



London Ambulance Service **NHS**  
NHS Trust

## **Policy and Procedure on Employment History and Reference Checks**

## DOCUMENT PROFILE and CONTROL.

**Purpose of the document:** To set out the LAS Policy and Procedure regarding employment references.

**Sponsor Department:** Workforce

**Author/Reviewer:** Senior HR Manager. To be reviewed by May 2018.

**Document Status:** Final

<b>Amendment History</b>			
Date	*Version	Author/Contributor	Amendment Details
29/05/15	2.1	IG Manager	Document Profile and Control update and formatting
06/05/15	1.4	Senior HR Manager	Update of document in line with NHS Employers Employment history and reference checks document.
24/05/12	1.3	IG Manager	Renumbering S.6 & Doc Profile & control update
24/05/12	1.2	Senior HR Manager (South)	Paragraph 6.2.1 amended in line with NHS standard guidance.
23/12/09	1.1	Senior HR Manager (South)	reformatted
10/09	1.0	Senior HR Manager (South)	Published
29/09/09	0.2	Senior HR Manager (South)	second draft
22/07/09	0.1	Senior HR Manager (South)	First draft

**\*Version Control Note:** All documents in development are indicated by minor versions i.e. 0.1; 0.2 etc. The first version of a document to be approved for release is given major version 1.0. Upon review the first version of a revised document is given the designation 1.1, the second 1.2 etc. until the revised version is approved, whereupon it becomes version 2.0. The system continues in numerical order each time a document is reviewed and approved.

<b>For Approval By:</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>Version</b>
SMT	27/05/15	2.0
SMG	26/10/09	1.0
<b>Ratified by Trust Board (If appropriate):</b>		

<b>Published on:</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Dept</b>
The Pulse (v2.1)	29/05/15	Digital Media Officer	Comms
LAS Website (v2.1)	29/05/15	Digital Media Officer	Comms
The Pulse (v1.3)	28/05/12	Governance Co-ordinator	G&C
LAS Website (v1.3)	28/5/12	Governance Co-ordinator	G&C
The Pulse	15/06/10	Records Manager	GCT
LAS Website	15/06/10	Records Manager	GCT
<b>Announced on:</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Dept</b>
The RIB	09/06/15	IG Manager	G&A
The RIB	05/10	Senior HR Manager (South)	HR

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<b>EqlA completed on</b>	<b>By</b>
23/10/09	Senior HR Manager (South).
<b>Staffside reviewed on</b>	<b>By</b>
9/10/09	Joint secretaries

<b>Links to Related documents or references providing additional information</b>		
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Version</b>
	NHS guidance on employee history and reference checks (July 2013)	
HR005	Recruitment and Selection Policy	

Document Status: This is a controlled record as are the document(s) to which it relates. Whilst all or any part of it may be printed, the electronic version maintained in P&P-File remains the controlled master copy. Any printed copies are not controlled nor substantive.

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Trust has a duty of care to patients and staff to ensure that all reasonable checks are undertaken to identify any reason that, if known, would result in an individual not being employed or appointed to undertake any activity on its behalf.
- 1.2 The primary purpose of an employment history and reference check is to obtain information about an applicant's employment and/or training history in order to ascertain whether or not they are suitable for a particular position.
- 1.3 The secondary purpose is to cross-reference information gained through the reference with that provided by the applicant as part of their application and interview.
- 1.4 The Trust will investigate any gaps or discrepancies in employment or training history (e.g. via by seeking further references) in order that it can make an informed view as to the probity of the individual.
- 1.5 This document sets out the LAS standards when:
  - Seeking references regarding an applicant from other employers;
  - Providing references within the LAS regarding current employees;
  - Providing references to other employers relating to current or past LAS employees.
- 1.6 The Policy reflects the requirements of the Employment history and reference checks document (NHS Employers, July 2013).

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This document addresses both references requested from outside the LAS in regards to potential employees as well as reference requests to the LAS concerning any current or past employee.

## **3. Objective**

- 3.1 To set out the expected standards when requesting references from external sources, seeking and providing references internally within the LAS, and responding to reference requests from external sources.

## **4. Responsibilities**

- 4.1 For applicants from outside the LAS it is the Recruitment Department in liaison with the relevant manager who will carry out the necessary reference checks. For internal applications where references are

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required the manager will review references in liaison with Recruitment / HR as necessary.

4.2 All requests for references from outside the organisation regarding current or past LAS employees must be made and responded to by the relevant HR manager.

4.3 Managers are responsible for forwarding all reference requests to their HR Manager.

## **5. Legal**

5.1 All references will be sought and provided in line with the Trust's Recruitment and Selection Policy. All references will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

5.2 All appointments will be made in line with the NHS Employment Check Standards and will include consideration of information from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where appropriate.

## **6. Procedure**

6.1 The checks serve two purposes for the Trust. They allow us to an applicant's employment and/or training history in order to ascertain whether or not they are suitable for a particular position and it also allows us to cross reference and therefore verify the information that the applicant has put on his or her application and/or has set out in interview.

6.2 Employment history and reference checks should be obtained when an individual is being considered for employment/work (paid or unpaid i.e. volunteer work) and should only be used to inform a recruitment decision. Information should not be used for the purpose of short-listing or selection.

6.3 It is acceptable to obtain references prior to interview for senior appointments such as medical consultants or board directors. All applicants must be notified in writing in such circumstances.

## **7 Provisional offers**

7.1 Applicants will be informed that any confirmed offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory employment checks being both received and verified.

7.2 It will also be made clear to applicants that any offer of appointment may be withdrawn (or if they are appointed their employment will be terminated) if it becomes apparent that the he or she has knowingly withheld information or provided false and/or misleading information.

7.3 The Trust will always seek the applicant's permission to obtain a reference from their current employer to ensure that the individual has informed their current employer of their intention to leave.

8 Minimum requirements

8.1 All applicants will be required to provide their full employment and/or training history, including an explanation of any gaps between periods of employment or training when completing the application form.

8.2 A minimum of two references will be sought from different sources and this will include factual information from the applicant's HR department(s). As a minimum the following information will be sought:

- Where the applicant has been employed/studied;
- Dates employed/studied
- Position held/course undertaken;
- Recent or on-going disciplinary action or referrals;
- The applicant's absence record.

8.3 The Trust will seek to validate a minimum of three years continuous employment and/or training including details of any gaps in service.

8.4 Two references will be sought in every case. The need to seek any further references will depend on how many episodes of employment/training the applicant may have had in the last three years prior to making their application. Where an individual has been with one employer for three years or more, one confirmation of employment/training from that employer is sufficient, provided that all requested details have been confirmed. Where an applicant has changed employment frequently within the last three years, a sufficient number of confirmations must be obtained to cover the continuous three years history.

9 Other types of confirmation

9.1 Depending on the individual's circumstances, other types of references may also be required:

9.2 Applicant has not worked or been in full time education within the last three years preceding the application.

9.3 In such cases, in addition to asking for a personal statement from the applicant the Trust will request two personal references from persons of some standing in their community who have known the applicant for at least three years. Persons of some standing may include a GP, lawyer, MP or minister of religion, etc.). The personal reference should clearly state the referee's name, job title, company, address, and length of time the individual has been known to them.

9.4 Been in full-time education in the last three years.

- 9.5 In this case, a reference should be obtained from the relevant school, college or university.
- 9.6 Served in the Armed Forces or Civil Service during the previous three years.
- 9.7 In this case, a reference should be obtained from the relevant service or department
- 9.8 The applicant has been self-employed.
- 9.9 Evidence should be obtained (for example, from HM Revenue & Customs, bankers, accountants, solicitors, client references etc) to confirm dates of employment, and any other information such as confirmation that the individual's business was properly conducted and the applicant's involvement in the business was terminated satisfactorily. In addition, it is recommended that one personal reference from a person of some standing in their community should also be sought.
- 9.10 Overseas employment or training  
The Trust will check any significant periods of time spent overseas i.e. a continuous period of three months or more.
- 9.11 The following documentation may be requested to seek assurance regarding time spent overseas:
- proof of overseas residency, such as a document from a landlord;
  - overseas employer references or academic references/certificates;
  - proof of itinerary;
  - confirmation of travel from UK departments and agencies overseas for example, FCO missions, British Council, Non-Government organisations and agencies.
- 9.12 Confirmation of dates will be cross-referenced with passports where possible), work permits and other documentation confirming travel and immigration status, or by contacting embassies and consulates where appropriate.
- 9.13 UK representatives for overseas countries can be found on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website, [www.gov.uk/foreign-commonwealth-office](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-commonwealth-office)
- 9.14 Every effort will be made to obtain confirmation from overseas employers or academic institutions to ensure that the an individual is suitable. The LAS will ensure that it independently confirms the details of the applicant's previous employer and will check confirmation details in the same way as they would check details in the UK.

10 Internal applicants

- 10.1 Where an individual applies for a new position within the LAS every effort should be made to ensure any risk is minimised. Recruiting managers should contact the Human Resources department to verify that all details recorded on ESR or other personnel management system are up to date, and that there is no relevant information on the individual's personnel record which will need to be considered before any appointment is made.
- 10.2 Should the recruiting manager wish to seek additional information about the individual's suitability for the new role, information should be obtained from individual's line manager.

11 Verification of references

Confirmation of employment and/or training must be received in writing, either via post, email, fax, or using the organisations preferred recruitment software (such as NHS Jobs or Health Jobs UK).

- 11.1 If the LAS receives electronic confirmation then it must come from a company email address (private email addresses such as Yahoo, Hotmail etc. are not acceptable). All references must include the referee's name, job title, and mainline switchboard number.
- 11.2 In cases where there are concerns that both the referee and the organisation are bona fide then the LAS will carry out the necessary checks such as using the internet or business directories. Advice from the Trust's Counter Fraud Service may also be sought.
- 11.3 All information obtained in the reference with the information provided by the applicant as part of their application will be checked. If any discrepancy is found, it will be sensitively raised with the applicant. Only where the Trust is fully satisfied with the explanation given, will any applicant be appointed.
- 11.4 The recruitment of any individual will be terminated should it be proven that there has been intent to mislead by providing false or inaccurate information.
- 11.5 In exceptional circumstances, where checks reveal substantial misdirection then concerns will be reported to NHS Protect:  
<http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Protect.aspx>

12 LAS providing references for current or previous employees

- 12.1 All responses to reference requests made by external sources to the Trust whether from other employers, agencies or another source must be carried out by the relevant HR manager before being sent to the requesting organisation. Any reference requests from outside the Trust should therefore be re-directed to HR. The HR Manager may



consult with the individual's line manager when completing the reference. A copy of any reference will be placed on the individual's personnel file.

13 Professional registration and qualification checks

13.1 Qualification checks should be carried out in line with the NHS Employers' Professional registration and qualification checks at: <http://www.nhsemployers.org/>

14 Maintenance of records

14.1 The Trust will hold and maintain accurate factual information relating to an employee's appointment using ESR where available, or other relevant personnel management system.

14.2 Any information obtained should be retained for the minimum periods outlined within with the Department of Health's guidance Management of Records Code of Practice at: [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/RecordsManagementCodeofPractice](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/RecordsManagementCodeofPractice)

15 Further information

16.1 Further more detailed advice is available on the Employment history and reference checks document at: <http://www.nhsemployers.org/>

16.2 Guidance on the recruitment of individuals to the Trust is included in the Trust's Recruitment and Selection Policy which can be accessed at <http://thepulse/managing/1048159528.html>

<b>IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</b>				
<b>Intended Audience</b>	For all LAS staff			
<b>Dissemination</b>	Available to all staff on the Pulse			
<b>Communications</b>	Revised Procedure to be announced in the RIB and a link provided to the document			
<b>Training</b>	Briefing provided to relevant HR staff			
<b>Monitoring:</b>				
<b>Aspect to be monitored</b>	<b>Frequency of monitoring AND Tool used</b>	<b>Individual/ team responsible for carrying out monitoring AND Committee/ group where results are reported</b>	<b>Committee/ group responsible for monitoring outcomes/ recommendations</b>	<b>How learning will take place</b>
Agency staff bookings against Policy requirements.	Manual check of records.	To be monitored by management within Recruitment on an ad hoc basis. Also subject to audit.	Workforce Committee.	Feedback to individual Recruitment Department staff/ Recruitment Department management as necessary.