



The  
**Mulberry  
Bush**

Showing the way in therapeutic care

# **CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK**

The Mulberry Bush Organisation Limited  
Standlake  
Witney  
Oxfordshire  
OX29 7RW

Tel: 01865 300202  
Fax: 01865 300084

[www.mulberrybush.org.uk](http://www.mulberrybush.org.uk)

# Introduction

Very many thanks for applying for a vacancy with The Mulberry Bush.

This Candidate Information Pack is designed to give you sufficient information to allow you to make an informed and thorough application. So, you will find a job description and person specification enclosed for the vacancy. In addition, this document will provide you with a background about The Mulberry Bush and our policies as well as provide you with advice and guidance on completing the application form which forms a part of the pack.

If, of course, you believe that something has been omitted which may prejudice your application in some way, please do not hesitate to call our HR Administrator on 01865 300202 (extension 259) who will be pleased to help you.

## About Us

The Mulberry Bush Organisation is an Oxfordshire-based not for profit charity. Our goal is to improve the life chances and social inclusion of traumatised children and young people and their families which, in turn, will create a long-term benefit to society by reducing social exclusion and its impact on families, schools and communities. We are a therapeutic community.

In order to attain our aims, we provide two separate but connected services:

### **The Mulberry Bush School**

A therapeutic residential school which provides care, treatment and education to severely emotionally troubled children. The School was started on its current site in 1948. Its founder, Barbara Dockar-Drysdale, had looked after children who had been evacuated from London during the wartime blitz.

Barbara Dockar-Drysdale, who dedicated herself, with Dr. Donald Winnicott, to understanding and finding ways of helping such children, is now recognised as a pioneer of therapeutic childcare. Her books *Therapy and Consultation in Childcare* (1968) and *The Provision of Primary Experience* (1990) still influence childcare professionals in this country and abroad.

The model of work with the children remained very similar until the late 1990's working with a large group of up to 36 children. Between then and today, the School, whilst valuing its roots, has changed to focus on working in smaller groups and physically differentiating professional tasks through an extensive redevelopment of the site.

The site now is world class in terms of quality and provision and rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. The Government focus on the integration of children's services has reinforced the value and importance that the school model has been developing since inception.

### **THE LEARNING AND RESEARCH CENTRE. OUTREACH**

Outreach was established to allow us to share our skills and expertise with other organisations seeking to provide outstanding therapeutic services for children and young people.

Our belief is that for children to receive the best care, education and treatment possible the professional staff caring for them require comprehensive professional development and support.

Further information is available on our website which can be found at [www.mulberrybush.org.uk](http://www.mulberrybush.org.uk)

## **WORKING FOR US**

The fact that you have received this information pack means that you are interested in working for The Mulberry Bush. There are many benefits and opportunities available to every member of our team but we also want you to be aware of the challenges that you will have to confront if you are offered a post with us. It is important that you understand our environment now to allow you to decide whether it is right for you.

We have a worldwide reputation for the nature and quality of the therapeutic care, education and treatment we provide. Your skills, knowledge and expertise will be developed and enhanced by being a part of The Mulberry Bush. The work involved will be fulfilling at times but it could also have a severe emotional and physical impact. We do our utmost to help our staff understand and cope with these circumstances. For example, everybody is trained in Team Teach techniques and all staff are highly trained. We promote a reflective culture where all staff seek support from and offer support to their colleagues.

A reality of our environment is that we work with children who can be impulsive and violent, displaying dangerous/anxiety provoking behaviours. At times, therefore, staff have to deal with highly stressful situations where they may get hurt despite the fact that we have the measures and training in place to keep the risk to a minimum.

It is not our intention to discourage you from working with us. We want our children to understand and adopt new behaviours which will allow them to integrate with mainstream society. You have to be confident that you have the commitment, resilience and dedication to contribute to the achievement of this goal.

## **GENERAL CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

The conditions of service outlined below are intended as a guide only. You should clarify the specific conditions of employment for the post for which you are applying.

### **Pay**

Salaries are based upon The Mulberry Bush's pay scales. Your salary will be paid monthly to a Bank or Building Society account and is normally paid on the 28th of each month.

### **Pension – Non-Teaching Staff**

At the start of employment, subject to meeting the qualification criteria, you would be included automatically into our Workplace Pension Scheme which is operated through The People's Pension.

### **Pension – Teaching Staff**

Teaching staff's entitlement to pension is as defined by the regulations set by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

### **Probationary Period**

You must complete successfully a probationary period of six months from the date of joining The Mulberry Bush.

## **Our Policy Statements**

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

To achieve its vision and aims, the Mulberry Bush School has to ensure the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated people who are suited to and fulfilled in the roles they undertake. At the very heart of anybody's suitability for employment with us is that he or she shares the School's total commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Consequently, we have developed professional recruitment policies and practices which provide the necessary measures and controls to enable us to employ a workforce that will fulfil its roles and responsibilities with full regard to this commitment.

The Mulberry Bush School recognises the value of and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. The recruitment and selection of all who work within the School is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. This document provides a good practice framework to ensure a fair and objective process which complies with the principles set down in our Equality and Diversity Policy.

It is our aim to make certain that all candidates are left with a favourable, positive view of the School. So, we will ensure that all applicants are treated courteously and respectfully at all times throughout every recruitment campaign.

Posts within the School are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and, therefore, all applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and have undergone an enhanced DBS with barred list check. The School is committed to ensuring that people who have been convicted are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position. This will depend on the background, nature and circumstances of the offence(s). The School's Recruitment Procedure outlines the considerations that will be taken into account when determining the relevance of a criminal record to the post.

The Disclosure & Barring Service has published a Code of Practice and accompanying explanatory guide. We are committed to ensuring that we meet the requirements of the Disclosure & Barring Service in relation to the processing, handling and security of Disclosure information.

### **SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

The Mulberry Bush Organisation is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as its utmost priority and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

### **SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN**

Everyone working in or for The Mulberry Bush Organisation shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

- providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn and develop in our school setting, and
- identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in our school setting'

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Mulberry Bush Organisation has established a training function whose primary task is to encourage the development of skills and learning within our team in a way that maximises their ability to attain our objectives within the framework of government and organisational policy and guidance.

Members of staff are expected to attain specified qualifications as well as undergo defined training programmes as integral elements of their job roles. The required qualifications/accreditations and training standards are defined in the Training and Health & Safety Policy. It is important to emphasise that where statutory requirements or government policies stipulate that certain qualifications and/or training are required to perform the tasks involved within a job role, then failure to qualify or to attain the desired standards will preclude a member of staff from continuing in that role.

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

The management and staff of The Mulberry Bush Organisation are committed to meeting and, whenever possible, exceeding all of the relevant regulatory and legislative requirements relating to equal opportunities in employment.

We all have a legal and moral responsibility to treat all job applicants, fellow employees, suppliers, visitors and clients reasonably and impartially - regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion, religious belief or age.

Everybody within the Organisation must remember that attitudes, opinions and beliefs will vary considerably from person to person. So, a joke, a comment, an action or a particular point of view which is completely acceptable to you may be repellent to someone else. Therefore, please do your utmost to ensure that you do not offend your work colleagues and that you encourage your workmates to behave in a similar way.

The School is intent on eliminating all discrimination, harassment and bullying from its workplaces. Any unwanted behaviour, whether physical or verbal, which is offensive or humiliating and viewed as unacceptable to the victim will be fully investigated and, where necessary, appropriate disciplinary action taken.

## **RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS**

The Mulberry Bush Organisation undertakes to treat all applicants for vacancies within our school fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against the subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

The School operates a fair recruitment policy which ensures that individuals have the opportunity to disclose any convictions or conviction information in a way that allows a clear risk assessment to be carried out that will determine whether or not the conviction or conviction information is relevant to the position applied for.

When assessing the relevance of any conviction, the selection panel will look at the following information:

- Whether the conviction is relevant to the vacancy
- The seriousness of the offence revealed
- The length of time since the offence took place

- If the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
- If the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offence took place
- How the applicant has moved forward since the offence.

If the conviction is deemed to be relevant then the applicant will be considered to be unsuitable for the vacancy and will be advised accordingly.

# Making Your Application

## INTRODUCTION

All candidates, whether internal or sourced externally, are required to complete the School's application form because it will ensure that key information provided as well as assessments undertaken on all applicants is consistent and fair. Curriculum vitae will not be accepted in place of the application form because relevant details can be omitted which prevents a fair assessment being achieved during the short-listing process.

**It is essential that you complete all relevant sections of the application form in the way requested. A failure to complete any section which applies to you will automatically disqualify you from consideration for the vacancy.**

**Please ensure that you read, understand and follow these guidance notes because we do not want to disqualify you because of a simple omission or oversight.**

## GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

Most elements of the application form are self-explanatory. However, we would like to clarify the following points in each section:

### Personal Details

*Any Other Names Used Previously* – for example, if your name changed when you married or if you have changed your name by deed poll. Please provide all names.

*DfE Registration Number* – this only applies to teachers.

*Are you related to an employee?* – you should also complete this section if you are related to one of our Trustees.

### Driving

We will check your licence and so please provide accurate information.

### Health

You do not have to complete this section if you do not want to do so and it will not affect your application.

### Current/Most Recent Employment

Please include full details of your current employment or, in you are not in work at present, your most recent job role.

### Career History

You must provide below full details of your career history prior to your current or most recent role in reverse chronological order and working back to when you left full-time education. We require comprehensive information on your employment record **as well as** breaks in employment. So, please provide all employment details including the name of your employer, the dates you were employed, your job title and your duties. In addition, please give details of all breaks in employment including the dates along with your activities during these times e.g. travel, raising a family, voluntary work, unemployment, training.

If there is insufficient room on the application form, please provide the details on a separate sheet.

**It is important to highlight that a failure to include full details of all employment and breaks could result in your application being rejected.**

### **Training and Education**

You should list any qualifications you have attained including the dates and college, school or awarding authority. You should also provide details of any training you have undertaken which is relevant to your application for employment with The Mulberry Bush Organisation.

### **Professional Qualifications**

If you are professionally qualified, please provide the details here.

### **Supporting Statement**

Please give careful thought to this section before completing it because this is your opportunity to state why you feel that you have the skills, experience, background, attitudes and/or knowledge to be a success in the role for which you are applying.

### **References**

We will check the references of all candidates who are invited for interview and the references will be requested prior to any interview. You must provide details of referees in accordance with the instructions given on the application form. In the event that a candidate is shortlisted, any matters or issues arising from the references provided will be discussed at interview.

### **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act**

As stated on the application form, the vacancy for which you are applying is exempt under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and so all convictions, cautions, bind-overs as well as any pending prosecutions must be declared on the application form. If you do have to make such a declaration, you will not be excluded automatically from consideration.

### **Disqualification from Caring for Children Regulations 1991**

This section must be completed.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service**

This section must be completed.

### **Data Protection Act**

You have the choice of whether or not you wish to give your consent.

### **Declaration**

Please ensure that you read the Declaration section in its entirety then please check all of the information you have given in the application form to ensure that it is accurate and complete. When you are satisfied that everything is correct, please sign the declaration.

## **PRE-EMPLOYMENT HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE**

We have brought to your attention already that there are times when members of our team have to deal with highly stressful situations where they may get hurt. One of the measures we have in place to keep the risk to a minimum is to ensure that our employees possess the physical, emotional and mental health to deal with the circumstances as they arise. This is why we ask applicants to complete the health questionnaire as well as the health section in the application form. It is important to emphasise that there is no obligation on you to do so and it will not prejudice your application.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MONITORING QUESTIONNAIRE**

It would be greatly appreciated if you could complete and return this questionnaire, the reasons for which are provided in the accompanying 'Questions and Answers' document. However, there is no obligation on you to do so and it will not prejudice your application for employment in any way.

# The Selection Process

Once you submit your application form to The Mulberry Bush Organisation, selection will follow this process.

## **PRE-INTERVIEW SELECTION**

Once applications are received for a vacancy, selection for interview will be conducted using each stage of the following process in the order specified. There will be no deviation from this process.

### **Reviewing Applications and Short-listing**

When applications are received for a vacancy, all application forms are reviewed to ensure:

- that they are fully and properly completed;
- that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies;
- that any incomplete applications are refused and returned to the candidate concerned for completion;
- that any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment are identified and noted.

A decision is then made on who to select for interview by assessing all candidates against the criteria contained in the person specification that has been prepared for the role without exception or variation. The assessment will also consider the anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment noted.

All unsuccessful candidates will be notified in a suitable, timely manner and feedback provided on the reasons if requested to do so.

### **School Visit**

For most vacancies, shortlisted applicants are invited for a day's visit to the School as a part of the pre-interview selection process. They spend time with the children in the class and house. There will be a debriefing session at the end of the day.

### **References**

The purpose of seeking a reference is to obtain objective and factual information which will confirm the details provided in an application form and which will support appointment decisions.

### **Other Checks before Interview**

There may be times when a reference cannot verify a specific qualification or previous experience which is particularly important for effective performance of the role in question. In such cases, we will confirm the details prior to the interview usually by telephoning the relevant employer and arranging for written confirmation of the facts. Any discrepancy will then be explored at interview.

### **Psychometric Profiles**

For some appointments, candidates invited for interview will be asked to complete a 16PF personality questionnaire prior to the interview. The resulting report will be discussed with the candidate at the interview.

## **THE SELECTION INTERVIEW**

It is policy at The Mulberry Bush Organisation that the selection process for any vacancy will involve a face-to-face interview even in the event that there is only one candidate. The purpose of the interview is to assess the match of each candidate against the competencies, experience and qualifications contained in the person specification.

Our policy is to have an Interview Panel involving a minimum of two interviewers and, in the case of senior or specialist appointments, it may be appropriate to have a larger panel.

We base our interviews on actual experiences rather than theoretical circumstances. Consequently, questions will be related to both:

- competencies defined in the person specification which will require candidates to deal with an actual situation or answer from personal experience; and
- a candidate's attitudes towards and understanding of relevant issues.

## **PRE-APPOINTMENT CHECKS**

When the preferred candidate is selected, an offer of employment from The Mulberry Bush will be conditional upon:

- the receipt of at least two satisfactory references;
- verification of the candidate's identity;
- receipt of a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure including, where appropriate, a barred list check;
- where applicable, satisfactory overseas criminal record checks received (see further details below);
- verification of the candidate's physical and mental health and fitness to carry out the job responsibilities;
- verification of qualifications;
- verification of professional status where required e.g. DfE registration, QTS status (unless properly exempted), National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH);
- verification of the right to work in the UK (see further details below);
- for teachers, provision of their DfE number;
- for teaching posts, verification that not included on the NCTL Prohibited List;
- for senior managers, verification that not included on the Section 128 Prohibition List.

The School will ensure that all checks are confirmed in writing and retained on the individual's personnel file. If the checks prove unsatisfactory or discrepancies are identified, we will undertake further investigations to clarify the matters and, where necessary, take appropriate action. In the event that:

- the DBS Disclosure shows an applicant has been disqualified from working with children by a Court; or
- an applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his or her application; or

- there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

the Mulberry Bush must report the facts to the police and/or the DCSF Children's Safeguarding Operations Unit.

## **RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UK**

All preferred candidates, irrespective of their nationality or where they are working currently, will be checked to establish that they have the right to work in the United Kingdom.

Entitlement to work in the UK must be verified by checking the original documents of one of the following:

- A valid passport showing that the holder is a British citizen, or a citizen of the UK and Colonies, having the right of abode in the UK;
- A valid passport or national ID card showing that the holder is a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland;
- A Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) issued in the UK by the relevant authorities;
- A Residence Card for non-European Economic Area (EEA) family members of EEA or Swiss nationals in a biometric format;
- A valid passport or other travel documents endorsed to show that the holder can stay indefinitely in the UK, has the right of abode in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK;
- Original, long birth certificate (issued within 6 months of the birth) accompanied by official documentation showing NI number (for example: P45, P60, NI number card or letter from a government agency). **Please Note:** NI cards beginning with TN or ending in E - Z inclusive are temporary numbers and are not acceptable;
- Appropriate UK Residence Permits/Cards.

The above list is not exhaustive and can change. Consequently, there may be other documents which could be equally acceptable. The Mulberry Bush will be pleased to offer guidance.

The original documents must be viewed by a responsible person at The Mulberry Bush. That person will take copies of all documents which have been viewed to verify your right to work in the UK, sign them, date them and retain them on a personal file.

Checks to ensure that you have the right to work in the UK will be conducted before employment commences. You will not be able to commence employment until the required checks have been completed.

## **CANDIDATES WHO HAVE LIVED OUTSIDE THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Foreign nationals or UK citizens who have lived abroad for a period of twelve months or more (whether continuous or in total), whilst aged 18 or over, will have to provide a 'Certificate of Good Repute/Good Conduct' or something similar from the UK embassy or consulate of the country in question. A focus will be placed on the ten years preceding the date that an offer of employment is made by The Mulberry Bush.

If you need to provide such documentation, it is your responsibility to obtain the certification at your own cost. If invited, you will be asked at interview whether you have obtained the appropriate documents.

The methods and systems used to undertake checks will vary from country to country. If you are encountering difficulties, The Mulberry Bush will be able to offer guidance but will not be able to make an application on your behalf.

It may not always be possible for you to obtain the required Certificate of Good Repute. In such circumstances, The Mulberry Bush will assess whether there has been an adequate demonstration that every effort has been made to obtain one. If it is apparent that no more could be done, we will undertake a risk assessment taking account of relevant factors including DBS checks, provision of other certificates of good conduct, references and other pre-employment checks.

## **CANDIDATES FROM HM ARMED FORCES**

If you have been serving with HM Armed Forces, you must submit an extract from your military record. The extract provided must:

- be the original document, not a copy;
- cover (and state that it covers) any periods within the past ten years during which you were overseas for three continuous months or more and serving in the military;
- expressly disclose any and all convictions you may have received during this time;
- be from an identified source that The Mulberry Bush can contact if it is necessary to verify the extract's authenticity.

If you are unable to provide this information, The Mulberry Bush will work with you but no job offer will be made until the matter is resolved. The Mulberry Bush will make a reference request but it **MUST** be accompanied by a signed statement from you which authorises the release of relevant information. The reference will ask for confirmation of the period of service together with the reason for your discharge as well as details of any discipline note.

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