

Applying for a job with
West Sussex Mind

Notes and Information for Candidates

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Working For Us

Thank you for your interest in joining West Sussex Mind.

We know that applying for a new role takes time and effort, and we genuinely appreciate your interest in becoming a part of our team.

At West Sussex Mind, we place a very high value on the work of our staff and volunteers as we depend heavily on their skills and dedication to provide excellent services. Working with us requires a real understanding and appreciation of our beliefs and values and the ability to apply them in day-to-day work.

Whether supporting someone experiencing mental health challenges, working alongside colleagues, or building partnerships within our communities, we strive to create an environment where people feel valued, respected and empowered.

These guidance notes are designed to help you understand our recruitment process and support you in submitting an application that reflects who you are, what you can bring, and why you would like to join our team.

Who We Are

West Sussex Mind is an independent local mental health charity, affiliated to Mind, working to ensure no one has to face a mental health problem alone.

Every day, our teams work alongside people across West Sussex, providing support, information and opportunities that help individuals improve their wellbeing and live fulfilling lives.

We are proud of the compassionate, supportive and inclusive culture we have created and recognise that our people are our greatest strength.

We believe that diversity, different perspectives, and lived experiences make us stronger and help us better support the communities we serve.

We are committed to fair and inclusive recruitment. We therefore welcome applications from people of all backgrounds, communities and identities, including people with lived experience of mental health challenges.

Staff Wellbeing and Benefits

We want West Sussex Mind to be a place where people feel supported, valued and able to grow. Alongside meaningful work, we are committed to supporting employee

wellbeing through learning, development and a positive workplace culture. Here are some of our benefits:

Payments and Benefits

- A competitive salary
- 6% Employers pension contribution
- Generous annual leave entitlement starting at 25 days (pro-rata for part-time staff)
- Employee wellbeing support including access to an Employee Assistance Programme
- Flexible and hybrid working opportunities

Training and Development

- A commitment to personal and professional development
- A culture that encourages initiative and creativity
- Comprehensive induction
- Mandatory training programme
- Additional training relevant to role
- Supportive management and supervision

Our Recruitment Process

Stage 1: Application

Submit your completed application form by the stated closing date on the job advert as late applications received after this will not be considered.

Stage 2: Shortlisting

Applications are assessed against the essential criteria within the job description and person specification. To ensure fairness, only information contained within your application will be considered.

If you have not been shortlisted for interview, you will be informed by email that your application has not been successful.

Stage 3: Interview

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview via email. Interviews are generally in person, but on occasion it may take place online.

Depending on the role, candidates may be asked to undertake a pre-interview task, which could involve reviewing a case study or a presentation.

Details will be provided in the interview invitation.

Stage 4: Conditional Offer and Pre-employment checks

If you are successful, we will make a conditional offer of employment subject to the appropriate pre-employment checks, which can take up to 6 weeks to complete.

If you are not successful, you will be informed by email, and we will give you the option to receive feedback from the panel.

Guidance Notes for completing the application form

Before You Apply

Before completing your application, please ensure you have read:

- The Job Description and Person Specification
- This candidate guidance document
- Any additional recruitment information provided

The **Job Description** sets out the background to the post and the main responsibilities and tasks.

The **Person Specification** lists the skills, experience and any qualifications that we consider essential or desirable for the postholder to have to do the job.

Think about why you are interested in the job, the attributes we are seeking and how your own skills and experience tie in with what the job involves.

Please note that CVs are not accepted.

Completing Your Application Form

The **Application Form** is an important part of the recruitment process and will be used to determine whether you are shortlisted for an interview. These guidelines are here to help you to complete it as well as you possibly can.

When completing your application:

Please do:

- ✓ Complete all sections of the form. If a question is not relevant, or does not apply to you, please put N/A (not applicable)
- ✓ Provide sufficient information for the shortlisting panel to assess your suitability.

- ✓ Be factual and accurate and make sure the information you give is well organised, relevant and concise.
- ✓ Give clear examples demonstrating your experience, skills and achievements.
- ✓ Check your application carefully before submission.
- ✓ Submit your application by the **Closing Date**.

Please do not:

- X Copy and paste your CV into the Supporting Information section.
- X Assume the panel has prior knowledge of your experience.
- X Leave sections incomplete.
- X Submit generic responses that do not relate to the role.

The **Application Form** particularly the Supporting Information section provides all the information that will be used to decide whether you will be invited to an interview.

All information in your application will be treated in confidence and only information relevant to the post will be considered in the selection process.

Supporting Information section

In this section, please demonstrate how your experience meets each of the requirements listed in the Person Specification, and give examples. Include relevant employment, volunteering, education and lived experience where appropriate.

Shortlisting will be based on the details you give of your ability to meet the criteria described for the post. You may wish to list your experience under the same headings as used in the Person Specification.

Remember: Tell us what you want us to know – we will not guess or make assumptions.

Lived Experience

At West Sussex Mind, we recognise the valuable insight that can come from lived experience, either personally or through supporting family members, friends, carers or communities.

Where appropriate and where you feel comfortable doing so, you may wish to include relevant lived experience within your application. Disclosure of personal information is entirely voluntary and will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

We recognise that the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming more common in supporting the job application process, and we are not fully opposed to its use.

However, as an organisation that values inclusion and the importance of every individual's voice, we strongly encourage candidates to write their supporting statements in their own words.

Your supporting statement is an opportunity to share your unique experiences, perspectives and motivations. This helps us to understand who you are, what matters to you, and how your values align with ours.

Applications that are overly generic or do not clearly demonstrate an applicant's own experience are less effective in the shortlisting process.

References

We ask for the names of two referees, one of which should be your current or most recent employer. References from family or friends are not acceptable. References are only contacted at offer stage and with the permission of the successful candidate. Employment is then offered subject to the receipt of satisfactory references.

Further Information

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity are key principles for West Sussex Mind both as an employer and a service provider. We have a responsibility to ensure that our mental health services are accessible to those who need it and that those working or volunteering with us have an environment in which they feel valued, respected and included.

We strive to ensure that anyone who engages with us finds it easy to do so. We want you to feel we support you and treat you fairly, with dignity and respect.

Individuals with different cultures, perspectives and experiences are at the heart of the way West Sussex Mind works. We want to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people, regardless of their background, and make best use of their talents.

We commit to working within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting a culture of respect and dignity and actively challenging discrimination, should it ever arise. We will remove unnecessary barriers for our service users and employees.

Our Anti-Racist Commitment

We are committed to being an actively anti-racist organisation. This means not only challenging racism when it occurs, but taking proactive steps to identify, understand

and dismantle systemic and structural inequalities that impact people from racially minoritised communities. We recognise that racism can be overt or subtle, and we are committed to continuous learning, reflection, and action to ensure our services and workplace are equitable and inclusive.

Safeguarding

West Sussex Mind is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults, children and young people at risk.

As part of this commitment:

- All staff are expected to share responsibility for safeguarding.
- Recruitment practices are designed to promote safer recruitment.
- The majority of roles will require enhanced safeguarding checks.

Further details will be included in the recruitment information for each role.

Data Protection and Privacy

Information provided during the recruitment process will be handled in accordance with UK data protection legislation.

Your information will be used solely for recruitment-related purposes and will only be accessed by individuals involved in the recruitment and selection process.

Criminal Records

Members of staff and volunteers at West Sussex Mind work closely with vulnerable adults. We therefore need to take steps to ensure that the people who use our services are protected from any form of abuse.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar ex-offenders from working with us. This will depend on the offence and the relevance of the offence in relation to the position applied for.

Information For Shortlisted Candidates

Interview Guidance

To help prepare for your interview, we recommend:

- Reading the Job Description and Person Specification again.
- Have a look at our website and familiarising yourself with the work we do.

- Reflecting on examples of your experience and achievements.
- Considering how your values align with ours.
- Preparing questions about the role and organisation.

Interview questions are designed to assess:

- Skills and experience
- Knowledge relevant to the role
- Values and behaviours
- Commitment to mental health and wellbeing
- Understanding of safeguarding where relevant

Reasonable Adjustments

West Sussex Mind is committed to ensuring that all applicants can participate fully in the recruitment process. If you require adjustments at any stage, please let us know. Examples include:

- Additional time during assessments
- Accessible documentation
- Adjustments relating to physical accessibility

All requests will be considered sensitively and confidentially.

Criminal Record Checks and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

West Sussex Mind is committed to the fair treatment of all applicants, including those with criminal convictions.

All posts require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, but having a criminal record will not automatically prevent appointment.

If you are appointed to a staff position you will be asked to provide information to enable us to check any criminal record you may have with the Disclosure and Barring Service - this is made clear in the covering letter sent with these details and on the Application Form.

Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position applied for could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Each disclosure will be assessed fairly and individually, taking account of:

- The nature of the offence
- Relevance to the role
- The circumstances involved
- Time elapsed since the offence

- Evidence of rehabilitation

All disclosure information will be handled sensitively and in accordance with DBS guidance and our Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy & Procedure.

Pre-Employment Checks

All offers of employment are conditional and will include:

- References
- Identity verification and right to work checks
- DBS checks – basic/enhanced dependent on role
- Occupational health assessment

Please note that no Contract of Employment is issued till after all required checks have been completed to the satisfaction of West Sussex Mind.

Eligibility to work in the UK

All offers of employment are subject to evidence of an individual's right to work in the United Kingdom.

Original documentation will be required before employment can commence.

Contact Us

If you have any questions about a vacancy or require support with your application, please contact: **People Team** - people_team@westsussexmind.org

Thank you for considering a career with West Sussex Mind.

Whatever your background, experience or journey to this point, we appreciate the time you've taken to consider joining us.

We look forward to learning more about you and wish you every success with your application.