



Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF)

Employment Policy

General principles

Both trustees and staff of FVAF wish the organisation to be seen as an employer of best practice with an open and agreed set of policies covering its activities. The engagement of paid staff is in itself a major undertaking and needs to employ fair and equitable practices as prescribed by this overarching policy. Due reference to the FVAF Equality and Diversity Policy should be made at all times in the interpretation of this policy.

Responsibility

Final responsibility for the engagement of paid staff rests with the Board of Directors. Some delegated powers enable that responsibility to be fulfilled on a daily basis by the Manager.

Representation

FVAF will place no bar on individual staff joining an appropriate professional or other representative body during their period of employment.

Recruitment

For each contracted post within FVAF prior to any recruitment activity a job evaluation shall be completed to ascertain the role, requirements, salary level and resource needs for the post.

For each contracted post within FVAF both a job description, showing the role, responsibilities and duties of the postholder, and a person specification showing skills, knowledge, experience and attributes required for the job shall be produced.

Requirements deemed essential for the role shall be clearly identified along with a list of desirable conditions.

In the first instance consideration will, if appropriate, be given to the possibility of offering a contract of employment to current FVAF volunteers who will have been involved in a similar activity. Providing they fulfil all requirements and accept the terms for employment then the recruitment for the post will not proceed to an external process.

Job advertisements shall be placed to attract as wide a group of applicants as possible in line with the nature of the role advertised. All advertisements shall carry a statement of the FVAF commitment to Equality and Diversity and the date of interviews.

All potential applicants to receive a covering letter, job and person specifications, details of the role and FVAF in general, application form and equalities monitoring form.

Selection

All selection decisions will be made by a panel and not by an individual. The normal panel to be composed of the Chair or Vice Chair and the Manager.

Shortlisting to be on the basis of the essential and desirable criteria applied consistently to all applicants. No criteria to be used that are not included in the person specification.

Applicants with significantly limiting disabilities who meet the essential criteria for the job shall be guaranteed an interview

Short listed candidates shall receive full details and location of the interview, process to be followed, times to attend, any material or other requirements for the day and a clear request for any 'reasonable adjustments' required of FVAF to conduct the interview.

Interview questions to relate to the job and person specifications only. The panel to pre-prepare questions that will be asked in consistent format and responses recorded accordingly. For certain roles a practical assessment may be requested.

All candidates to provide evidence that they are legally eligible to work in the UK

All unsuccessful candidates to be notified of such at a given time within one week of interview. Feedback to be provided as requested.

References to verify factual details will be taken up for candidates conditionally offered the job and not to choose between candidates.

A health check will only be required if a candidate has significant periods of sickness or sick leave not related to a disability.

After each recruitment and selection process an evaluation of the process shall be completed by somebody not involved in the process and with a particular, but not exclusive, focus on equality issues.

Induction

Each new member of paid staff shall be provided with an induction pack including a checklist. This to include an explanation of work practices, key policies to be familiar with, key people to meet and other information. It is anticipated this will be completed within the first month of employment.

Staff shall be provided with a signed contract of employment within one month of commencing employment. For short term roles this contract will be time limited in the first instance.

Training

It is FVAF policy to provide an environment within which all staff can undertake their roles with confidence and competence. Accordingly every appropriate and affordable opportunity for formal staff development and training shall be provided, in line with role and personal requirements and considerable effort made for all to benefit from informal learning from each other.

The FVAF annual budget to include a clearly defined cost centre for staff training against which expenditure shall be monitored.

All formal staff training activities to be monitored post the training, filed in the staff file and evaluated at staff supervisions.

Staff Reviews

All paid staff to have a formal regular review with their immediate line manager. This to include a self assessment by the staff member and a review of this and the previous review by the line manager. Agreed outcomes and issues to be formally recorded and filed in the staff file. Any concerns arising from this process to be referred as an issue of capability.

As previously stated it is FVAF policy to provide an environment within which all staff can undertake their roles with confidence and competence. Accordingly every effort will be made to provide staff with the skills, knowledge and support to achieve. Due note shall be taken of an individuals personal circumstances and all efforts made to be fair and transparent in dealing with issues of performance.

Should it be required the FVAF Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures will provide guidance on dealing with extreme issues of failure to perform.

Employer Supported Volunteering

FVAF is committed to the principle of employer supported volunteering and will support reasonable requests for the paid staff to involve themselves in appropriate volunteering opportunities within the community for a maximum of two days per year.

Grievance and Disciplinary issues

As described in the FVAF Grievance Procedures and Disciplinary Procedures.

Pensions

FVAF trustees shall provide facility for the administration of a personal workplace pension. FVAF are committed to providing in accordance with the Pensions Act 2008 a pension contribution through NEST to all eligible employees.

Annual Leave

Paid holiday entitlement will be 20 days per annum increasing by 1 day per annum for each completed year of continuous service to a maximum of 25 days

The employer's holiday year runs from April 1st to March 31st
You must give appropriate notice of your annual leave requests. The employer would normally require at least 48 hours notice of single day requests and 28 days notice of requests for one or more weeks of leave. All requests to be agreed with your Line Manager prior to the leave being taken.

Any holiday entitlement which is not taken during the employers' holiday year can only be carried forward to the following year with the prior agreement of the employer. Pay will not be received in lieu of unused holiday entitlement.

On termination of employment, pay will be provided for any holidays not taken in that holiday year.

Employees are entitled to all public holidays at full pay.

Sickness and Sick Pay

FVAF trustees are sympathetic to the possible health status of staff and can, at their discretion but in an open and fair manner, make up the salary of a staff member to its normal level during a period of paid sick leave. This to be for the number of week's equivalent to the number of completed month's service at the time of the onset of sick leave up to a maximum of six weeks.

Maternity/Paternity Leave

Maternity/Paternity leave and pay will be granted to meet the current national government legislation.

Flexible Working

FVAF respect that due to commitments outside of their control, some employees may need a degree of flexibility to their working arrangements. Any requests for an alteration of working patterns must be made to and agreed with the employees line manager in a time frame that allows adequate cover to be arranged if needed.

Retirement

It is the policy of FVAF to support staff throughout their period of employment. Accordingly employees can continue in their job, subject to their capability to perform the tasks required by the role, beyond the appropriate national retirement age.

Redundancy

FVAF trustees seek to ensure, so far as possible, security of employment for its paid staff. However, the nature of voluntary sector funding is well recognised and the withdrawal, reduction or cessation of a fixed term funding arrangement may make the issue of redundancy unavoidable. FVAF trustees are committed to handle any redundancy in as fair, consistent and sympathetic manner as possible.

All staff will be informed as early as possible of any impending situation that may result in redundancy and consult frequently with any individuals affected.

FVAF shall select staff for redundancy in as fair and open a manner as possible. It is recognised that the funding usually relates specifically to individual roles and this is likely to influence selection for redundancy.

If at all possible FVAF shall seek to offer alternative employment to staff selected for redundancy. If more than one member of staff is affected by this process then the FVAF procedures for selection of staff shall be followed.

Any member of staff under notice of redundancy shall be entitled, at the discretion of their line manager, to time off for re-training, to seek alternative employment or other issues pertinent to the redundancy.

FVAF redundancy pay shall be in line with the statutory rates and terms. (published on the direct.gov.uk website).

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