

IMSP060R: Recruitment Policy and Procedure

Version 1.4 (12/2024)

Reference number/version:	1.4
Departments:	HR
Document Owner:	Group HR Director
Effective from date:	December 2024
Review date:	Every 2 years

Document History

Version number	Edited by	Date reviewed	Summary of changes
1.0			Version 1
1.1	HR	August 2021	Branding updated and references to HR Case Handlers
1.2	HR	November 2022	Revised policy format and updated processes and hiring manager responsibilities
1.3	TK	May 2024	Update to include process to reference check prior worker, updates to Security checks, reference to EDI policy to F&I
1.4	HR	December 2024	Amendment to the panel requirements for Grade 5/6 roles

1. PURPOSE

Mears Group is committed to attracting and recruiting the highest calibre staff by ensuring that its recruitment and selection process is fair, transparent, effective and complies with the relevant legislation. The Group is committed to equality of opportunity in recruitment, selection and promotion.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that Mears Group attracts and selects the best available candidates, with the appropriate level of qualifications, experience, and ability in order to carry out the duties of the post. By ensuring consistently high standards in the recruitment processes, and the application of terms and conditions to contracts of employment, the Group will ensure that all candidates receive a positive experience. This will enable the Group to promote itself as a professional company and be recognised as an employer of choice. Demonstrating the

Group culture and ethos to all potential candidates will also enhance the ability to provide a professional and successful service.

The Company prides itself on being a fair and non-discriminatory employer and, as such, all staff concerned with recruitment must ensure that they fully comply with the Company's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, at all times. This will ensure that there are no discriminatory processes or practices are undertaken at any stage. All Hiring Managers will be trained to fully understand the Company's Policies on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which require them to access and equally consider as wide a pool of talent as possible, representing the communities in which we work in.

2. SCOPE

This policy and procedure apply to Mears Group Plc and its subsidiary companies' ("Mears Group") employees and external candidates who apply for a position with Mears Group or any of its subsidiary companies.

3. DEFINITIONS

Hiring Manager - refers to the direct line manager on Workday for the vacant post, or alternatively, in the event that they are not available, then the manager's manager.

HR – primarily refers to the Recruitment team, but also HR Administration team and HR Business Partners who will be responsible for providing advice and guidance to managers and candidates on policy and process and co-ordinating the activities required to ensure an effective recruitment process.

Employee – is an individual who is directly employed by Mears Group and or any of its subsidiaries. It does not include self-employed and agency workers or contractors for the Group.

Candidate – refers to any individual who applies for a vacancy with the Mears Group or one of its subsidiary companies. A candidate may be internal (an existing employee of the Group) or external.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of managers to ensure the implementation of the policy is applied fairly and consistently to candidates, ensuring the Fairness and Inclusion impact is considered. All hiring managers must undertake training on the recruitment process and fairness and inclusion expectations prior to leading on a recruitment exercise.

Managers will be responsible for ensuring that they follow the correct procedures for requesting and implementing all recruitment actions. The standard documents and any specific

requirements must be reviewed and discussed with HR for advice at the appropriate stage of the process and prior to any actions or decisions being taken.

HR will be responsible for ensuring appropriate advice and guidance is given to managers on the application of this policy, in addition to supporting the implementation of any job requisitions, or other job changes, and providing Workforce Development Group with regular reports on all recruitment and related activities.

5. POLICY

JOB PROFILES

The company operates a job catalogue through Workday that defines the available roles for each business unit. Each job profile will contain details on the agreed, job titles, grade, pay range, job description, adverts. Pre-screening questions and interview packs will also be linked to each job profile for use in the recruitment process.

If the Hiring Manager wishes to advertise for a role, or use a job title, that does not exist in the job catalogue, a separate process is required for approval via the Change Control Process, detailed in the Pay and Bonus Policy.

PRE-RECRUITMENT APPROVAL PROCESS

The Workday organisational structure of each hiring manager is intrinsically linked to the annual budget process. Changes to pay and organisational structure will impact the ability of the cost centre manager to achieve their approved budget spend.

Hiring Managers are required to fully evaluate the need for a new, changed or replacement posts prior to raising a job requisition in Workday. This evaluation should consider if a direct replacement is required and if not, is there a requirement to staff the team differently. Hiring Managers are also required to consider any known commercial agreements or constraints arising from previous acquisitions or TUPE transfers prior to submitting a job requisition.

If the purpose of the recruitment is to replace a leaver in the same position, a requisition should be raised in Workday against the existing position by selecting "For Existing Position", selecting the worker or vacant position that is being replaced. The option "Create New Position" should only be used if the purpose of the recruitment is to replace an existing position with a different position or to increase the headcount in the team. When replacing a role with a different position, the previously existing post on Workday must be closed down and then the new position requested within Workday.

Once the Hiring Manager has raised the job requisition it will require approvals within Workday. These vary according to the grade of the post and the circumstances of the request, as follows:

- Existing Grade 1 position - Cost Centre manager -> HRBP -> Pre-Requisition Approver
- New Grade 1 position - Cost Centre Manager -> HRBP -> COO/MD -> Pre-Requisition

Approver

- Existing Grade 2+ position - Cost Centre Manager -> HRBP -> Pre-Requisition Approver
- New Grade 2+ position - Cost Centre Manager -> HRBP -> COO/MD -> Pre-Requisition Approver

Discovery Calls

Once the job requisition has been approved within Workday, a Recruiter will be allocated and hold a Discovery Call with the Hiring Manager to discuss the job advert, closing dates, any local recruitment activities in support of the advert, the composition of the shortlisting and interview panel and the requirement for an Interview Pack. Hiring Managers will also be reminded of their responsibility to arrange interviews, collect right to work documents, and provide interview notes.

Further Discovery Calls will be scheduled if no suitable candidates have been identified during the advertising period to determine whether the advert needs to be re-posted. If so, the advert, posting requirements and any other options and alternative approaches will be discussed and a new advertising period agreed. For longer posting periods the Recruiter will conduct an interim review and arrange a follow-up conversation, as necessary.

Due to the importance of securing the Hiring Manager's input, Discovery Calls are mandatory, and adverts will not be posted until the call has taken place.

Internal Job Changes

All external recruitment exercises require a job requisition to commence the process, however, some internal job changes can be requested through Workday without the need for a job requisition. Processes for which a job requisition is not required are:

- Employees changing from a fixed-term contract to a permanent contract, in the same role
- Apprentices who are appointed into a fully qualified role (subject to Mears Learning Approval)
- Employees who are demoted, whether at their request or as a result of a formal process

In addition, a further set of requests have been identified which may be exempted from the requirement to raise a job requisition, subject to the specific circumstances, as follows:

- Promotions
- Restructures
- TUPE moves
- Secondments

In these cases, advice must be sought from the relevant HR Business Partner about the

appropriate process to follow before any of the job changes listed above are raised without a requisition. Any job changes requested, for which a job requisition is required, will be sent back, as part of the Workday approval process. The rationale for the decision will be provided, and Line Managers are expected to raise a job requisition and follow the standard recruitment process.

REMUNERATION

Pay ranges for each job profile are set within the job catalogue in Workday and reviewed annually. Any deviance from pay range must be adequately justified within Workday when submitting the job requisition or making an offer in line with the Pay and Bonus Policy.

Proposed salaries outside of the pay range will be subject to the Workday approval process and Hiring Managers must not make any commitments to candidates or employees until full approval has been received.

It is company policy that all job offers are subject to standard Mears Terms and Conditions. Any exceptions to this, will require a full business case to be approved by the Group HR Director and COO/Head of Service. The company will consider the total reward package for the role and may determine that the salary offered should be adjusted to take account of any preferential terms and conditions retained.

ADVERTISING

Mears is committed to retaining its employees and allowing them opportunities for promotion and all vacancies covered by a job requisition must be advertised internally to facilitate internal mobility and to resolve potential redundancy situations. However, the Group also recognises the importance of hiring the most suitable candidate for the job, supporting its aims of a high-performance culture in line with the Performance Management policy. As such, where particular knowledge or skills are required that are either not available or in short supply within the business, external advertisement will also be approved alongside any internal notifications. If external advertisement is required, this should be selected on the job requisition raised in Workday.

Upon receiving approval to advertise the vacant position, the HR Recruitment team will arrange to advertise the role internally through Workday. The standard advert template will include the following:

- Job title
- Outline of the contract and key duties
- Skills required for the role
- Closing date for applications.

Where a position cannot be filled internally or where it is appropriate to conduct an external recruitment campaign, concurrently the available position should be advertised through relevant networks, websites, and through local online channels as agreed with the Recruiter.

External adverts will always include the salary/hourly rate along with the agreed advertising period. The recommended default timeframe is 2 weeks, however, this will be discussed on the Discovery Call and the time frame can be extended or shortened, depending on anticipated candidate attraction levels.

During the advertising period managers can shortlist, review CVs and interview candidates, however, an offer must not be made to a candidate until after the posting end date. All candidates must have been reviewed and shortlisted once the posting end date has passed.

Local Recruitment Activities

Local recruitment is currently being successfully used by branches and certain activities are mandatory that all branches must follow and therefore should be considered by all hiring managers. Examples of good practice include regularly liaising with Job Centre Plus branches, presence as an employer at career fairs, banners and posters and leaflets in the local area.

Recruitment packs can be supplied to branches. The packs will contain a range of professionally produced materials to support and enhance local recruitment and will be kept under review to reflect changing needs and good practice shared through local People Plans.

Hiring managers will be advised about which parts of the pack and local recruitment activities are compulsory and which can be utilised by branches according to their individual situations. All local recruitment activities must be recorded and shared with the Recruiter for their information. It is recommended that each branch nominates a person to own local recruitment activities, according to their specific requirements. The nominated person will be responsible for forming and maintaining effective partnerships and should have the authority to commit branch resources to achieve the desired outcomes.

Notwithstanding the encouragement of local recruitment activities, the overall management of candidates during a recruitment process must be carried out by HR Recruitment, to ensure the high standards as set out within this policy are maintained.

APPLICATIONS

It is important the recruitment experience is positive for all candidates in order to achieve the most effective candidate management across the Group, mitigating potential candidate drop off and working towards strengthening the Group's brand. It is therefore important that the Hiring Managers takes time to discuss the job description including person specification with the Recruiter, as part of the Discovery Call, to ensure that the best possible candidates are put forward for review.

The Recruiter will respond to candidate applications received through Workday within a maximum of 2 working days of receipt. Hiring Managers are expected to adhere to the same timescales when they receive contact from the Recruiter. This will prevent quality candidates from being lost to other external recruitment processes or disengagement due to poor levels of communication.

All applications will be treated confidentially and circulated only to those individuals responsible for shortlisting or interviewing. All pre-selection screening will be conducted against established role related criteria and Company competencies, where appropriate.

Internal candidates will be required to apply for any advertised vacancy they wish to be considered for through the internal careers site within Workday. This is to ensure a fair and consistent process and that they are dealt with in the same manner as external candidates and assessed fairly and consistently.

Internal candidates will only be selected to attend an interview if they meet the essential criteria established for the role and are short-listed for the position. Internal candidates must inform their Line Manager of their application in advance of applying and permission must be sought to attend an interview if it is scheduled during working hours.

Prior worker candidates are required to apply for any advertised role on our external job boards and will have the opportunity to get through to an interview if they meet the requirements. However, we need to ensure we maintain high standards for the Group. Prior workers must have previously been an asset to the Group, left on good terms and placed the Group and their colleagues ahead of themselves.

When recruiting and considering re-employment of a prior worker the recruiter will contact the current hiring manager of the role in question via email informing them of the prior worker and providing them with the previous line managers name and contact information. The hiring manager needs to contact either the previous line manager of the individual or the senior leadership team to gain internal views and references prior to moving to offer stage.

A specific process has been developed to facilitate redeployment for employees who are at risk of redundancy, please see the Redundancy policy for full details.

Should Hiring Managers have any queries about any previous employment with Mears they should contact the HR Department for advice.

CONDUCTING ASSESSMENTS INCLUDING INTERVIEWS

The HR Recruitment team will screen candidates using a standardised screening matrix relating to each job profile and business unit to endeavour to remove unconscious bias from the screening process.

Once the Hiring Manager and other short listers have decided which applicants should be shortlisted and progress to assessment, the Hiring Manager should contact the candidates to invite them to attend an interview. They should discuss the dates and times of availability, location, and interview panel members, as well as stages of assessment. Applicants who are invited to an assessment/interview should be sent full details of the venue, the times and type of assessment, along with a copy of the job description and person specification. A role-specific candidate assessment form must be used to ensure a consistent approach between both candidates and interview panel members. Once the interview is booked in with the candidate the Hiring Manager needs to schedule the interview date, time and location onto workday.

The Recruiter will help managers to prepare the relevant documentation. Where appropriate, skills tests may form part of the interview process. However, psychometric testing will only be used if the test has been validated in relation to the job, is free of any bias and is administered and validated by a suitably trained person.

RIGHT TO WORK DOCUMENTS

At interview stage, the candidate should be asked to provide documentation confirming their Right to Work in the UK along with any other applicable documentation such as:

- Certification of skills and qualifications
- Professional memberships
- Driving Licence
- Proof of address

In all cases when checking the validity of right to work documents the Hiring Manager must be in physical possession of the original document or documents in line with the Right to Work in the UK Policy and Procedure. The Hiring Manager cannot rely on the inspection of the document via a live video link or by checking a faxed or scanned copy of the document. The responsibility for checking the documents belongs to the Hiring Manager. For information on the acceptable right to work documents please use the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/acceptable-right-to-work-documents-an-employers-guide> .

Further guidance on the specific steps required for compliance, and the timescales for each, for separate business units will be produced for Hiring Managers' use.

SELECTION PROCESS

Prior to advertising a role, the Recruiter will ask the Hiring Manager to define the selection processes applicable to each vacancy. This information should be shared with the candidates,

and they should be given an opportunity to advise the Hiring Manager of any reasonable adjustments that may be required, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Various selection approaches are applied and include shortlisting from application forms, interviews, technical and behavioural based, psychometric testing/aptitude testing, assessment centres, team and individual exercises, role-play and/or PC and job specific based selection tests.

In all instances, the approach adopted must be relevant to the specific vacancy to ensure that selection decisions are based on fair and consistent criteria. Equally, any approach used in the selection process must be designed to ensure non-discriminatory practices by providing supportive evidence for selection decisions.

All interviews should be held with at least two interview panel members, and hiring managers are responsible for ensuring that the panel should be sufficiently diverse, reflecting the composition of the shortlist and the workforce, to ensure a fair assessment is made. For grade 6 roles, grade 5 People Manager roles and in branches where there is under representation of women employees, every effort should be made to have a woman interview panel member. Furthermore, where grade 5 roles are not going to be People Managers and there is a fair woman representation within the branch then it is still desirable that there is a woman interview panel member. This will be monitored and reported on by the HR Recruitment team. It is accepted that initial first stage interviews, including telephone screening by the HR Recruitment team, may not require a panel. Where a panel has been convened, scores for interviews should be conducted independently by each interviewer and only compared once the process has been completed. Scores from all assessments should be added together and the candidate with the highest overall score should be offered the position since the methods of selection prescribed by the Hiring Manager will ensure the most suitable candidate has the highest score.

All unsuccessful candidates who are interviewed will be notified as soon as possible and should be offered the opportunity for feedback on the reasons for not being successful. The Hiring Manager must provide feedback to the Recruiter as part of the interview notes via Workday to allow the HR Recruitment team to contact the unsuccessful candidates on the manager's behalf.

However, if the unsuccessful candidate is internal and currently working for Mears the Hiring Manager needs to contact the individual along with their current line manager and provide them with constructive feedback and ways to improve for next time.

Managers must ensure that all comments on recruitment documentation are professional, factual and appropriate in line with the policy and the company standards.

OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

Hiring Managers are encouraged to book interviews for suitable candidates received before closing date of the advert, however, no offers should be made until after window has passed and all potentially suitable candidates have been interviewed.

It is the role of the Recruiter to maintain contact with candidates and liaise with Hiring Managers in order to ensure correct procedures are followed.

Where an internal candidate is offered a role, their release date from their present role will be agreed by their current Line Manager as well as new Line Manager. This should be as soon as is reasonably practical, and not later than their current contractual notice period, unless otherwise agreed. All offers will be subject to the successful completion of the approval process within Workday. The Recruiter will initiate a transfer in Workday under the job change process, based on the information in the job requisition and offer documentation.

All external offers of employment are subject to receipt of interview notes on all candidates interviewed as well as pre-employment checks, e.g., DBS / DS or equivalent background check, driving licence check and right to work. All steps need to be completed prior to a contract being issued.

Once the pre-employment checks have been completed the candidate will be moved to Ready for Hire and will then be processed by the HR Admin team to create the employee record.

The contract of employment will be sent to the candidate electronically for the candidate to sign and return prior to their start date, along with any other documentation required in respect of the role. The Hiring Manager will be required to request vehicles, IT, and other equipment and to confirm the required systems access via Service Now – a notification is automatically sent via Workday so that an account is created for the new starter.

Any offer of employment should be in line with the salary agreed on the job requisition and any benefits including grade should be in line with the job profile as set out in the Job Catalogue. For internal promotions and other internal moves the Pay Policy should be adhered to when setting salaries. If the offer is different from the information in the job requisition, further approvals will be required, in line with the relevant Workday approval chain.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

Whilst the preceding steps primarily involve systems, there is also a requirement for the Hiring Manager to communicate with the new starter throughout the pre-commencement period including:

- Confirming what they will be required to do next and when
- What the communication will look like e.g., email from Sterling
- Who they can call if they need any help
- Where they need to report to on day 1 and at what time
- What their first week will look like

- Checking that they are ready to start, prior to first day, and arranging a visit to the office to meet the team, familiarise themselves with the environment and check that they can log into the systems
- Planning for the employee to meet key stakeholders / colleagues

In order for onboarding to fully completed there is a recommended lead time of one week.

REFERENCES

References are subject to contractual requirements. For parts of the business such as AASC and Care all offers of employment are subject to receipt of two satisfactory references. All information received on references must be treated as strictly private and confidential. Standard reference request letters will to be utilised whether by HR or the Business Unit, where appropriate, and references obtained in line with the relevant requirements of the policy.

Note the requirement in the Prior Worker section, that internal verbal references must be sort from the previous line manager or senior leadership team, prior to any offer to bring back a prior worker.

In the event a candidate does not opt for a reference from their previous two employers (where applicable) they will be requested to provide an explanation for this.

RECORDS OF RECRUITMENT

All recruitment documentation from both the candidate and the Hiring Manager including candidate CVs, interview questions, assessment answers and notes must be uploaded to Workday by the Hiring Manager. These may be subject to review in the case of any challenge against the decision, and by the Internal Audit function to ensure they comply with Company standards and data protection legislation.

It should be noted that all interview comments are recorded and are factual, objective, and non-discriminatory, as they may be open to external scrutiny. Rejection decisions should be based on the assessments set out for the role which would demonstrate lack of capability due to responses within the relevant stages of the recruitment, inadequate qualifications, etc. and not related to any protected characteristics, in line with the Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

COMPLAINTS

In the event that an internal candidate wishes to complain about the recruitment procedure, then they are encouraged to follow all informal routes to achieve an acceptable resolution.

Where this is not possible then reference should be made to the Grievance policy and procedure.

In the event that an external candidate wishes to complain about the recruitment procedure, the HR team will be responsible for passing the complaint to the relevant Head of Service/Chief Operating Officer. The senior manager will be responsible for ensuring that the complaint is investigated, and a response provided within a reasonable timeframe. The HR Case Handler team will provide advice and guidance to the investigating manager.

MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mears Group and its subsidiaries ("Mears" and "Group") take appropriate steps to ensure that they meet their obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 ("the Act"). The current Group statement including the details of its approach to fulfilling the commitment to support the elimination of modern slavery may be found on the company website.

As part of Mears' ongoing duty and due diligence to identify and mitigate risk the following procedures systems and processes are in place within HR to:

- Regularly monitor labour and payroll of existing operations or projects
- Include the Act requirements when risk assessing potential new operations or projects
- Include the Act requirements as part of procurement processes clearly setting the expectations
- Provide appropriate training

- Build strong relationships with the supply chain and make clear the Group's expectations as to their conduct
- Protect and support any whistle-blowers
- Identify and assess potential risk areas in the supply chains and
- Monitor potential risk areas in the supply chains and put in place actions to mitigate those risks.

6. OTHER RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Pay and Bonus Policy
Fairness & Inclusion Policy
Data Protection policy
Grievance procedure
SODA
Performance Management Policy
Right to Work in the UK Policy
Reference Policy

7. APPENDICES

There are no appendices in this policy document.