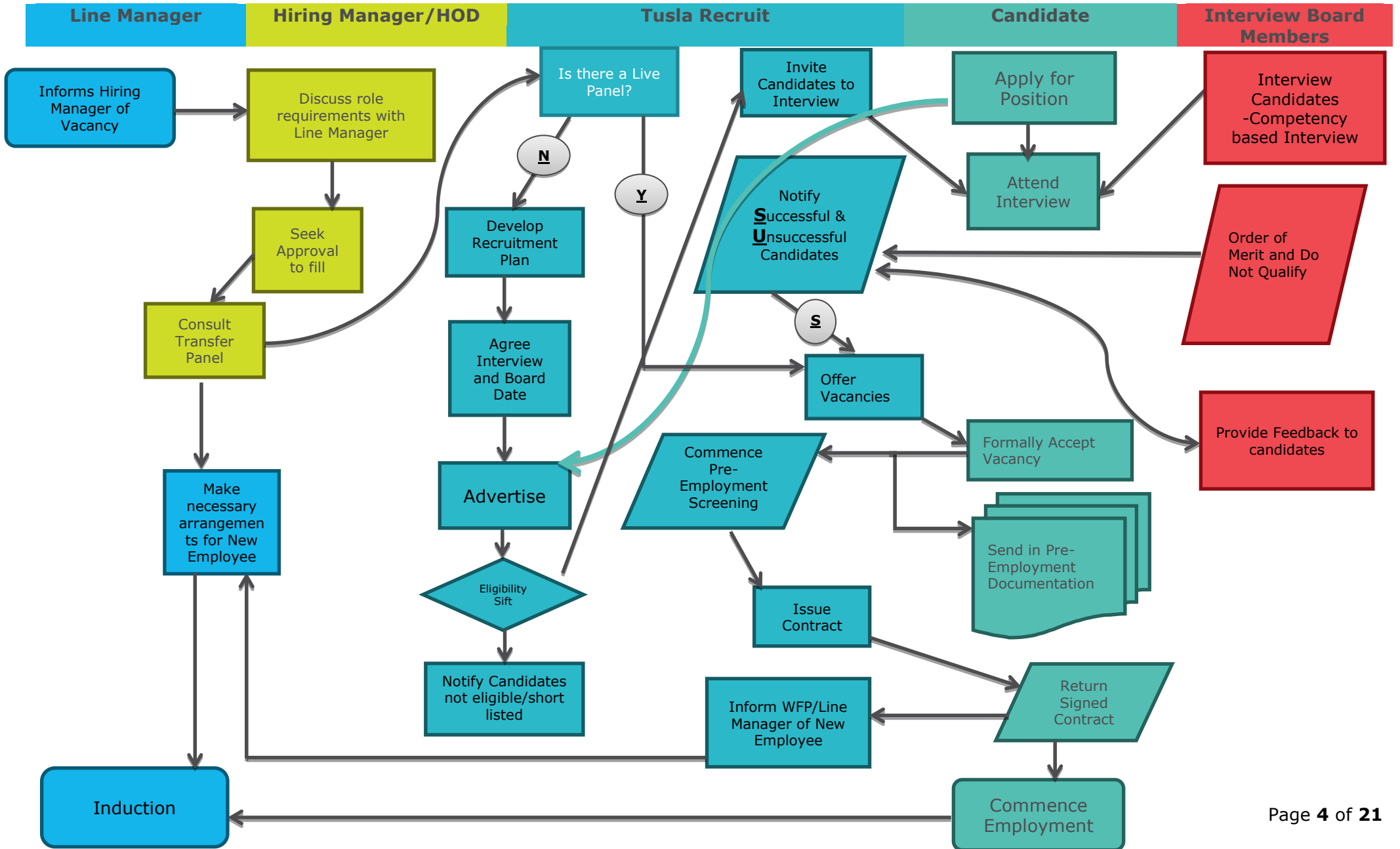
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# 1 Flow Chart – Overview of R & S Procedure



## **2 Introduction**

Best Practice in recruitment and selection is important in safeguarding the interests of children, staff and management of childcare services. Tusla Recruit & Talent Management, from within the Human Resource Department have developed safe recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure clear processes and safe practices are in place to enable Tusla Child and Family Agency to take all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable people are recruited to work within children and families services.

Recruitment for appointments to position in Tusla Child and Family Agency is subject to the provisions of the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act, 2004 (the Act) and is regulated by the Commission of Public Service Appointment (CPSA) and subject to the Codes of Practice published by the CPSA.

Tusla Child and Family Agency holds a recruitment licence from the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) which allows it to directly recruit to positions within the Agency. The conditions under which this licence was granted require the Agency to abide by the CPSA's Codes of Practice Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service (Appendix 1) which sets out core recruitment and selection principles of probity, merit, best practice, fairness and transparency. This principle based approach is intended to maintain and enhance consistency, fairness, transparency, accountability and diversity in recruitment and selection practices.

The Code reflects the Agency's responsibilities with regard to protecting the public interest and the Agency are committed to a recruitment and selection policy which complies with these standards. These standards must also be observed by all those involved in the recruitment, selection and appointment processes under the Agency's remit. The Agency's recruitment and selection processes are also subject to audit by the Commission for Public Service Appointments.

### **3 Purpose of Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a sound framework to ensure an effective and unbiased recruitment and selection process where the principles of probity, merit, best practice, fairness and transparency are applied in decision making regarding the appointment of candidates to positions in Tusla Child and Family Agency, while meeting the requirement of all relevant legislation.

#### **3.1 Aim of this Policy**

The aim of this policy is to outline Tusla Child and Family Agency recruitment and selection policy, process and procedures and to ensure that all those who are involved at any stage of the process are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

#### **3.2 Scope of this Policy**

This policy relates to the recruitment of all employees to Tusla Child and Family Agency. The processes cover the period from when a request to recruit (Job Order) is notified to Tusla Recruit to the commencement of a new employee with Tusla Child and Family Agency.

#### **3.3 Policy Statements**

##### **3.3.1 Recruitment**

- 3.3.1.1 Staff will be recruited based on the requirements of the role, without bias on the grounds of the candidate's Sex, Marital or Family status, Age, Disability, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Race or Membership of the Travelling Community.
- 3.3.1.2 Tusla Recruit will commence the recruitment and selection process to recruit candidates to identified vacant positions as soon as possible following the approval to fill the position.
- 3.3.1.3 A Recruitment Plan will be set out for each campaign in consultation with the Hiring Manager during which the job description will be reviewed/developed for the position and this will define the functions of the role and the specific agreed terms and conditions pertaining to the role. Some roles will have nationally agreed specifications.
- 3.3.1.4 All vacancies will be advertised internally within Tusla Child and Family Agency and some positions maybe advertised externally in relevant publications and websites.
- 3.3.1.5 The closing date for receipt of applications will be set out in the advertisement and all applicants are required to submit on line application within the timelines set.
- 3.3.1.5 All applications for a position will be assessed against the agreed eligibility criteria and essential criteria for the position advertised by using the information provided in the application documentation. Based on this assessment candidates will deemed eligible or not eligible for the campaign. Candidates may also be shortlisted for interview based on the criteria set down for the position. Applicants not shortlisted for interview will be notified in writing or verbally where appropriate.

### **3.3.2 Selection**

- 3.3.2.1 The selection process will involve the relevant Hiring Manager/s from the are where the vacancy exists and other suitably qualified managers will assist. An independent Chairperson will be appointed by Tusla Recruit to oversee the interview process
- 3.3.2.2 No staff member, board member, service user or external person shall be involved in any aspect of the selection process where an immediate family/household member or anybody with whom they have a close relationship/friendship is an applicant.
- 3.3.2.3 The selection process will always involve an interview but may also include other suitable assessment or selection methods deemed appropriate.
- 3.3.2.4 Candidates will be notified of interviews at least seven working days in advance. Where possible, interview dates will be arranged prior to advertising and the dates included in the advertisement.
- 3.3.2.5 Prior to offering an external candidate a position within Tusla Child and Family Agency the required pre-employment documentation must be in place and appointment approved. This will include satisfactory references from their current and most recent employers.
- 3.3.2.6 All decisions made as to the suitability of a candidate as a result of any disclosures received will be done with a commitment to fairness. The decision making process will consider if the disclosure has a potential bearing on the suitability of the candidate for the position for which they have applied.
- 3.3.2.7 The successful candidate will be issued with a contract of employment which complies with the Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994 and 2001, and the Unfair Dismissals Acts 1997-2007. The contract will be signed by appointee and a representative of Tusla Recruit.
- 3.3.2.8 Unsuccessful candidates will be notified in writing.
- 3.3.2.9 Candidates may request feedback from their interview. Such feedback will be given in consultation with Tusla Recruit using the interview assessment form as a basis for the discussion, a record of the session will be retained.
- 3.3.2.10 Review and complaints will be addressed through the processes outlined in the CPSA Codes of Behaviour.
- 3.3.2.11 Tusla Recruit will ensure that all documentation relating to the recruitment process is filed in a manner that complies with the relevant Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation.

### **3.3.3 Garda Vetting**

- 3.3.3.1 All applicants will be informed as part of the selection process that it is the Agency's policy to carry out Garda Vetting on all successful candidates prior to final offer of employment.

- 3.3.3.2 A copy of a Garda vetting form from a potential employee/volunteer is not acceptable as the vetting is required to be carried out in the name of Tusla Child and Family Agency. Employees will be re-vetted during their employment in line with best practice and legislative requirements.
- 3.3.3.3 Tusla Central Vetting Bureau will be responsible for the vetting process within the Agency.
- 3.3.3.4 In the event of a disclosure on the candidate from the Garda Vetting Unit a designated representative from Tusla Recruit in consultation with the Hiring Manager will carry out a risk assessment and make a decision on the suitability of the candidate for the position.

## **4 Procedures**

### **4.1 Approval Process**

All recruitment/employment actions that impact on WTE numbers and/or budget require local or national approval. Approval is granted through the Employment Monitoring Group (EMG). The principals of the EMG process are set out on the following link:

<http://hset.net.hse.ie/childfamilyagency/HR - National Control Group .html>

All positions require EMG approval in advance of commencing the recruitment and selection process.

### **4.2 Overview of Employment Monitoring Group (EMG) Process:**

In line with the Business and Service Plans recruitment requirements for delivery of services require pre approval. The EMG administer the approval; all new and replacement posts. The hiring manager is required to familiarise themselves with the process and submit vacant and development posts to the process in a timely manner to allow time for approval and planning for recruitment to the vacant/new position(s) in a timely manner.

Approval decisions are notified to hiring manager. The hiring manager may fill the position by transfer in line with the transfer policy details are on the Tusla Hub on the following link:

(<http://hset.net.hse.ie/childfamilyagency/Tusla%20Pilot%20Transfer%20Policy.html> )

or by open recruitment. If the hiring manager is to fill the position by open recruitment they are required to prepare a Job Order Form and submit to Tusla Recruit via their designated Workforce Planning Officer. Submission of the Job Order triggers the commencement the recruitment and selection process.

### **4.3 Request to Recruit - Job Order Forms**

A Job Order Form is completed by the Hiring Manager following receipt of approval. Details of the position, area and care group along with other supporting details are outlined on the form by the hiring manager and approval paperwork attached. The forms



are submitted to the Workforce Planning Officer for the region or corporate and national services. Job Order Forms are checked by the Workforce Planning Officer and all details clarified in advance of recording on the Job Order Log. The log is a register of all Job Order Forms. The Workforce Planning Officer will submit the Job Order to Tusla Recruit via the [recruitment@tusla.ie](mailto:recruitment@tusla.ie) email address and retain the supporting approval documentation at source. If the position requires a new position number or re-grade of an existing position number the Workforce Planning Officer will prepare a 'SAP OM Request for Re-grade existing position number/Create new position number Form'\*. This form will be signed by the Regional HR Manager or by the HR Business Manager for Corporate and National Posts and submitted along with approval details and accompany the Job Order Form.

#### **4.4 Review of Job Order Forms**

Job Order Forms received by Tusla Recruit are reviewed weekly at the 'Positions for Recruitment Meeting'. The meeting is attended by the Recruitment Operations Manager, the Recruitment Officer and the Campaign Managers and the officer who co-ordinates the Job Order Forms and log. Decisions are made at the meeting on appropriate action for each request to recruit.

The action may be a decision to:

*Fill the position from existing panel in place* – the position is expressed out the panel and candidate appointed in order of merit. Pre-employment Screening commences for the candidate and hiring manager notified of the action.

*Fill the position from a panel formed by a National Campaign.* If no live panel is in place and a national campaign is planned in the future, the hiring manager is notified of the plan and an interim solution explored to fill the position. The post may be filled by temporary assignment pending permanent filling.

*Fill the position by Bespoke Campaign* – if there is no generic panel in place for the grade or no plan to recruit the grade in the annual Recruitment Plan a bespoke campaign is planned to provide a panel from which the post will be filled. At the commencement of the campaign a decision will be made to form a panel to fill the post only or to create a panel to last one year or more.

The status of the request to fill/Job Order Form is recorded on the Job Order Log and is updated weekly at the 'Positions Management Meeting' by the assigned officer. A status report is generated monthly for inclusion in the Integrated HR Report which provides the Senior Management Team, the Board of Directors, the Department of Youth & Children and Workforce Planning Officers of these details.

In line with the guidelines set down in the CPSA Codes of Practice and Children's First Guidelines it is Tusla policy to fill each request through safe recruitment practices, i.e. an application and selection process.

## **5 Recruitment Plan and Campaign Timelines**

Each position recruited by a campaign requires a documented Recruitment Plan/Campaign Timeline which is agreed by the Head of Department (HOD) or Hiring Manager (HM) of the organisational unit and a member of the Tusla Recruitment Team. This is a service agreement and both Hiring Manager and Tusla Recruit are required to

commit to the timelines agreed and set down to allow for efficient recruitment scheduling for the Agency.

This process allows for an understanding to be established between the Tusla Recruit and the Hiring Manager on what the requirements are and the timeframes in which the recruitment team can deliver. The positions are scheduled in line with the Recruitment Calendar. The Recruitment Calendar is a working document (excel spreadsheet) which allows the team to schedule campaigns appropriately in line with the annual Recruitment Plan and the demands of bespoke campaigns.

A carefully structured recruitment plan maps out the strategy for attracting and hiring the best qualified candidate and helps to ensure a wide applicant pool.

Recruitment requests received via Job Order Forms are assigned to the Recruitment Services Officer or a Campaign Manager who will make direct contact with the HOD/HM to commence discussions to formulate the recruitment plan. The details are outlined on a '*Campaign Timelines Form*'\* which captures the plan for recruitment.

The approval details from the Job Order Log and Form will provide the campaign reference which is used on all campaign documentation.

The Recruitment Services Officer/Campaign Manager will work through the Campaign TimeLine Form with the HOD/HM collecting required details (e.g. position no., cost centre and criteria in the planning stage ensuring the HOD/HM is aware of the importance of the plan and commitment to the timescales.

While formulating the recruitment plan, all aspects of the campaign should be discussed and key dates planned early on in the process that will allow for easy scheduling and assignment of recruiting resources.

At planning the publishing date is agreed and once this is confirmed in consultation with the HOD/HM the eligibility sift, short listing and interview dates are set down and recorded.

Information on the confirmed dates within the plan documented and logged on the Recruitment Calendar/Schedule on the Tusla Recruit shared drive.

The notes section of the Campaign Timelines form is used to note any specific requirements or details that may require further discussion with Recruitment Officer/Manager or that are specific requirements to the campaign.

A well laid down Recruitment Plan will assist with scheduling and processing the campaign and will have impact on the decisions in hiring the right person for the job and reduce the cost of poor recruitment decision making.

The Hiring Manager and Recruitment Services Manager/Campaign Manger sign off on the Recruitment Plan documented within the Campaign Timelines Form and the document is used to plan the campaign. The plan is filed off on the Campaign Folder and updated accordingly as the campaign progresses and is filed off at end of campaign for reference/review.

A Campaign Timelines Form is generated for National Campaigns and used in tandem with the recruitment plan.

## 6 Process for Preparing Job Specification

The Job Specification gives focus to the purpose of the post and the principal responsibilities. As many posts are recruited nationally there may be some stipulations in the Job Specification relevant to the role nationally. Reference should be made to most current Job Specifications saved to the Job Specification Folder on the shared file.

It is important that sufficient time is given to drafting the job specification in the recruitment planning stage. It is an important document and plays an important role in the recruitment, selection, induction and training of candidates. The Job Specification provides the employee with a detailed insight to the position and it provides the employer with an opportunity to list their expectations. Before the recruitment and selection process begins, time is required to create a Job Specification and all activities will emanate from this.

The Job Specification:

- Provides the relevant criteria against which candidates may be measured throughout the selection process and which can be justified in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Provides valuable information to ensure the selection techniques and tools are customised to reflect the requirements of the job.
- Generates good quality information which will help assessors make better decisions.

The Job Specification is a means of identifying what the position needs to achieve but not the exact method by which the work is done.

The Job Specification will outline at a minimum:

- Position information such as title, grade code and reporting relationship;
- A position summary, or statement, summarising the nature and purpose of the role;
- A list of the principal duties and responsibilities;
- Selection criteria (this is always essential and not desirable);
- Links to other supporting information relevant to perspective candidates

All Tusla Job Specifications carry a reference to:

- Health and Safety Responsibilities
- Child protection/children's first legislation and guidelines
- The National Standards for Children and Family Services
- CPSA Codes of Practice
- Ethics in Public Office 1995 and 2001  
(Accountability for positions at Grade VIII or higher)

Please refer to Job Specification template\* for insert or appropriate wording.

The selection criteria for the post may need to be checked with the national eligibility criteria set down for the grade. The importance of setting down correct eligibility criteria cannot be overstated. Accuracy and relevance of detail in Job Specification is of utmost importance and sufficient time should be given to ensure this document is correct as it has implications for the selection and appointment of staff to the Tusla – Child and Family Agency.

Terms and conditions of employment are also included in the job description.

This should include:

- hours and days of work
- salary range and method and frequency of pay
- Whether job is temporary/permanent, job share etc
- Annual leave
- Length of service or probation period
- Is transport a requirement for the role
- Pension scheme

and any other relevant information with regard the grade/organisation policy.

The hiring manager may obtain a job specification template in advance of the recruitment planning meeting for advance preparation. The Recruitment Services Officer/Campaign Manger will assist the Hiring Manger with the final draft of the Job Specification.

Nationally agreed Job Specification will not require same level of advance preparation as content will be set down and agreed upon.

### **6.1 Using the Job Description for Recruitment and Selection**

Applicants details are crosschecked with the criteria set down in the Job Specification during the eligibility sift.

Competency Interviews are based on the competencies set down in the Job Specification. They should be appropriate to the post and taken from the relevant National Framework of Competencies.

Job Specifications for new national posts may need to be checked with IR/ER Section before they are issued.

Up to date Job Specifications should be filed in the Job Specification folder. The date the new version was developed should be inserted on the specification and the new version should override any previous versions saved.

## **7 Process for Advertising Positions for Recruitment**

With regard to the potential vacancy to be filled, a decision should be made on the most appropriate method of advertising which will result in sufficient levels of interest from suitable candidates. This might include advertising the vacancy internally using the careers portal or externally using national press, appropriate websites, recruitment agencies, etc.

National permanent positions will be advertised within the careers section on the Tusla Website/the HSE website and Public Service Appointments – the copy advert is also circulated within the Regional and National services through the Regional HR Departments and placed on appropriate Notice Boards.

A decision may be made during the recruitment planning stage to advertise the position in the National Papers or relevant professional journals or websites.

Care should be taken to ensure that the wording of the advertisement does not deter any potential applicants or leave the organisation open to a claim of discrimination. Care

is taken to ensure the wording does not discriminate on any of the nine ground set down in equality legislation in a direct or indirect way.

Direct discrimination occurs if an employer treats a person less favourably in relation to employment on any of the nine grounds listed in the legislation. It is also illegal to direct someone to discriminate.

Indirect discrimination occurs where a practice or policy that is not essential for the job, or a requirement is hard to satisfy, has a disproportionate impact on a person or people by any of the nine grounds covered.

The medium used for advertising is set out in the Recruitment Plan and are appropriate to the requirements of the position.

In line with best practice generally internal positions are advertised and open for 2 weeks, positions advertised externally are open for 3 weeks. These timelines maybe adjusted and left open for a longer period if advert is during the summer or Christmas season or if applicant pool is considered small.

## **8 Process for Eligibility Sift/Short listing**

The eligibility sift is the process whereby the applicants are assessed jointly by the Hiring Manager/Representative and a member of the Tusla Recruit Team against the agreed criteria set out in the Job Specification and relevant to the requirements of the position. The decision is made on the basis of the information supplied by the applicant in their application form. The sift will eliminate applicants not eligible for the position who do not have the requirements set down for the position.

At least two persons are required to assess the applications to identify if applicants meet the eligibly criteria set down. Those who meet the eligibility criteria set down may be called to the next stage of the process. For large candidate pools a shortlisting exercise may be applied. Once the application deadline date closes, all members of the eligibility sift/shortlisting process will be given a full and complete set of the following:

- job specification
- Eligibility Sift/Shortlisting Form setting out eligibility requirements
- a complete application form for each applicant

The eligibility criteria will be based on the specific requirements of the job as outlined in the job specification. The criteria and short listing criteria or rating system is agreed on in advance of the meeting and applied consistently in respect of all applicants.

Those involved in this process will be fully briefed and equipped to properly discharge the duties of this role, having due regard to the requirements Tusla under the Freedom of Information legislation. Once this exercise has been completed those involved should:

- Agree on and record a final short list of candidates that have been assessed as being competitive on the 'Eligibility Criteria/Shortlisting Form' provided.
- Note the candidates not shortlisted, along with provision of a short note on the short listing template provided.
- Include in the shortlist those applicants about whom there is dispute if unanimity cannot be achieved for further discussion with the Recruitment Operations Manager.

When short-listing, board members should never:

- Recommend for interview any applicant, whether internal or external, who does not meet the essential criteria. Make negative assumptions or decisions on the basis of perceived over-qualification
- Exclude candidates from further consideration for reasons that are not related to the selection criteria such as personal bias, age, disability, gender, race or any other of the nine grounds listed in the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and 2004.

The Tusla Recruit representative as part of this process will:

- Prepare the eligibility/shortlisting criteria form in line with set criteria
- Attend eligibility/shortlisting meeting with the hiring manager/delegate
- Write out to successful candidates and invite them to interview as per schedule
- Write out to unsuccessful candidates and inform them of decision as to why they were not deemed eligible/not to shortlist and reason

All documentation required for this process is saved to the campaign folder. All documentation generated in this process is filed on the competition file for reference

Applicants have a right to seek review of the decision made at this part of the initial recruitment and selection process and are required to seek review in line with the requirements set out in the CPSA Codes of Practice (Section 7).

## **9 Process for Interview and Selection**

The Interview Board will be nominated by the Hiring Manager during the recruitment planning meeting and an Independent Chairperson will be appointed by the Campaign Manager/Recruitment Officer. All members of the interview board must be trained in Effective Interview Skills. The board will be approved by the Recruitment Operations Manager/Recruitment Officer.

An interview schedule will be set out and saved to the campaign folder. Successful candidates will be contacted by email and invited to attend for interview on the notified date/time. Candidates will normally be given at least 7 days' notice of interview. The timescale may be reduced in exceptional circumstances. Ideally interview date will be set out on the Campaign Timelines Form and notified to candidate at application stage (noted on Job Specification).

Candidates for interview will be notified that they are required to produce a form of recent photographic identification e.g. driver licence, passport or student ID. On invite to interview the interview board is disclosed to the candidate.

Interview schedule will be drafted when all candidates are confirmed and a copy will be provided to the Interview Board in the Interview Pack prepared for the campaign.

The Interview Pack will contain a letter to each board member with names and contact details of the interview dates and times along with the following items:

- Job Specification
- Application Form for each candidate
- Interview Schedule
- Interview Board Member Guidelines
- A copy of the CPSA Codes of Practice
- Interview Board Members Declaration Form

- Note taking sheets
- Candidate Interview Marking Sheets
- Recommendation Sheet/ Do not qualify sheet
- Competency/Key Performance Indicators

and any other relevant documentation that additional assessments may generate

The member of the recruitment team assigned to the campaign will:

- Book an appropriate meeting room for interviews
- Organise catering and set up the board room for interviews providing water and glasses for board members and candidates throughout the process
- Contact/meet with the interview board members in advance of the interviews and go through the Interview Board Meeting Checklist.
- Check in with the Board throughout the day to assist with any requests or requirements they may have.
- Meet with the board/chairperson at the end of the campaign to check over paperwork and signatures and note any comments/issues or enquiries the board may raise.
- Notes should be made on any issues that arise and discussed with the Recruitment Officer.

Following the interview process panels should be approved by Recruitment Operations Manager (Senior Posts, Grade VIII or higher, will be signed off by The General Manager or Director of Human Resources)

### **9.1 Results of Interview**

All Candidates will be notified of the result of their interview at the earliest possible date after the interview. The recommendation of the interview board does not constitute a job offer as it is only one stage of the selection process. This selection process continues after interview and includes clearance checks such as references, Garda/police clearance, and occupational health, validation of qualifications and experience and provision of any other relevant documentation required for appointment.

The interview board's decision on which candidates are the most suitable for the position does not constitute a job offer. Final offer is made following pre-employment screening.

## **10 Competency Based Applications and Interviews**

### **10.1 Competency Based Application**

A Competency Based Application requires the candidate to describe some of their personal achievements to date that demonstrate certain competencies (necessary skills and qualities) required for the position they are applying for (e.g. Communication Skills, Planning and Managing Resources etc). It is a requirement of application that all question areas are completed within the word count set down and candidates will be questioned on all areas at interview.

For each competency, the candidate is given a description of a skill or quality. They are then asked to describe a situation, from their own experience, which you think is the best example of what **they** have done which demonstrates this skill or quality.

The information presented in this part of the application may form part of the shortlisting process, and may also be used to help structure the interview. Shortlisting may apply based on the information provided in the application form. This means that the eligibility/shortlisting board will rank and shortlist applicants based on information put forward in the supplementary questions section of the application form.

For each example applicants are asked to include the following:

- (a) the nature of the task, problem or objective;
- (b) what they actually did and how you demonstrated the skill or quality (and, where appropriate, the date you demonstrated it)
- (c) the outcome or result of the situation and an estimate of the proportion of credit they can claim for the outcome.

Candidates are asked not use the same example to illustrate their answer to more than two skill areas.

The interview board may seek additional examples of where the applicant demonstrated the skills required for this post.

Candidates are notified of these requirements in the application pack.

### **10.2 Competency Based Interviews**

All interviews conducted in the recruitment and selection phase are competency based. Interviewers ask candidates to provide actual work samples on application and at interview stage which demonstrate their experience and skills in the competency area selected.

Details on competency based interviews are set out in the Interview Board Members Guidelines. The candidate receives a candidate information pack which outlines the process and helps the candidate prepare for interview.

## **11 Pre-employment Screening Procedure**

All Candidates will be notified of the result of their interview at the earliest possible date after the interview usually within 7 to 10 days of the interview. The recommendation of the interview board does not constitute a job offer as it is only one stage of the selection process. This selection process continues after interview and includes clearance checks such as references, Garda/police clearance, occupational health and validation of qualifications.

The following pre-employment checks are carried out for all positions within Tusla Child and Family Agency as part of the screening procedures:

- References from current and most recent employer
- Relevant documentation including qualifications, validation (where applicable)
- Professional Registration (CORU or NMBI for example)
- Copy of passport
- Marriage certificate (if applicable)



- Valid work permit (if applicable)
- Occupational Health Clearance
- Garda Clearance (which may include foreign police clearance)

The conduct of these checks usually forms the final stage in the assessment of candidates who have been successful at all other stages of the process and will be offered a job in accordance with their order of merit on a panel. It is important that candidates, when offered a position, are informed that these final checks that will be carried out and are made aware that any job offer will be dependent on the agency being fully satisfied with the outcome of additional validation of information that it considers necessary for the performance of the job.

### **11.1 References**

As part of the application process candidates are requested to provide three professional referees, including their current employer who, in relation to social work/care posts, must have a professional relationship to the candidate. In addition, candidates are advised that Tusla Child and Family Agency retains the right to contact all previous employers as part of the pre-employment screening process.

The candidate is advised that *"Tusla reserves the right to remove candidates from specific recruitment panels and retract job offers if satisfactory clearances (e.g. past/current employment references, security clearances) cannot be obtained or are unsatisfactory."*

Tusla Child and Family Agency reserves the right to seek both written and verbal references from current and previous employers, educational institutions or any other organisations with which the candidate has been associated. Tusla Child and Family Agency also reserves the right to determine the merit, appropriateness and relevance of such references and referees.

A full and comprehensive suite of professional references are obtained to assure Tusla Child and Family Agency that the applicant's past performance and behaviours are appropriate to the post.

In line with Children's First Guidelines candidates who are screened for positions that have direct contact with children and families will have their suitability for the role screened. At least one referee should have firsthand knowledge of the applicant's previous work or contact with children. Referees will be asked if the candidate's is considered suitable by them to work with children on the reference they provide.

The suite of references must include the candidate's current Line Manager/Supervisor or employer. A professional reference is understood to be from a person in a direct clinical/professional supervisory role to the candidate. An 'Employment Reference Form' is completed by a member of Tusla Recruit team during the telephone conversation with the referee in relation to the candidate including professional ability. The completed form is then emailed to the referee for confirmation before being considered either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The Form may also be e-mailed or posted out to a referee.

Consideration is given, inter alia, to;

- Referee marks one or more skills/competencies as unsatisfactory
- Referee indicates he/she would not reemploy the person or recommend the person for employment

- Referee does not deem the candidate suitable for working with Children and Families
- Referee states negative comments about the person
- Referee refuses/fails to supply a reference
- Candidate does not wish to have a particular referee contacted.

In the event that a reference is not considered satisfactory, an evaluation is carried out by the Recruitment Officer and Recruitment Operations Manager who oversees the follow up with the referee and other relevant persons to establish facts and to document findings and available information. In some instances the Hiring Manager is contacted to discuss any issues about the candidate and the possible consequences for the particular post. A letter also issues to the candidate advising them of the situation that has arisen in relation to the difficulty in securing a complete suite of references to reflect their employment history. They are requested to provide any additional relevant information to be considered by Tusla prior to a final decision being made as to whether or not their appointment can proceed.

Based on all the available information the candidate's file is then jointly discussed by the Recruitment Officer and Recruitment Operations Manager and who are responsible for making a recommendation in relation to proceeding with 'the appointment to post' or 'the withdrawal of the job offer'. Tusla advised that it has encountered situations where a candidate has provided satisfactory employer references in respect of some of their career to date but Tusla has been unable to secure relevant satisfactory references in respect of other stages in their career that are deemed relevant, for example where a referee has refused to provide a reference. While reaching a decision in these situations can be particularly challenging, Tusla policy is that these decisions are arrived at collectively by the relevant Managers, taking account of all available information, and the decision is ultimately informed by the risk associated with placing a potentially unsuitable candidate into the post in question. A record of any discussions and the final decision are documented and signed off by the Managers. The candidate will be made aware of the decision and may be asked to put forward a written account on the findings which will be reviewed within a 7-10 day period following notification. If a decision is made not to proceed with an appointment the candidate is informed by letter that the job offer is being withdrawn as the Agency has been unable to obtain satisfactory references. They are advised that they are now being removed from the panel and therefore will receive no further job offers from this panel. The candidate is also advised of their right to appeal the decision under Section 7 of the Code of Practice.

### ***11.2 Qualifications and other Documentation***

At the application stage candidates are required to provide details of their qualifications and eligibility criteria for the post being advertised including relevant experience and courses undertaken. Candidates are advised that any credit given at interview, in respect of claims to qualifications, training and experience is provisional and is subject to verification. They are informed that the recommendation of the interview board is liable to revision if the claimed qualification, training or experience is not proven. Following their acceptance of the 'recommendation to proceed' to the clearances stage of the process, candidates are requested to submit documentation to Tusla Child and Family Agency including original qualifications, validation (if applicable). The candidate will also be required to submit a copy of passport, marriage certificate (if applicable), and valid work permit (if applicable).

### **11.3 Pre-Employment Health Assessment**

Prior to the job offer being made candidates must complete a pre-placement Health Declaration Form with regard to their health status in order to determine their fitness to carry out the duties of the post and to assist Tusla in meeting its obligations under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005. The information provided is reviewed by the Occupational Health Service. In some instances it may be necessary for the candidate to undergo a medical assessment.

Advice should be sought from the Occupational Health Advisors and Recruitment Operations Manager where concerns are raised in relation to an applicant's medical clearance.

### **11.4 Garda and Police Clearance**

It is Tusla Child and Family Agency policy to carry out Garda vetting on all new employees. New employees may not commence employment until the outcome of final Garda/Police Clearance Checks are in place. Candidates are advised on application that Tusla will seek Garda Vetting for all their residences in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Providing international security clearances from other countries, where residency was for more than six months, are the responsibility of the candidate. All applicants are required to provide valid identification and complete a Garda Vetting Form disclosing all convictions received which is then sent to the Tusla Central Vetting Bureau for processing.

If a particular issue is raised about a candidate following the Garda vetting Tusla completes a risk assessment in relation to the possible impact of this issue on the job in question and whether the candidate's conviction may have any adverse consequences. This is a matter for discussion among Senior Recruitment Management and may require further consultation with the Hiring Manager before a decision is made on whether to proceed with an appointment.

### **11.5 Creation of Panels**

For some competitions a panel of successful candidates may be formed as a result of the interviews. Candidates who obtain a place on the panel and who fulfil the conditions of the selection process may, within the life of the panel, be considered for subsequent approved vacancies. The candidate who obtains first place on the panel will be the first candidate considered for a position, subject to satisfactory clearances, and so on in order of merit. A panel is typically live for one year. The panel may be reviewed at end of the year and the life of the panel extended to a maximum of three years following consultation with the hiring manager and HR Senior Management.

### **11.6 Internal Applicants**

Where applicants move internally within the agency to a new job role it may not be necessary to undertake all of the above employment checks again. The Recruitment Team will request to retrieve the current personal file and will confirm that the right to work and any professional registration is up to date. Where the new role requires additional qualifications, these must be seen and copied by the recruitment team. A reference will be obtained from the current line manager. Sick Leave Record may be checked for a four year period. Occupational Health screening will only be required where the role involves a significant change of duties. If a current Garda Clearance is not

on file one may be sought, however, this would not delay the internal appointment process.

The Recruitment Officer will check that all screening is complete and sign off on the checklist before final offer of employment is made to the candidate. A Contract of Employment is then drafted and issued.

### **11.7 Contract of Employment**

A contract of employment is drafted on agreement of a start date. A contract of indefinite duration is issued for all permanent positions and a specified purpose contract is issued for all temporary employments. Other contracts of employment may need exploration if candidate is appointed alternatively to above.

The candidate is issued the Contract of Employment in advance of commencing employment. Once a signed copy is on file the line manager is notified and requested to prepare for induction of the new employee. A Personnel/Payroll file is generated and the file is sent to National Payroll Services for upload to *Therefore* and a request to set the employee up on SAP as an active employee from start date. No employee should commence employment without a co-signed contract on file.

### **11.8 Employee Set Up Form**

Form HR101 or 102 is generated and filled up by the employee and Campaign Manager to collect personal details required for the employee's record on SAP HR Personnel System, personnel file and payroll set up. The form is signed by the employee and approved by the Recruitment Officer.

The HR forms can be accessed on the following link:

[http://hsenet.hse.ie/childfamilyagency/New\\_HR\\_Forms.html](http://hsenet.hse.ie/childfamilyagency/New_HR_Forms.html)

### **11.9 Letter of notification to Hiring Manager**

A letter of notification with employee commencement details is drafted and sent to the hiring manager to advise the manager of the employee's commencement and provide a pre-employment/induction check list to the hiring manager.

### **11.10 Personnel File**

A personal file is created to contain all the documentation created and collected during the process. This file is sent to Health Business Service – National Payroll Records who set up an employee on the SAP HR Personnel System and create a payroll file. The personnel file is saved to an electronic personnel file system – *Therefore* - and can be accessed by HR Staff.

### **11.11 Close off Campaign File**

The campaign folder is updated accordingly, panel updates are recorded to reflect appointment(s) from and existing or new panel and panel list held within the shared folder is updated accordingly by the Recruitment Service Manager or delegated officer.

### **11.12 Review or Complaint Procedure**

Tusla Child and Family Agency operate their review and complaint procedure in line with the process set down in the CPSA Codes of Practice Appointment to Positions in the Civil and Public Service.

Procedures where a candidate seeks a review of a decision taken in relation to their application are set out in Section 7 of the CPSA Codes of practice.

General information and procedures in relation to allegations of a breach of the code of practice are set out in Section 8 of the CPSA Codes of practice

The CPSA Codes of Practice – Appointment to Positions in the Civil and Public Service may be accessed on the following link:

<http://www.cpsa.ie/en/About-Us/What-we-do/Setting-Recruitment-Standards/Code-of-Practice-for-Appointment-to-Positions-in-the-Civil-Service-and-Public-Service-.pdf>

*\*Recruitment Forms are a work in progress due to changes within the structure and processing of forms. Final versions will be available on the Tusla Hub and users notified of access*