

Recruitment Policy

Forward

The success of the Council is dependent on the high performance of the staff we employ and ensuring that we have the right people, with the right skills in the right places and a workforce that is representative of the community it serves.

Recruitment decisions must be made on the basis of clear and justifiable job-related criteria and fully in accordance with standards in the Council's "Employees' Code of Conduct", which is part of the Council Constitution [click here](#).

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the recruitment process to familiarise themselves with this Policy and the supporting Recruitment Procedure, any breach of which may be regarded as a disciplinary offence.

Equalities and diversity in employment

The Council aims to be an exemplar employer and recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that its employment practices do not discriminate against a group or individual on the grounds of a protected characteristic: age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

All recruitment and selection decisions for appointment to posts within the Council must be made conducted on the basis of merit against clear and justifiable job-related criteria and all permanent and temporary vacancies (including secondments) advertised, except for:

- i) Restructuring - where posts are being deleted and there is a requirement to "match" the duties on the "old" and "new" job descriptions for assimilation;
- ii) Redeployment - where there is a statutory duty to offer pregnant employees or those on adoption, maternity or shared parental leave a suitable alternative post or a requirement to prioritise disabled or displaced employees for redeployment;
- iii) "Acting-up" appointments - where there is a requirement that the post-holder "act-up" into a post; and
- iv) Succession planning – where there is an approved succession planning process in place for posts and/or services as agreed at the Work Force Board.

Approval to recruit

Recruitment to all permanent and temporary roles, (including agency, programme and project workers), is now online and must be approved by the Director or Strategic Director.

Managers are required to submit a business case online via the Councils recruitment system "TalentLink", which must first be signed off by the Head of Service and Director (if applicable).

Ringfence recruitment for our residents

The Council is committed to helping remove barriers to employment and address social deprivation inside the Borough by supporting and providing more job opportunities for our residents. Council vacancies, once they have gone through the internal redeployee and recruitment stages, will be open to residents through its Job Shops.

Succession planning

The Council's succession planning policy is intended to identify and support the progression of employees into senior, critical and hard to recruit to posts, and to replace individuals when they leave.

This will provide career pathways for all employees who want to develop and progress within the Organisation, especially to senior, critical and hard to recruit to roles. To progress, they will still meet the criteria for the role, as detailed in the person specification.

Children's Social Workers - Internal transfer scheme

Children's Care and Support operate an internal transfer scheme to encourage staff retention. Vacancies are ringfenced internally for qualified social workers and/or team managers, including agency staff, with one year's service in their teams to apply.

Job descriptions and person specifications

Managers must use the Council's job description and person specification template(s).

The criteria on the person specification must be able to be objectively assessed, non-discriminatory, and justifiable in the context of that post. They must all be essential for the post and additional "desirable" criteria are not permitted.

Managers may have up to a maximum 9 criteria for short-listing purposes, and which must include questions based on the Council's "Drive" values. As a guide, managers should aim for 3 questions from the "Drive" values and up to 6 criteria from the knowledge, skills and experience competencies

All applicants who are eligible to apply under Guaranteed Interviews Schemes e.g. "Disability Confident" or "Defence Employers Recognition Scheme" and meet the short-listing criteria will be interviewed regardless of the total numbers.

Recruiting from outside the United Kingdom

The Council has a sponsorship policy to support managers when recruiting from outside the United Kingdom. This is available on [\[link\]](#)

If you wish to fill in a job with a sponsored employee, it is important to consider this from the outset of the recruitment process before an advertisement for the role is placed. Advice and support should be sought from the Human Resources Talent and Resourcing Team.

Shortlisting and interview panels

Composition

There must be a minimum of 3 and up to a maximum 12 panel members, all of whom will have either:

- i) completed the mandatory recruitment and selection training and/or “refreshers” in the previous 3 years; or
- ii) been granted an exemption via the “Mandatory Training: Assessment and Accreditation Form”, [click here](#)

Human Resources will either be represented or nominate an independent panel member where the recruitment process may contentious.

The Recruiting Manager is responsible for ensuring that the composition of recruitment panels is representative, especially with regard to gender and ethnicity, and should include a member from outside that service area. Those involved in the short-listing will also normally be on the interview panel.

Panel members will not normally be involved with recruitment to posts at a higher level than their own post except when there is a need for someone:

- i) independent / outside of that area e.g. for a more representative panel;
- ii) from a community, partner or external agency (e.g. for a funded post); and/or
- iii) with expert or technical advice (e.g. HR, ICT, Legal etc)

All panel members will have equal voting rights except where candidates are tied, and the Chair has the casting vote.

Observers

The Recruiting Manager may allow an “observer” at interviews, but they must not be involved whatsoever i.e. their opinion must not be sought or obtained. Shortlisted candidates must be notified in advance if an observer is to be present at the interview.

Reserve Panel Members

The Recruiting Manager must ensure that there is a reserve on “stand-by” on the day(s) of the interview(s) so if any Panel Members are absent, these can still proceed wherever possible. The “reserve” may/may not have already been involved in the recruitment process for the post, but they must be mandatory recruitment and selection trained.

Application process

Depending on the role, applicants may be asked to complete an application based question form which would ask questions around the skills knowledge, experience and competencies, as well as the Council’s ‘drive’ values based’ or submission of a “CV” and/or “personal statement” via the Councils on-line recruitment system “TalentLink”.

For Apprenticeship and some frontline roles, the application and selection criteria may differ. Please contact the Human Resources Talent and Resourcing Team for further advice.

Reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made for applicants with a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition. Each person is different and what is reasonable may depend on the person and the role; examples of adjustments may include, where appropriate:

- Allowing applicants to submit oral personal statements
- Making information available in different formats (and providing hard copies)
- Making questions or details of tests available in advance
- Changing the format of tests from written to audio
- Allow written tests to be done on a computer compatible with adaptive software.
- Allowing applicants to become familiar with any software before the test
- Allowing applicants more time to respond to questions or to complete tests
- Allowing applicants to have an interpreter or be accompanied by a support worker
- Work trials instead of formal interviews

The list is not exhaustive and if the Recruiting Manager and/or Panel is unsure as to what is reasonable, they should discuss this with the applicant and take advice from Human Resources.

Anonymised recruitment

Applicants' personal details will be kept anonymous until after short-listing. The Recruiting Manager and Panel will not have access to personal details until after they complete the "short-listing" i.e. when they need to invite the short-listed candidates to interview.

Short-listing

The interview panel must be involved at the shortlisting stage and complete their individual scoring on Talent Link (if applicable).

The shortlist panel must meet to discuss and agree scores for each candidate. The panel chair must complete the agreed panel score sheet on behalf of the shortlist panel and submit to the Talent and Resourcing Team.

Applicants with a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition that meet the minimum criteria in the person specification will automatically be longlisted/shortlisted.

Long-listing

There will be occasions where there are a large number of applicants and excessive numbers of candidates who meet the person specification.

In these instances, it is advised to either add an additional stage into the recruitment process e.g. identify at least two criteria (already identified as application criteria in the person specification) to assess at longlist stage to assist in determining a manageable shortlist. A file note should be kept of how the shortlisting was undertaken.

Longlisted applicants with a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition who meet the minimum longlist criteria should be included in the shortlist irrespective of their ranking order.

Selection tests

Recruiting Managers may ask shortlisted candidates to undertake practical tests or to make a presentation where this is relevant to the criteria on the person specifications.

Candidates must be notified in writing in advance of the nature of the tests and how these will be assessed, and suitable reasonable adjustments made for disabled applicants.

Selection for interview and appointment

Applicants will be assessed against the criteria on the person specification only, using the Council's template scoring matrix. Applicants must demonstrate that they meet all the:

- i) shortlisting criteria to be considered for interview; and
- ii) job criteria to be considered for appointment

Conflict of interests

As detailed in the Employees' Code of Conduct, in order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees who are related to, or have a close personal relationship outside work with, an applicant, must not take part in the recruitment process.

- If any members of the shortlisting and interview panel knows a candidate, they must declare this to the other members of the selection panel and the Talent and Resourcing Team as soon as they are aware of the candidate's application.
- Where an employee has a close working, personal or familial relationship with a candidate, they must have no further involvement in the selection process.
- If a candidate has named anyone involved in the selection process to be provide a reference, they will be asked to provide another referee.

Failure to comply with the above will considered a serious breach of the Employees' Code of Conduct and gross misconduct which, if proven, normally leads to dismissal.

Guaranteed interview schemes

Applicants who are eligible to apply under guaranteed interview schemes e.g. "Disability Confident" or the "Defence Employers Recognition Scheme" should complete the relevant section when applying on-line; they will then be guaranteed an interview if they demonstrate that they meet all the shortlisting criteria.

Right to work in the United Kingdom

The Council is required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the United Kingdom. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from Human Resources or UK Visas and Immigration.

Feedback

The Chair of the Interview Panel will offer all unsuccessful candidates feedback within 10 working days of the final interview. Internal candidates to be provided feedback at application and interview stage.

Data protection

Personal information will be protected, used lawfully and respectfully and in a transparent manner as detailed in the “Recruitment privacy notice for job applicants” [click here](#) .

Appointments

All appointments are subject to satisfactory:

- Proof of the right to work in the United Kingdom
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance where required
- Medical clearance
- References
- Confirmation of qualifications or membership of a professional body where this is a requirement of the post
- Completion of a probationary period, (unless otherwise stated)

Employment references

The arrangements for applying for and dealing with request for employee references are set out in the Employment References Policy.

External applicants need to provide 2 references including 1 from their current or last employer covering the previous 3 years or a recognised professional, (see examples at Appendix 1), except for the following.

- Applicants who are leaving education need to provide a reference from their school, college or university as appropriate.
- Agency workers in front-line services in Public Realm, (e.g. caretaking and refuse), who have been engaged continually in the Council for a minimum 6 months may be appointed without a reference, subject to completion of a risk assessment and satisfactory pre-employment checks and a 6-month probationary period. Managers must take advice from their Human Resources Business Partners.

Internal applicants for a permanent position within the Council, except appointments through the restructuring process (assimilation and ringfenced interviews) will need one reference from Human Resources or their Director / Head of Service (or equivalent). References are not required for employees applying secondments or temporary positions within the Council.

Where a reference contains any negative or adverse comments, the manager should consider giving the applicant an opportunity to respond to these. The Manager will decide after taking advice from their Human Resources Business Partner whether to continue with the offer or not.

Probation

All new appointments will be subject to satisfactory completion of a probation period as detailed in the Probationary Procedure, except for employees:

- i) on the Assisted and Supported Year in Employment whose confirmation of appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of an assessment period of 12 months;
- ii) who left the Council under a TUPE transfer and transferred back when that service is brought back in house, provided there has been no break of service in the interim;
- iii) on Teachers pay and conditions of service;
- iv) assimilated following a restructuring;
- v) redeployed after having satisfactorily completing a work trial

Internal appointments

The Probationary Procedure applies to the following “internal” appointments:

- Agency workers, consultants, or volunteers etc appointed to Council posts
 - Apprentices appointed to posts at the end of their apprenticeship
 - Temporary employees moving to a permanent post*
- * The manager may waive this requirement if they are satisfied that the employee has covered all the main requirements of the permanent post.

Employees are not allowed to apply for any other posts (permanent or temporary) within the Council during their probationary period.

Conduct, disciplinary and performance issues

Employees are not allowed to apply for any other posts (permanent or temporary) within the Council whilst they are serving an capability or disciplinary sanction e.g. a formal review period or written warning.

Re-applying for posts

Applicants who have not been shortlisted or who are unsuccessful at interview cannot reapply for the same job if it's within 6 months of the first advert. The only exceptions to this are where:

- i) the applicant met all the criteria for a post but was not interviewed or appointed and either:
 - a) the successful candidate did not take up the appointment or leaves within 6 months of the first advert; or
 - b) further vacancies for identical posts with the same person specification are due to be recruited to within 6 months of the first advertIn these situations there must be clear evidence that the applicant had met all the criteria for the post at the selection stage and was the next highest ranking i.e. as detailed on the interview and selection forms completed by the Panel at the time.
- ii) it is considered appropriate as a reasonable adjustment for disabled applicants

Reserve candidates

Reserve candidates may be appointed where the Service has filled the same job role, at the same grade in the 6 months preceding the current recruitment exercise. (The appointment must be to the same job description and person specification).

If there was more than one appointable candidate in the previous recruitment exercise, the recruiting manager can offer the job to the next highest ranked applicant from that process i.e. a reserve candidate, after the vacancy is approved. For example, if the Director or Strategic Director approves the vacancy on 1st December, the previous recruitment exercise must have been completed (the date of the selection interview) in the period 2nd June to 30th November 2022.

If there are any queries about whether a post can be offered to a reserve candidate, the recruiting manager should contact the Human Resources Talent and Resourcing Team who can support recruiting managers with letters for reserve candidates.

Re-engagement of former Council employees

It is the Council's Policy not to re-engage former employees without prior approval, which normally be granted to those who resigned for career, caring or personal reasons [click here](#).

Relocation expenses

Relocation expenses will only be paid where applicants are required to relocate to within reasonable commuting distance of their new place of work as specified on the job advert and as detailed in the "Relocation Policy" [click here](#).

"Positive action"

The Council may decide to take "positive action" under the Single Equality Act to address under-representation in particular areas or across the Council e.g.:

- Advertising posts in the community or targeted publications or media
- Outreach work e.g. to encourage people to apply for posts

Human Resources will automatically update the policy to comply with any changes to legislation or ACAS guidance and notify employees of the amendments.

Appendix 1 - Recognised professions

Examples of recognised professions include:

- accountant
- airline pilot
- articulated clerk of a limited company
- assurance agent of recognised company
- bank or building society official
- barrister
- chairman or director of a limited company
- chiropodist
- commissioner for oaths
- councillor, for example local or county
- civil servant (permanent)
- dentist
- director, manager or personnel officer of a VAT-registered company
- engineer with professional qualifications
- financial services intermediary, for example a stockbroker or insurance broker
- fire service official
- funeral director
- Justice of the Peace
- legal secretary (fellow or associate member of the Institute of Legal Secretaries and PAs)
- manager or personnel officer of a limited company
- member, associate or fellow of a professional body
- Member of Parliament
- Merchant Navy officer
- minister of a recognised religion (including Christian Science)
- nurse (RGN or RMN)
- officer of the armed services
- optician
- paralegal (certified paralegal, qualified paralegal or associate member of the Institute of Paralegals)
- person with honours, for example an OBE or MBE
- pharmacist
- police officer
- Post Office official
- Salvation Army officer
- social worker
- solicitor
- surveyor
- teacher or lecturer
- trade union officer
- Warrant Officers and Chief Petty Officers

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