Community Counts
Milnbank
Housing Association
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TO:	Governance Sub-Committee
PREPARED BY:	Linda Sichi (Deputy CEO)
SUBJECT:	RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY
DATE OF MEETING:	07 September 2026
APPROVED BY:	Paul Martin (CEO)

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY

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RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY

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1. MILNBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION (MHA) STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

MHA's mission is to provide excellent homes and services in a thriving community. We believe that people living in the MHA community should:

- Have warm, safe, and affordable homes, and receive excellent services from MHA.
- Live in neighbourhoods that are clean and well cared for, with real community pride.
- Have access to opportunities and services that promote a good quality of life.

2. MHA's VALUES

Working as 'One Milnbank' so that we offer the same quality of services, support and housing to all tenants and residents.

3. LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The Board leads and directs MHA to ensure good outcomes for its tenants and other service users. MHA adheres to the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework Financial & Regulatory and to all relevant legal employment requirements associated with this policy. Specifically, the Employment Rights Act 2025 Equality Act 2010 Immigration, Asylum & Nationality Act 2006 UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

4. POLICY INTRODUCTION

This policy provides a framework for fair, transparent, inclusive, and legally compliant recruitment, selection, and onboarding practices. The recruitment procedure (Appendix 1) provides guidance on the process, from identifying a vacancy through to an employee joining MHA. The policy should be read with any associated recruitment guidance, templates or forms MHA adopts as part of the process.

5. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all recruitment, selection and onboarding activities undertaken by or on behalf of MHA. It covers the appointment of individuals to permanent, temporary, fixed term, apprenticeship, secondment, and internal opportunities. It applies to all stages of recruitment, including workforce planning, advertising, candidate attraction, application management, shortlisting, assessment, interviews, offers of employment, pre-employment checks, induction, onboarding, and probation. It applies to all employees, managers, board members, recruitment panel members, HR representatives and any external organisations or individuals engaged to support recruitment activities on MHA's behalf.

6. RECRUITMENT PRINCIPLES

Recruitment decisions will be based on merit, objective assessment and role-related criteria as set out in the job description and person specification. To achieve this, equality and diversity practices will be integrated into every stage of the recruitment and selection process. MHA will promote equality, inclusion, accessibility, candidate experience, and transparency throughout the process.

7. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

7.1 MHA is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion throughout the recruitment, selection and onboarding process. Recruitment decisions will be based solely on the skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications, behaviours, and potential required for the role, as set out in the job description and person specification. MHA will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and will not unlawfully discriminate against applicants on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

7.2 MHA aims to attract candidates from the widest possible pool of talent by ensuring recruitment practices are fair, inclusive, and accessible. Reasonable adjustments will be offered throughout the recruitment process, and recruitment arrangements will be reviewed regularly to identify and remove unnecessary barriers to employment. Vacancy advertisements, recruitment materials, and assessment methods will be designed to encourage applications from a diverse range of candidates and to support informed and equitable participation in the recruitment process.

7.3 Equality, diversity, and inclusion principles will be embedded at every stage of recruitment and selection. Individuals involved in recruitment activities will be expected to act fairly, objectively, and consistently and should receive appropriate training or guidance on equality legislation, inclusive recruitment practices, unconscious bias, and accessibility. MHA recognises that a diverse workforce brings a broader range of perspectives, skills, and experiences, which can strengthen decision-making, enhance service delivery and better reflect the communities it serves.

8. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & RECRUITMENT TECHNOLOGY

8.1 AI and recruitment technology may be used to support the following,

- Drafting recruitment materials, candidate correspondence, and assessment support.
- Support interview scheduling and administrative tasks.

8.2 AI must not make recruitment decisions without human oversight. Recruitment panels will remain responsible for all decisions. MHA will assess the risks of bias, discrimination, transparency, and privacy when using AI enabled tools and inform candidates where appropriate. AI generated outputs must be reviewed by an appropriately trained individual before being relied upon as part of the recruitment process.

8.3 Candidates may use AI tools to support application preparation. However, assessment activities should enable MHA to evaluate an individual's own skills, knowledge, experience, and suitability for the role.

9. RECRUITMENT GOVERNANCE

Roles and responsibilities for approval, assessment, decision making, and compliance are as follows.

Roles	Responsibility
Board	Approval of senior appointments/new roles
CEO	Overall compliance with policy, delegated authority for replacing roles
Line Manager	Delegated authority for replacing roles
HR	Administration, advise and compliance with the policy
Recruitment Panel	Delegated authority to appoint

10. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING

As part of MHA's recruitment process, equal opportunities monitoring will be undertaken from any completed equal opportunities forms and reported. MHA will analyse the report to inform future recruitment.

11. DATA PROTECTION/RETENTION

11.1 Candidate information will be processed lawfully, fairly, and securely. Candidates will be entitled to access any notes taken during the recruitment process, presuming that they contain personal data which will relate to them. If any candidate asks for access to this information, their enquiry should be directed to HR.

11.2 All recruitment documentation associated with the vacancy, will be stored confidentially for a period of six months. After this time, all documents will be confidentially shredded.

11.3 The successful candidate's recruitment documentation and all associated paperwork will be made into a personnel file and retained in line with our GDPR Policy.

11.4 Special consideration will be given to storing the results of any criminal record check or health questionnaire/medical report. MHA will make a record of all checks and whether the result was or was not satisfactory. The original will then be promptly destroyed. The record of the results will then then be stored in accordance with our GDPR Policy. There may be exceptional circumstances where this information should be kept if it is clearly related to the ongoing employment relationship.

MHA's Employee Privacy Notice outlines how we will process your personal data.

12. APPOINTMENT, INDUCTION & PROBATION

New employees appointed to a role within MHA will receive a structured induction programme, essential training, regular support and be subject to a probationary period. During the probationary period, the employee will be

supported in adjusting to their new role and understanding the organisations expectations. This will include,

- An induction programme
- Regular review meetings with their line manager
- Clear objectives to be achieved
- Relevant training

13. EXIT INTERVIEWS

Employees who have resigned from their post will be invited to attend an exit Interview prior to their termination date. They will be carried out by the Deputy CEO or, in her absence, a manager who is not the line manager of the departing employee. The purpose of the exit interview is to allow MHA to gain further information about the employee's reason for leaving. It also provides additional information in relation to,

- The employee's perception of MHA in relation to its employment practices.
- Management stye and treatment perceived by employees as being unsatisfactory or unfair.
- Identifying reasons for turnover and improvements MHA can make in the future.
- Whether there are any learning points or improvements the organisation can make on the working environment and culture.

14. EMPLOYEES LEAVING OR FORMER EMPLOYEE REFERENCE REQUEST

It is company policy that MHA will only provide a factual reference for employees who are leaving or former employees when requested. This will confirm the employees' name, job title, start, and end date of employment. This should not be seen as implying any comment about the employee or their suitability for employment with another company. All reference requests will be approved by the CEO.

15. POLICY MONITORING & REVIEW

The Recruitment & Selection Policy will be reviewed by the Governance Sub-Committee every 5 years or in line with EVH updates, or as otherwise deemed necessary.

Appendix 1 – Recruitment Procedure

1. Recruitment Procedure

This procedure forms an appendix to the Recruitment and Selection Policy and provides guidance on the process, from identifying a vacancy through to an employee joining the organisation. It is designed to support fair, transparent, and consistent recruitment practices in our organisation.

2. Identifying the Need to Recruit

2.1 When either a job becomes vacant or a new job is created, there is an opportunity to fully consider what MHA requires. The following questions should be considered:

- Is there a requirement for this post to be filled?
- What would be the adverse effect/s of not filling the post?
- If the post is to be filled, should this be on a like for like basis or are there alternative considerations?
- Does this vacancy provide an opportunity to look at the wider team roles?
- Have all reasonable alternatives been considered

2.2 Approval will be authorised in line with MHA's delegated authority noted below and reported to the Board.

POST	DELEGATED AUTHORITY
CEO	Board and appropriate recruitment advisors
Managers & Directors (Grade 9 & 10)	Board & CEO
(Note - when MHA are recruiting senior leadership roles reference will be made to the Senior Managers Recruitment Information Note which provides practical guidance on identifying senior management function roles, recruitment requirements, the use of declaration forms, handling positive declarations, potential disqualification issues, and data protection considerations)	
Grade 8 & below (Senior Officer – Trainee)	CEO will delegate

2.3 The procedure below will be followed prior to the recruitment and selection process taking place:

- A job description and person specification will be developed for the role detailing the duties, skills, knowledge, and experience required. If a current job description and person specification exist, these will be reviewed by the line manager to ensure it accurately reflects the role.
- If this is a new role or you deem an existing role to have significantly changed, job evaluation may be carried out to determine the correct salary/grade for the

role. The organisation may seek to engage specialists carry out this work prior to the recruitment process taking place.

- A recruitment panel will be identified and have delegated authority to make an appointment to the post.
- A reasonable timescale for the entire recruitment and selection process should be agreed by the recruitment panel. This will take account of selection checks and notice period for the successful candidate.
- All paperwork required during the recruitment and selection process – the job advert, application paperwork, shortlisting, and interview paperwork will be agreed by the recruitment panel.
- The same people should be involved throughout unless a conflict of interest arises at any point during the process. In this circumstance, the recruitment panel will discuss if it is appropriate for an alternative individual to join the recruitment panel.
- Depending on the seniority of the post, the recruitment panel may seek advice from recruitment advisors, prior to progressing a recruitment and selection process if deemed necessary.
- The recruitment panel will identify the most suitable individual to support with the administration of the process.

3. The Recruitment Panel

3.1 The above will be established for every recruitment exercise and will normally consist of a minimum of three members. The composition of the panel should reflect the nature, seniority and responsibilities of the post and should include at least one member with knowledge, skills, or experience relevant to the role being recruited.

3.2 All panel members must undertake recruitment and selection training and receive appropriate guidance on equality, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, unconscious bias, and relevant employment legislation. Panel members are expected to conduct themselves professionally, always maintain confidentiality and base all decisions solely on evidence provided through the recruitment and assessment process.

3.3 Prior to commencing the process, panel members must declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. Where a conflict exists, the individual may be required to withdraw from all or part of the recruitment process. All recruitment records, assessments and decisions must be documented and retained in accordance with the organisation's data retention arrangements.

3.4 The recruitment panel is collectively responsible for ensuring that recruitment processes are fair, transparent, objective and applied consistently. Decisions must be based on the requirements of the job description and person specification, and the rationale for shortlisting and appointment decisions must be clearly recorded.

3.5 MHA recognises that the Board will require support when recruiting for the CEO and they will seek support from an independent organisation prior to

commencing the recruitment and selection process. The Board will decide who will be involved in the process along with the Chair.

4. Candidate Experience

MHA is committed to providing a positive, professional, and respectful candidate experience throughout every stage of the recruitment and selection process. All candidates will be treated fairly, with courtesy and dignity, regardless of the outcome of their application. Recruitment processes will be communicated clearly, including timescales, assessment methods and expectations, and candidates will be kept informed of progress wherever possible. MHA will seek to ensure that recruitment arrangements are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to individual needs, including the provision of reasonable adjustments where required. Feedback will be offered in line with MHA procedures, and candidate feedback may be gathered and reviewed to support continuous improvement of recruitment practices. MHA recognises that every interaction with candidates contributes to its reputation as an employer and is committed to delivering a transparent, supportive, and positive experience for all applicants

5. Attracting Candidates

MHA understands the importance of attracting suitable candidates through the most appropriate and cost-effective means. The recruitment panel should discuss the best internal and external advertising methods in line with the agreed advertising budget. The knowledge and skills required for the job should ensure suitable candidates are attracted to apply for the job and the advert should outline the main details of the post (e.g. job title, salary, hours worked, closing date etc).

6. Advertising - Permanent Recruitment

MHA will advertise all permanent posts via a variety of methods:

- Internal advert – this will be in conjunction with another advertising method.
- Online recruitment platforms and professional networking platforms demonstrating our commitment to Equal Opportunities.
- Sector specific websites.
- MHA's website and social media platforms.

MHA will also consider how vacancies are promoted to underrepresented groups.

All candidates will receive an application pack that will include the following:

- An application form
- Equal opportunities monitoring form
- Job description and person specification
- Any other relevant information deemed necessary for the post e.g., summary statement of terms and conditions of employment, relevant information about MHA which cannot otherwise be accessed via our website and is relevant to the role.

An exception to this, will be in cases of restructuring or redundancy where it may be necessary to appoint candidates into vacant posts as alternatives to

redundancy rather than advertising the vacant posts. If this situation arises, MHA will seek HR advice on the process.

6a Advertising - Temporary Recruitment

Short-term appointments of less than one year (e.g., maternity leave cover), may be advertised internally and filled by a current employee where appropriate to do so, or by candidates engaged from suitable employment agencies. Temporary posts more than one year will be advertised internally and externally simultaneously.

6b Advertising - Internal Recruitment

All existing staff will be notified of permanent and long-term temporary vacancies. MHA will ensure that those employees on sick leave or any type of other leave are notified and will be eligible to apply for any post advertised. For very short-term posts of a few weeks, internal advertising will not normally take place as line managers have discretion to seek a temporary candidate from an employment agency if there is no suitable internal candidate identified.

6c Modern Apprenticeships

Candidates for modern apprenticeships will also be required to submit application documents, which will be subjected to fair shortlisting procedures. Successful shortlisted individuals will be invited to attend an interview, and the most suitable individual/s will be selected.

7. Shortlisting

7.1 Following the closing date, only then should shortlisting take place by the recruitment panel. At least one panel member must possess skills, experience or knowledge most closely related to the post. The individual responsible for the administration of the process will number all applications, remove all personal and equal opportunities information making applications unidentifiable before passing all applications to the recruitment panel. This will reduce the risk of unconscious bias and support objective assessment.
(Note – this procedure will also apply when advertising is via CV's).

7.2 Each panel member must complete the shortlisting assessment form independently in relation to each candidate. If a panel member can identify a candidate via the information contained in the application form, resulting in a conflict of interest, they should declare this to the other members of the recruitment panel. That recruitment panel member should exclude themselves from the panel if the candidate is to be shortlisted. This decision will be made by the panel before progressing to the next stage and where possible, another person will be appointed to the recruitment panel.

7.3 Essential criteria will be applied in the first instance to shortlist candidates and those who do not match all the essential criteria will not be called to interview. Candidates who do not possess all the desirable criteria may still be called to interview. However, desirable criteria will only be applied, where there has been

a large response to the advert, to reduce fairly the number of candidates called for interview.

7.4 The recruitment panel will meet collectively after completing their own shortlist and then decide on the final shortlist of candidates for interview. The recruitment panel will record their collective reasons for those candidates who have not been shortlisted.

7.5 Those candidates shortlisted will be invited to interview. MHA will also contact candidates not shortlisted to advise that their application will not progress to the next stage of the process. Those candidates not shortlisted for interview have the right to request feedback on their application and the reason/s for not being shortlisted.
Any requested or appropriate, information which has been provided by MHA to a candidate will be made available to all other candidates invited to interview.

8. Reasonable Adjustments

MHA is committed to ensuring that disabled candidates and those with other relevant needs are not disadvantaged during the recruitment and selection process. Candidates will be invited to inform MHA of any reasonable adjustments required to participate fully in any stage of the process, including the application, assessment, and interview stages. Requests will be considered sensitively and on an individual basis, and every reasonable effort will be made to provide appropriate support to enable candidates to demonstrate their suitability for the role. This may include adjustments to communication methods, assessment arrangements, interview formats, timings, or access requirements.

9. Skills Assessment

As part of the process, MHA may ask candidates to carry out a skills assessment. This is not applicable for every role, but the recruitment panel will decide what is necessary to determine suitability for the role. This may take the form of a practical exercise, management test, or presentation to the recruitment panel. Where this is required, candidates will be informed in advance of their interview to allow suitable time to prepare, as necessary.

10. Interview

10.1 All shortlisted candidates will be offered an interview, which are normally held face to face. The interview process will consider the following:

- Each candidate will be asked the same questions, based on the job description and person specification and in the same order by members of the recruitment panel.
- If appropriate candidates will carry out a suitable skills test and/or presentation topic.
- Typically, interviews will be 30-60 minutes duration depending on the nature of the post.

- Each recruitment panel member will complete an interview assessment form for each candidate, recording brief notes to assist with panel deliberations upon the conclusion of the interviews.

10.2 The recruitment panel will decide which panel member will Chair the interviews on the day. The Chair of the recruitment panel will be responsible for:
- Introducing the panel members to candidates.
- Explaining the format of the day, ensuring timings are adhered to.
- Informing candidates about when they should expect to be contacted about the outcome of their interview.
- Completing an overall assessment form combining all panel member scores for each candidate interviewed.
- Ensuring panel members state and document justifiable reasons for the rejection of each unsuccessful candidate.
- All interview paperwork being accurately completed.

10.3 Upon conclusion of the interviews, the recruitment panel will score each candidate and discuss them in turn to identify if they have an appointable candidate. Where candidates are judged to be equal, they may be called back for a second interview.

10.4 Appointment decisions will be based solely on merit and objective evidence gathered throughout the recruitment process. Personal relationships, assumptions, stereotypes, or factors unrelated to the requirements of the role will not influence recruitment decisions.

11. Job Offer

11.1 Once the recruitment panel has decided, a conditional offer will be issued to the successful candidate subject to the following terms:
- Receipt of two satisfactory references.
- Original relevant qualifications stated on the candidate's application form being verified.
- Proof of eligibility to work in the UK being provided.
- A satisfactory PVG membership/Disclosure Scotland check where appropriate.

11.2 Appointment will normally be made at the bottom of the salary scale; otherwise, an appointment will be made on a suitable salary within the scale paying consideration to a candidate's skills, experience, and current job role. The initial offer can be verbal and followed up in writing. The terms of a written contract of employment will be confirmed and issued noting that the conditions must be satisfied before confirmation of the job offer can be issued.

11.3 If the job offer is declined, the recruitment panel should indicate if the second highest scoring candidate was suitable and may be offered the post subsequently. If there is not a suitable candidate, the recruitment process should be revised, and a rerun of the whole recruitment process should be considered.

11.4 Once the job offer has been accepted, the interview outcome should be issued to unsuccessful candidates. MHA will inform unsuccessful candidates of the

outcome of the interview as quickly as possible and within a few days of the interview having taken place.

12. Feedback

The recruitment panel will record their collective reasons for unsuccessful candidates and agree the feedback at the end of the interview process. All candidates will be advised of the outcome of their interviews by telephone and/or email and constructive feedback on their interview can also be made available to them. Feedback will be evidence based, objective and relate to the requirements of the role and assessment criteria.

13. Selection Checks -References

MHA will carry out reference checks for the successful candidate only once,

- the conditional verbal offer has been made
- The candidate has accepted the offer and confirmed the references can be requested

Two references will be required, one from the candidate's current employer and another from a previous employer. These will be requested in writing along with a copy of the job description. This will provide the referees with the knowledge and skills required for the post to allow them to give an informed opinion about the preferred candidate. All references will be checked on return to ensure employment dates match those stated on the application form of the preferred candidate and there is no information which would make the reference unsatisfactory.

13.1 Selection Checks - Right to Work in the UK

MHA has a responsibility to prevent illegal working therefore we will carry out a right to work check before confirming employment for the successful candidate. This will ensure the candidate is not disqualified from carrying out the work in question by reason of their immigration status. The successful candidate will be informed what is required to satisfy this check.

13.2 Selection Checks - Disclosure Scotland Criminal Records Checks

The successful candidate will be asked to complete a criminal convictions declaration form. Depending on the nature of the role, they may also be asked to undergo a PVG/Disclosure Check. If following these checks, information arises which the candidate has not disclosed or raises concern with the organisation, we will discuss this with the candidate prior to a decision being made about whether the selection check has been satisfied.

14. Interview Expenses

Reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed to candidates for non-local journeys. Any reasonable interview travel expenses paid will be in accordance with MHA's Expenses Policy.

15. Induction

Our staff will welcome a new staff member by providing initial induction training in MHA, which will be organised by the line manager in advance of the successful candidate taking up post. This will help to settle the new staff member, convey our aims, objectives, policies, and procedures thereby encouraging the individual to make a valuable contribution to our work. Equality, diversity, and inclusion expectations

16. Probation

New employees will complete a probationary period in line with MHA's Probationary Policy. Support arrangements will be put in place for current employees who are successfully recruitment for a new role/promoted within MHA. During the probationary period, the employee will be supported in adjusting to their new role and understanding MHAs expectations. It is the line manager's responsibility to manage the process which should include,

- Objective setting
- Regular review meetings in line with the organisation's Probationary Policy
- Identification of development needs
- Work with the employees to identify suitable training opportunities
- Appropriate support and supervision

17. Complaints Recruitment & Selection Process

If a complaint is received about any stage, it should be resolved promptly in the first instance and verbally where appropriate to do so. If the complainant wishes to further pursue the matter, they should be advised to put the complaint in writing and address it to the CEO who will investigate the matter and further liaise with the complainant.

18. Data Protection & Record Retention

18.1 MHA will process all candidate information in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and its own data protection policies. Personal data collected during the recruitment and selection process will only be used for legitimate recruitment purposes, kept secure and accessed only by those involved in the recruitment process. Recruitment records will be retained and securely disposed of in line with MHA's retention schedule, with documentation relating to successful candidates retained on the employee's personnel file in accordance with MHA's data retention arrangements.

18.2 Recruitment panel members must handle all recruitment documentation confidentially and not retain personal copies of candidate information following the conclusion of the recruitment process. MHA will maintain appropriate records of recruitment decisions to demonstrate that recruitment processes have been conducted fairly, objectively and transparently, and to evidence compliance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements.