



GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

PRE EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

This statement is issued to all applicants regardless of the post for which they are applying.

South Central Ambulance Service Foundation NHS Trust (hereinafter referred to as the "Trust") recognise the importance of ensuring all our employees are trustworthy and reliable. Therefore, we as a Trust are committed to carrying out pre and post appointment checks for all staff working in our services. Recent cases have highlighted the need to strengthen current procedures, which was reflected in the Health Service Circular 2002/008. The Circular covers procedures for all appointments, for NHS bodies from 1 July 2002. It is now essential for all NHS bodies to carry out checks for appointing any person, whether as an employee or as a volunteer.

NHS employers have a duty to ensure that patients receive a good standard of medical care and must take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of patients and staff. Therefore the Trust, when recruiting, informs applicants if criminal record information will be requested from them as part of the appointment process.

Identity and right to work in the UK

As part of the recruitment and selection process, all applicants will be required to produce identification documentation at interview. This is to ensure that individual's identity is verified and that they have the right to work in the UK. Candidates will be asked to produce three of the following pieces of original (not photocopies) identification documentation:

- Original birth certificate (issued within 8 weeks of birth)
- Photo Driving Licence (both paper and photo card)
- Passport (in date)
- National Insurance Contribution number card (or current pay slip)
- Current address (e.g. utility bill or bank/building society statement that is not more than three months old – mobile phone bill is not acceptable).

Unfortunately, individuals who are unable to provide identification will be unable to secure employment with this Trust.

Qualifications

Applicants will also be required to produce original documents / certificates verifying their education and/or training applicable to the post for which they have applied. Applicants are advised to make sure they have the necessary documents in good time in readiness for any interview and/or assessment centre. Failure to provide verification will result in an application being suspended or withdrawn. You can use the OfQual link:

<http://ofqual.gov.uk/help-and-advice/getting-a-replacement-certificate/www.qcda.gov.uk>
who may be able to assist for lost / copy examination certificates.

Driving Licence

Individuals applying for a role where driving is required will also be asked to produce their driving licence at assessment and/or interview stage and must declare any driving endorsements and/or convictions. If holding a two part licence, addresses on both the paper and photo ID part must match.

The Trust has a duty of care to ensure that all patients transported by Trust employees are done so in a safe manner. Therefore, for roles that transport patients, the Trust will not accept any more than a maximum of three penalty points on a licence from external applicants. For internal candidates applying for new role/promotion that have driving endorsements and/or convictions, up to a maximum of six points will be accepted (at the commencement of the new role). Under no circumstances will the Trust accept endorsements for drink / drug driving, reckless or careless driving (e.g. CD40 – CD70, DD40 – DD80, DR10 – DR90) codes from any new external applicant for any role requiring driving duties.

Please note that roles for Paramedic, Emergency Care Assistant and PTS Ambulance Care Assistant require that you hold category C1 on your licence. If you passed your test before 1 January 1997 you will have automatically been given this category on your licence. If you passed your test after 1 January 1997 you will need to apply to hold this category. Please see the DVLA website for further details.

References

References must be obtained to check facts such as an applicant's qualifications and previous job history. References should cover the preceding five years and will always be obtained in writing, although it may be necessary to telephone referees to clarify information.

If an applicant is currently or was recently employed, references should be obtained from the most recent employers. If an applicant has worked only as a volunteer, references should be obtained from the voluntary organisation(s). All references should be written by a person relative to the applicant e.g. a person with line management responsibility. In circumstances where an applicant has had a career break, the recruiting manager should explore with the applicant (at interview) who might be a suitable alternative e.g. college lecturer if undertaken any study, teacher if engaged in school associations or governors groups. Attempts will be made to obtain a reference from the last employer.

References for health professionals should be obtained from the applicant's clinical line manager.

References will seek information about an applicants previous work conduct to establish whether there are any current disciplinary or capability proceedings etc. of which the Trust should consider in relation to the application. Similarly the Trust will establish the levels of attendance of applicants in the preceding 24 months of the application. The Trust's objective is to minimize sickness absence, therefore, any applicant who exceeds more than three occurrences or ten days per year in the preceding two years may have their application withdrawn subject to review of individual circumstances in accordance with disability discrimination legislation.

Occupational Health Clearance

All successful applicants will be required to complete an Occupational Health Questionnaire to ensure that they are capable of carrying out the role or identify anyone at risk of developing work related diseases. Occupational Health will contact the candidate directly if something on the questionnaire needs to be discussed. All roles involving driving will need a medical with our occupational health providers.

Disclosure & Barring Service

Individuals who apply for posts which involve the provision of health services and will have access to patients and/or patient information in the course of normal duties will be required to complete an on-line (electronic) Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) form. The DBS carry out checks on individuals who have applied for such posts in order to protect vulnerable members of the community. It assists organisations to make safer recruitment decisions.

The individual will be required to produce various pieces of identification and once these are considered to be sufficient and the organisation is satisfied that the individual is genuine; a declaration will be made to the DBS, by the Trust to this effect. The individual will complete and e-DBS form for a disclosure check to be made.

Undertaking the check is a pre-requisite of employment, however, having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining employment with us, as long as this is disclosed during the application process.

Where the position is a "regulated position" under the terms of the Protection of Children Act 1999 (as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000), appropriate checks will be carried out in accordance with this legislation. Checks are made by referring to a Protection of Children Act 1999 list; individuals on this list have been legally barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for such a person to knowingly apply for, offer to do, accept or to do such work. A check will also be made against police records in accordance with best practice procedures by the Disclosure & Barring Service.

Applicants are encouraged to declare criminal record information and any other matters that are, or that might be, relevant to the position for which they are applying at an early stage in the appointment process.

Applicants who are discovered to have a criminal record following employment will be subject to disciplinary action which could result in their dismissal.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Applicants for certain professions and positions concerned with the provision of health services are exempted from Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and can therefore be asked to disclose “spent” convictions that they would otherwise not have to declare. If such information is requested, we will inform applicants whether the nature of the position for which they intend to apply means that they will be asked to disclose convictions that would otherwise be “spent” under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Applicants for such positions will also be asked if they are “bound over”, have received a police caution, warning or reprimand and whether they have been charged with a criminal offence that is not yet expired.

As part of the appointment process, following an offer of employment, **all** applicants will be asked to complete a declaration form for this purpose.

Professional Registration

Registration with the professional body imposes a duty on health care professionals to provide a good standard of medical care, and behave appropriately towards, patients. It is a pre-requisite for many posts to hold such registration i.e. Paramedics, Medical Practitioners, Nurses etc.

Prior to making an appointment, which requires professional registration, the Trust also needs to establish if applicants for such positions have ever been disqualified from the practice of a profession or required to practice it subject to specified limitations.

Applicants will be asked to produce proof of their registration at interview. During the progression phase of the recruitment process the Trust will make appropriate checks to ensure that the individual is fit to practice and that their registration is valid. Individuals will need to make a declaration to this effect.

General guidance for applicants

Unless an appointment is prohibited by law, a criminal conviction will not automatically debar the applicant from appointment. Applicants will be given an opportunity to discuss any information supplied before a final decision is taken regarding their appointment.

However, an applicant may not be appointed if the information declared renders that person unsuitable for the position for which they have applied. In reaching such a decision the Trust will consider the nature of the record/action, its relevance to the position applied for, and any other information the applicant wishes to provide.

The information declared will be treated in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

We are an equal opportunities employer, and all applications will be decided fairly and on merit. Information declared will be used to consider the applicant's suitability for the position. Information supplied will be treated in confidence and will not be used as the sole criteria to decide an applicant's fitness for position.

NOTE: Failure by an applicant to provide accurate and truthful information is considered to be a serious matter. Where it is found that a person has intentionally or recklessly provided inaccurate information or withheld information relevant to their position, this may disqualify them from appointment. It may also result in dismissal or disciplinary action and referral to the appropriate professional regulatory body.

If you would like to discuss what effect any criminal record or fitness to practice proceedings might have on your application or have a general query about a pre-employment check, you may e-mail the Recruitment Team: recruitment@scas.nhs.uk in confidence, for advice.