



Northamptonshire FA Safer Recruitment Policy

1. Introduction

Wearing the Northamptonshire FA (NFA) badge or having a role with the NFA does bring status and respect in the football community. Therefore, it is critical that the NFA does all it can to ensure that people are suitable for their roles and upholds the values and behaviours of the Association.

2. Principles underpinning the Policy

Safer Recruitment (Policy) aims to ensure that the recruitment and selection processes used by NFA:

- o Incorporate relevant vetting and checking procedures including a robust induction;
- o Provide ongoing training and development;
- o Meet the requirements of The FA Safeguarding Operating Standard.

This Policy outlines the steps NFA will take to ensure those employed or who volunteer are safe to work with children and young people and its main purpose is to:

- o Prevent unsuitable people from applying and working within the NFA;
- o Attract the best possible candidates to work in NFA to create and maintain a safe workforce.

The recruitment and selection process set out in this Policy should ensure the identification of the person(s) best suited to the role, whether paid or not, based on the applicant's abilities, qualifications, experience and attitude as measured against the role profile and person specification.

All those involved in the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers for the NFA will ensure all processes are conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation.

This Policy should be used alongside the following policies and guidance:

- o FA/NFA Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policies;
- o The FA Safeguarding Operating Standard for CFAs;
- o Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Guidance;
- o NFA Whistle-blowing Policy;
- o NFA Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers;

- o Relevant NFA Codes of Conduct;
- o NFA Induction process for Staff and Volunteers;
- o Right to work and employment checks.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the NFA Executive Officer, as the Senior Safeguarding Lead, to ensure that structures are in place to support the effective implementation of this Policy and that all appropriate pre-employment checks are carried out on all staff who work at NFA.

Before convening any recruitment panel, the Executive Officer will ensure that at least one member of the interview panel has completed Safer Recruitment Training, via the local authority or other relevant organisation.

The Recruitment Panel will ensure that safeguarding matters are central to the interview process.

4. Equalities Legislation

The NFA will comply with all relevant equalities legislation which is in force from time to time.

The NFA will promote equality in all aspects of its work, particularly with regard to all decisions on advertising of roles to diverse communities, appointing, promoting and paying staff, training and staff development. The NFA will ensure that its processes are open, transparent and fair and all decisions will be objectively justified.

5. Role Profiles and Person Specifications

All roles will have an element of safeguarding responsibility and this will be reflected in the role profile.

The NFA will implement:

- o Role profiles, which define whether the role will have contact with children and young people. Contact may include attending disciplinary commissions, welcoming young people to events or making mentoring calls;
- o Person specifications, describing the skills, experience or attributes the successful candidate needs in order to carry out the role.

Where roles are eligible, role profiles will specify the requirement for an 'Enhanced DBS check with a check of the relevant barred lists'.

6. Application form

The NFA will utilise standard application forms. With the exception of applicants who declare a disability and/or a need for reasonable adjustments. Shortlisting will be undertaken without any demographic information. Demographic information will only be used by the NFA for equality monitoring purposes.

7. Advertising

The purpose of an advertisement is to attract only the right type of person for the role.

The NFA will therefore consider the most appropriate ways to advertise each role.

All advertisements for roles in regulated activity, paid or unpaid, must include this statement:

“Northamptonshire FA is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk. Due to the nature of this role, the successful candidate will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check through The FADBS process. The possession of a criminal record will not necessarily prevent an applicant from obtaining this post, as all cases are judged individually according to the nature of the role and information provided.”

Adverts for all roles in regulated and non-regulated activity will:

- o State the role title, function and pay (including any allowances) and contractual status – the appropriate pay range or hourly rate where appropriate;
- o State clearly the hours/full-time equivalent and location;
- o Contain brief information from the role profile and essential criteria from the person specification;
- o Include the statement “if you do not have the formal qualifications specified but can demonstrate skills or experience of an equivalent standard, we would be interested in your application” when appropriate;
- o Include the statement “Northants FA is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. All eligible roles are subject to a DBS check”;
- o Contain language that is non-gender specific;
- o State as an equal opportunities employer the NFA welcome applications from all parts of the community;
- o Avoid phrases which imply age restrictions;
- o Contain a contact number for an informal discussion about the vacancy, or to arrange a visit to the CFA, if appropriate;
- o Specify a closing date for applications;
- o State the date of the interview(s).

8. Returned applications

Prospective applicants must complete, in full, and return the signed application form, with a CV, two named referees/references, with contact information and agree to a DBS check where relevant. The following points will also be communicated to applicants:

- o Receipt of applications will not be acknowledged;
- o Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline for completed forms has not passed;
- o Applications received after the closing date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances e.g. proof of posting indicates undue delay through no fault of the applicant.

9. Shortlisting

Northamptonshire FA will ensure that the candidates are shortlisted against the person specification and given due notice of the interview date.

The Recruitment Panel are responsible for recording their reasons for the candidates they shortlist.

The NFA will endeavour to ensure Recruitment Panels are diverse and that there is continuity in

the people involved in the recruitment process from shortlisting to interview and then selection. The line manager for the role being recruited should be involved in the entirety of the recruitment process.

10. Objective assessment

The NFA requires each application form to be carefully considered, and applicants will be assessed against the criteria listed in the person specification and the role profile.

The selection criteria will be applied objectively and consistently to all applicants, whether internal or external, and each applicant will be dealt with in the same way. Candidates who are shortlisted must always meet the essential requirements of the post – the desirable criteria may be used as an additional filter to reach the final shortlist.

11. Accessibility and reasonable adjustments

When shortlisting, the NFA will need to check to see whether any applicant has declared that they have a disability and whether there are any reasonable adjustments required for interview.

If a candidate has a disability where they are likely to be at a substantial disadvantage because of working arrangements, then Northamptonshire FA is legally required to consider any reasonable adjustments which could be made at the workplace if they were to be appointed.

12. Numbers to shortlist

If there are a large number of applicants who meet the essential criteria on the person specification, the Recruitment Panel may use the desirable criteria. If this is not effective in reducing the number, pre-screening may be used to reduce the numbers before the main selection process takes place.

13. Recording the decision

The results of shortlisting will be recorded by the Northants FA with clear reasons given for shortlisting or rejecting each applicant, and marks allocated against the criteria on the person specification.

Information obtained during the shortlisting process will be treated as confidential. Comments recorded as to why applicants were or were not included will not be disclosed outside of the Recruitment Panel. However they may be disclosable to an applicant who requests feedback on why they were not shortlisted for the vacancy.

14. Invitation to interview

Candidates called to interview will receive:

- o A letter confirming the interview and selection process;
- o Details of the interview day and time, including details of the panel members;
- o A further copy of the person specification;
- o Details of any tasks to be undertaken as part of the interview process;
- o The opportunity to discuss the process prior to the interview;
- o Confirmation of any reasonable adjustments being agreed to/made to support the candidate;
- o Details of documents to bring for evidence checking e.g. original certificates relating to

professional or educational qualifications;

- o For roles that are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the successful candidate will be subject to a DBS check. Therefore, all candidates will need to bring evidence of their identity with them to the interview.

15. The interview and selection process

The main objective of the interview/ selection process will be to:

- o Determine each candidate's suitability for appointment;
- o Give all candidates a fuller picture of the role;
- o Select the right person for the role.

One member of the Recruitment Panel will act as the Appointing Officer with overall responsibility for making the final decision.

Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the role and all Northants FA vacancies will require a face-to-face interview of short-listed candidates. Interviews may include additional interview techniques such as observation or exercises.

During the interview candidates will be asked appropriate questions. The process will give all candidates an equal chance to demonstrate their suitability for the role.

Supplementary questions can be asked of candidates based on responses during the interview and also any questions which arose from the application form.

Each Panel member will be responsible for keeping clear, concise objective notes of the interview process which will be available to candidates should they so request afterwards.

During the interview candidates will be required to:

- o Explain any gaps in employment;
- o Explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the panel;
- o Declare any information that is likely to appear on the DBS disclosure.

Any information disclosed by the candidate on their application form related to allegations, disciplinary action, cautions or convictions will be discussed during the interview.

Candidates will have the opportunity at the end of the interview process to ask questions about the job or Northamptonshire FA. The Chair of the Panel will ensure the candidates are aware of the decision-making timescales and how decisions will be communicated.

A risk assessment should be made as part of any final recruitment decision, if necessary delaying the decision. Where an appointment is made:

- o A documented record of the decision to employ, or not to employ should be made and kept on file;
- o An agreed probationary period and date of commencement of employment.

16. Recruitment Panel

The Recruitment Panel will consist of at least two people and reflect the needs of the role being recruited for.

17. Declaration of interest

Any person on the Recruitment Panel who has any interest in, or is related to, any of the applicants will declare that interest or relationship so that all the other members of the Recruitment Panel are aware of it. If appropriate such a person may be removed or replaced on the Recruitment Panel.

18. Pre-employment checks

Northamptonshire FA appointments are subject to satisfactory completion of the pre-employment checks detailed below and any offer of appointment will be conditional on all successful candidates completing the following:

- o Providing proof of identity;
- o If eligible, completing an enhanced DBS application and receiving satisfactory clearance;
- o Providing proof of professional status;
- o Providing actual certificates of qualifications;
- o Providing proof of eligibility to live and work in the UK;
- o Successful completion of an overseas police check for any individual who within the last five years has lived or worked outside the United Kingdom, whether they are a British citizen or not.²

All checks will be:

- o Confirmed in writing;
- o Documented and retained on the personnel file;
- o Followed up if they are unsatisfactory or if there are any discrepancies in the information received.

19. References – Use of Pre, During and Post Interview

Two references, one of which must be from the applicant's current/most recent employer where possible, will be requested for all shortlisted candidates (including internal candidates).

Requests for references will be accompanied by the role profile and person specification. Referees will be asked specific questions about the following:

- o The candidate's suitability to work with children and young people and Adults at Risk;
- o Any substantiated allegations;
- o Any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, relating to the safeguarding of children and Adults at Risk.

Reference requests will also request confirmation of the following:

- o Applicant's current post;
- o Attendance record;
- o Disciplinary record.

¹ If a candidate has lived or worked overseas in the five years prior to appointment, a 'Certificate of Good Conduct' must be obtained and provided by the candidate. If an applicant is unable to obtain the document they must provide evidence confirming the attempts made and then a risk assessment will be undertaken by the CFACEO/DSO regarding confirmation of employment. All other pre-employment checks must be satisfactorily completed.

References received before the interview process will be checked by the Appointing Officer/Chair of the Recruitment Panel prior to the interview.

References will be shared with other panel members after the interview. The Appointing Officer/Chair of the Recruitment Panel will clarify or probe any discrepancies from within the reference during the interview if appropriate.

In addition, a reference may also be requested from a previous employer when a candidate worked with children.

References will be sought directly from the referee. References provided directly by the candidate with the application form or at interview will not be accepted.

Previous employers not named as referees may be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. This will only be in relation to administrative details and not used as an informal means of canvassing views as to any applicants' potential suitability for the post being applied for. On such occasions, the candidate will be notified in the first instance.

The Appointing Officer will contact the referee directly in order to clarify any aspect of the reference. Any telephone discussion with a referee will be recorded with full notes being kept of the conversation.

References will be used to check the appointment and to reinforce decisions made as part of the interview/selection process. References will be checked against information on the application form and from the interview/selection process.

20. Offer of appointment

The offer of employment will be confirmed in writing by the Executive Officer from the NFA to the successful candidate(s) as soon as possible after the interview.

This will be a conditional offer of employment and is subject to satisfactory receipt of all pre-employment checks.

In addition, all appointments are subject to satisfactory references, vetting procedures and DBS clearance.

21. Induction and training requirements

All staff and volunteers who are new to Northants FA will receive a Safeguarding Induction and Briefing.

22. Probationary periods

All new NFA staff employees will be subject to a probationary period and this will be confirmed in the unconditional offer of employment and the Statement of Written Particulars.

23. Monitoring and review

This Northamptonshire FA Policy will be ratified by the Board and will be reviewed annually. The date the Policy is ratified should be recorded in the Northants FA Board minutes.

³ See relevant Appendices for further information.