

Appendix A: Recruitment and Selection procedures (including casual and agency staff)

All managers and those involved in recruitment and selection at any stage should familiarise themselves with this procedure.

The purpose of the procedure is to assist those involved in the effective and safe recruitment of staff in accordance with legislation and Council policies.

This procedure should be used in conjunction with the Council's Recruitment Policy (HR043) and Safer Recruitment Guidelines (Appendix B).

Establishment controls

All managers are required to agree their current structures by periodically checking and signing off establishment lists and salary budget details. Any changes to the agreed establishment must be effected as follows:

- Major variations to agreed establishment requiring additional budgets, such as increased position hours or new positions, requiring a growth bid to be considered and agreed by CMT. Consideration should be given as to whether Cabinet approval needs to be sought and minutes submitted to People Services to effect the changes.
- Major variations within establishment budgets, such as reorganisation, redundancies or re-grading will require a report to CMT approval for the variation before changes are effected.
- Minor variations within current establishment budgets, such as a small reduction in hours for one post or a change to working patterns, require details to be submitted to People Services and a reconfirmation of the structure. Notification must be given in writing of the change and details as to whether this change is permanent or temporary.
- Vacancies within the agreed establishment require the submission of a business case to CMT for consideration and approval before recruitment can commence.

This information will form the Council's staffing establishment. People Services are responsible for maintaining information on the Council's staffing establishment through the use of organisation/structure charts and budget information.

People Services will:

- notify Financial Services of changes to salaries for budget and accounting purposes periodically;
- reconcile the payroll, establishment list and salary budget information from Accountancy on a quarterly basis; and
- clarify any queries to ensure that the establishment remains correct.

Vacancy Management

All vacancies, whether for new or existing posts, must be reviewed prior to being filled. This review will consider whether the vacancy needs to be filled and on what basis. All requirements for agency staff and contractors must also be reviewed in the same manner. See Managers Guidance for Temporary Agency Staff (HR040).

The line manager of a vacant or soon to be vacant post will be required to submit a business case for their proposal for dealing with the vacancy to the Corporate Management Team.

Options for managing the vacancy must be set out clearly within the business case document (Appendix D).

The Revenue Budget includes an annual savings target of approximately 1% of the total staffing budget. This will be predominantly achieved by savings from posts that are vacant during recruitment activity i.e. whilst the postholder has left and we are awaiting the commencement of a replacement. Where it is not considered a priority to fill a post either on a temporary or permanent basis savings will be included in the savings target.

CMT will consider the following when considering requests:

- Impact on revenue
- Impact on existing staff
- Impact on service delivery/development targets
- Impact on statutory obligations
- Impact on health, safety and security
- Future service delivery options i.e. shared services, market testing etc.
- Opportunity to re-deploy staff from other areas

Vacancy management must be part of a strategic approach to workforce planning and should take into account broad consideration of the authorities' future objectives and resources.

Managers should evidence consideration of the following in order for the vacancy to be considered:

- Council priorities.
- Service Delivery Plan priorities and requirements
- Impact on key PI's
- Benchmarking of cost and performance with other authorities
- Partnering options
- Re-diverting of resources to priority areas
- Short term secondment or other options for filling vacancy
- Costs of recruitment
- Risk management implications
- Impact on existing staff

CMT will review options and agree if and how the post may be filled. Minutes of the CMT meeting will be required in order to effect the change to the establishment (as necessary).

All requests for agency or contract staff should be submitted in the same manner regardless of budget being available or whether it is to cover a vacancy or additional work.

For operational areas (refuse, cleansing, public conveniences, parks & grounds only) managers will not have to seek permission to use agency staff where these staff are required immediately, i.e. the same or following day where budget is available to cover temporary absence of permanent staff e.g. holiday/sickness cover.

In the case of a vacancy attributed to maternity or long term sick leave, CMT may decide whether the post needs to be replaced in conjunction with identifying appropriate budget from Finance.

Grading of posts

The grading of posts is confirmed by an evaluation of the main duties and responsibilities usually after approximately 6 months of someone being in post. This applies particularly where the post is a new post. Where the post is existing and has a new incumbent they can review the Job Description Questionnaire (JDQ) after approximately 6 months to ensure this is correct.

Where a post is new, a JDQ should be completed by the employee and agreed by the line manager prior to submission.

Managers should consider the requirements of posts and the budget allocated. An increase in the job evaluated score may affect the overall pay of the post and therefore the budget. Managers therefore may sometimes need to decide the absolute minimum requirements within the budget constraints that they have and although staff may be capable and willing to undertake work of a higher level this may not be possible within financial constraints.

The Council does not have a reserve budget to take pay increased or back pay from Job Evaluation into account therefore this must be controlled.

Occupational Requirements

As a general rule it is unlawful to specify that you require somebody in particular unless there is a genuine occupational requirement (GORs) for the position, and this can be objectively justified as a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. An example of a genuine occupational requirement is where there is a need to pursue privacy or decency, e.g. the requirement for a female leisure attendant whose job involves accessing the female changing rooms at a leisure centre. In the event of the genuine occupational requirement rule applying, this must be stated on the advertisement and job details.

Advertising

Once approval has been granted, line managers should provide a job description and person specification of the role (see points below) to People Services, along with details of what advert is required, advertising medium and closing date. You should usually allow at least 3 weeks for those posts advertised externally. Managers should provide an outline of the advert they require to People Services. For senior roles or those difficult to fill, People Services may advise that the services of an advertising agency are sourced to design and write an advert. There would be a small charge for this service.

The job description and person specification will give you a basis for drafting the advert and you may wish to add some additional information about your service or the role. Remember though that the more you put in, the more it will cost. Our normal practice is to include key information in the job advert with a 'signpost' to further details on our website.

People Services will usually provide an advert in the local press and on the internet – BBC, LCC websites - and JobCentrePlus as standard (including an internal advert). Any press advertising must be agreed with People Services and depending on cost may not be able to be funded from the central recruitment budget. Managers should carefully consider which advertising medium will be most cost effective. People Services will advise you on the most effective media to use in order to attract the right applicants with the appropriate levels of skills and qualifications.

People Services will place the advert and will arrange for handling of responses encouraging applicants to use on-line methods of recruitment as this is faster and more cost effective.

Managers should carefully consider the content of the advert to avoid any terms that could be considered discriminatory but also to positively promote where a job may be suitable for someone with a disability or where flexible working may be possible. The Council commits to Disability Confident standards and commits to adhere to the principles of equal opportunities for disabled people, including offering a guaranteed interview to any disabled person who meets the essential requirements of the job. It is important that we make clear what those essential requirements are – see below. It is unlawful to publish, or to be responsible for publishing, any advertisement that indicates, or may reasonably be understood to indicate, an intention to discriminate, even if the act of discrimination were lawful.

The test for deciding whether an advertisement indicates an intention to discriminate is whether a reasonable person would consider it to be discriminatory.

Advertising costs for local media, jobsgopublic and localgovjobs will be met from the centralised recruitment budget. Costs for any additional requests for wider advertisement, must be met from the recruiting managers own budget.

Managers can seek advice from the Council's Communications team on appropriate wording for external adverts. All wording for adverts must be approved by People Services prior to the role being advertised.

Managers should include on any advert, a contact name and phone number and/or email address if an applicant would like additional information or has any queries. They must also state whether or not the post is subject to any disclosure checks (please refer to Safer Recruitment guidelines at Appendix B) and that the Council will only accept job applications on the Council's own application form.

People Services will discuss with the recruiting Manager where to advertise positions in order to seek to attract under represented sections of the community to the Council.

Job Description and Person Specifications

A job description and person specification must be produced for each post.

These documents form the basis for the selection of the best candidate for the job and give each applicant the information they need in order to demonstrate on their application form how they meet the requirements of the job. (Template forms: HRF001 & HRF002)

The job description highlights the specific and core duties and responsibilities of the post holder. You may need to review the requirements of the job prior to proceeding to recruit. It is advisable to discuss any changes with People Services as this may have an effect on the grading of the job.

The person specification is the most important document in the recruitment and selection process because it is at this stage that discriminatory or potentially discriminatory barriers can be introduced. To prevent this it is necessary to identify essential requirements for the job against which all candidates can be measured fairly and equitably. You could indirectly discriminate by having a selection criterion, for example, length of service, ability to work full-time or a mobility requirement that put applicants of one sex or married or partnered, disabled etc. people at a substantial disadvantage.

You must ensure that you are able to prove it is necessary and appropriate for the post.

Remember that the completed application forms are the only information you will have at the short-listing stage to determine which applicants receive an interview. It is therefore crucial that the applicants know what you are looking for in order that they can assess their own suitability for the position and describe to you as the manager how their skills and experience is relevant to the post.

The standard person specification form should be used as it gives guidance on the areas which need to be considered.

Applications

All applicants are required to complete the Council's application form and CV's will not be accepted. It is recommended that managers who wish to offer an informal discussion about the role offer this in the application pack rather than on the advert as the conversation is likely to be more useful at this stage and will also save everyone's time.

Short-listing

Once the closing date has passed, People Services will provide one copy of all applications to the relevant department for short-listing.

Please ensure that all members of the selection panel use the same criteria for shortlisting and undertake this in line with short-listing guidelines and template (Appendices E and Ei). Any disagreements over this can be referred to People Services.

Please try to complete the short-listing form (HRF007) as fully as possible, giving comments where you think is appropriate.

Fair selection is a significant help in eliminating poor, unfair or unlawful recruitment practices and a positive way of advancing the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy (HR045).

You must be prepared to provide evidence of selection for interview where challenged i.e. in the event of an Employment Tribunal claim over unfair selection on the grounds of discrimination. All records connected with shortlisting would be required to deal with any such claim.

Interviews

Managers should arrange their own interviews with advice from People Services as necessary. This will involve sending out invite to interview letters and making arrangements for room bookings etc. Where interviews ask for special arrangements to accommodate a disability or religious requirements you should endeavour to meet these requests as far as possible.

When arranging interviews as much notice as possible of the date and arrangements should be given. There should be at least 2 people and ideally 3 on the interview panel and these must have received training in how to conduct selection interviews. For posts over Grade 5 a representative of People Services should normally be present to offer advice and assist with any testing etc.

Some skills are not readily identifiable from an interview and you may wish to use other assessment tools e.g. prioritisation exercises, case studies or IT tests. Such tests must be a proportionate method of electing the best candidate and should be agreed with People Services as appropriate. It is important to use tools that are either similar to work situations or tried and tested tools that have been validated.

Where the post is a regulated position, please refer to the safer recruitment guidelines. (Appendix B)

The decision about which tools you wish to use must be made before interview invitations are dispatched as candidates should be notified in advance of what type of exercises will take place. You should ensure that you will not discriminate by using the tools you have chosen.

Remember that an interview is a two way process for both the Council and the individual. The interview should measure candidates against the person specification criteria with a scoring matrix in order to assess their suitability for appointment, and give the candidate an opportunity to find out more about the job, organisation and terms and conditions.

The interview panel should meet prior to the interviews to agree questions and the format of the assessment. A standard list of questions should be drawn up for each candidate and panel members should consider follow up, probing questions depending on the candidate's replies. (Please also refer to Appendix G Embedding 'values' into recruitment)

The panel should nominate a person to chair the interview. It is important that interviewers do not ask candidates personal questions e.g. marital status etc. which are generally not relevant to the process and may be discriminatory.

Be careful about discussing salary, as any promises made in an interview could constitute a legal agreement. This does not preclude you from discussing salaries.

At the end of the interview candidates should be told when they might expect to be told whether they have been successful or not.

Psychometric testing and Personal Profile Analysis

For positions at Service Manager or above levels, recruiting Managers may require Applicants to undertake testing/ analysis as part of the recruitment process. People Services should be contacted in this instance .

Assessment Methods

The application form and interview will not always provide all of the information required to make an informed decision. The recruiting officer will need to consider if other selection methods are required. In designing the selection process, the officer should decide what selection methods are to be used to test each aspect of the person specification. The aim must be to select sufficient methods that will adequately measure the candidate's abilities to meet the requirements of the job.

The selection methods adopted must be consistently applied to all candidates and the results carefully recorded to ensure that all candidates are assessed fairly and treated equally.

Assessment methods should be checked to ensure there is no unjustifiable bias which would discriminate against certain candidates. For example, using jargon which would be unfamiliar to external candidates or using case studies including unnecessary references to race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age disability or cultural issues.

Assessment methods should be appropriate for the job being applied for. Candidates should not be asked to do a powerpoint presentation or role play dealing with a difficult customer if this would not normally be part of their job.

Methods could include:

- Ability tests
- Job simulation (work sample) exercises, including:
 - presentations
 - written exercises
 - in-tray exercises
 - Contact with employees/service users
 - role-play exercises
 - group discussions exercises
- Full Assessment Centres (using multiple techniques assessed by multiple assessors)

Conflict of interest

The appointing officer must ask all candidates if they have any other outside business interests that may conflict with those of the Council's business. If they have the appointing officer needs to decide the following:

- Whether or not the private interests conflict with the Council's business;
- Whether the individual would be able to use their position/ knowledge to confer advantage/ disadvantage to their private interests/personal gain;
- Whether the private interests, if known publicly, would undermine the trust, confidence and integrity in the Council;

If there is a potential conflict of interest, the appointing officer should advise the candidate that the application cannot be considered further whilst the conflict of interest remains. It will then be the choice of the candidate to either withdraw their application with the Council or to discontinue with the conflicting private business interests. The candidate may request some time out to make their decision.

Post Interview

At the end of each interview, the panel should consider the notes they have made and score the candidates against the assessment criteria. It is important that this is done after every interview and not left until the end of the interviews. (See Forms HRF010/ 011/ 012)

When all candidates have been interviewed and scored, the highest scoring candidate should normally be appointed. Should all the candidates fall below the standard required an appointment need not be made. In circumstances where no candidates meet the essential criteria but possess skills and experience which may fulfil a number of requirements, consideration may be given to appointing this person on a lower grade.

Offers

Managers, prior to making any offer of employment, should consider what salary would be appropriate to offer the candidate. General practice at the Council is to start new employees at the bottom of the grade. Exceptions should only be made to this after the case has been discussed with People Services prior to offer and should only be done in exceptional circumstances.

All offers should be made subject to satisfactory references and occupational health clearance and criminal record disclosure checks where necessary.

The offer is also subject to proof of eligibility to work in the UK and proof of qualifications. A list of documents which provide proof is provided to prospective employees with written offer of employment (HRF013).

Once the interview is over, review of candidates to be completed using 'Recommended person to be appointed' and the appointment checklist should be completed so that People Services can send out the appropriate contract of employment. This will be done within 2 working days of a decision to appoint and receipt of the appointment checklist. (See Form HRF017/018)

People Services will arrange reference checks, DBS checks and Occupational Health clearance (See Form HRF015).

Start dates must not be confirmed until all information has been received. People Services will confirm the start date in writing to the individual following agreement with the line manager once clearance has been received. It is vital that new employees do not start until all satisfactory clearance has been received.

Unsuccessful Candidates

Once a decision has been made to appoint all unsuccessful candidates should be contacted by telephone to inform them they have been unsuccessful. People Services will then confirm to all interviewed unsuccessful candidates in writing within 3 days of the interview taking place. Interviewers should be prepared to give constructive feedback to those requesting it. (See form HRF016)

All copies of application forms and associated notes should be returned to People Services where they will be kept for 12 months in accordance with the Council's Retention Policy. Where psychometric tests have been carried out feedback should be given only by a fully qualified and licensed person.

Feedback should concentrate on how the candidate matched against the person specification (or not) and avoid comparisons with the successful candidate. Feedback is usually developmental for the candidate and should therefore be positive and constructive.

Induction

Once an appointment has been made, preparation for the induction period should begin. A good induction has a direct impact on the performance and retention of staff. The employee will be inducted by their Line Manager on their first working day followed by People Services, Departmental and Corporate induction sessions during their first 6 months of employment. Managers are responsible for ensuring that their new member of staff completes the corporate induction as soon as possible after joining.

People Services will issue the manager and new recruit with induction information prior to and during the first weeks of employment as appropriate. Managers are required to consider what is necessary for an effective induction, ensuring that they cover key points as indicated on the induction checklist.

New employees are given induction information and a checklist which should be signed off and returned to People Services with the 6 month probationary review form.

Probation

The appointment of every new entrant to the Council's service will be subject to a Probationary Period of usually six months. This rule does not apply to an officer transferred from another authority due to continuous service or from any other service accepted by the Council as appropriate to the post to be filled. Please refer to the Probationary Period Policy.

This procedure is separate to the disciplinary procedure.

Engaging temporary staff

Consideration should be given to:

- Rate
- Terms of business
- Vetting arrangements (employers references etc.)
- DBS check if necessary
- Induction
- Code of Conduct
- Induction
- Confidentiality
- Health & safety arrangements

Prior to engaging temporary agency staff, please ensure:

- You have the necessary approval
- You give consideration as to whether the job will involve work in an area where a DBS check is necessary

Agency workers must:

- Sign the Council's confidentiality agreement;
- Sign the appropriate IT policies;
- Complete the safeguarding and disability, equality and diversity courses;
- Be instructed in the safe use of work equipment and if possible sign off written instructions;
- Be given the relevant information from the staff handbook which applies to agency workers and includes details relating to code of conduct, hours of work, PPE etc.

Agency workers should not be engaged for lengthy periods of time as this can cause complications as to who the legal employer might be. Agency workers are designed to cover short periods of absence or peaks of workloads. Where they are engaged for longer periods, legislation requires parity to be implemented with a comparable employee from 12 weeks onwards.

Intermediaries' legislation requires the Council to determine if a worker contracted and paid via an intermediary would be an employee, if engaged directly. If so, this worker is deemed to be 'in scope' of the legislation and the fee payer is required to deduct income tax and employee National Insurance ('NIC') from the 'deemed earnings' and remit these sums to HM Revenue & Customs, together with employer's NIC. Prior to engagement, employment status must be determined using the Employment Status Service tool available on the HMRC website. This check must be conducted with the People Service Managers support.

Re-advertising of Posts

Where a recently filled role becomes vacant (e.g. because the successful applicant leaves within a short space of time or references/ checks are not acceptable) or where another role with the same job description, hours and location becomes vacant within 6 weeks of its first being advertised and interviewed for, Managers can backfill to that post from the original recruitment exercise without the need to re-advertise the post again. Separate vacancy management approval will be required for new vacancies.

This applies only if an employee has not been entered into the redeployment pool since the initial advert was first placed. In such circumstances, and if the employee in redeployment meets the essential criteria for such, he/she should be offered an interview prior to any other applicant. HR advice on this must be obtained prior to back-filling any role.

Any employee applying for the role, either via redeployment or internally, and who meets the essential criteria for the role as laid down by the person specification should only be offered a role following interview if they then go on to meet the minimum benchmarking levels set for the interview stages.

Prior to the interview date, the recruiting panel will need to set the minimum benchmark an applicant would need to pass in order to be considered for the role following interview, e.g. an applicant must achieve over 60% in the test and 70% at interview. Managers must ensure that the weight given to particular facets of the candidates' abilities reflect the requirements of the job in a non-discriminatory way.

If the employee does not meet that benchmarking set for the interview stage, the recruiting Manager can backfill to the post from the original recruitment exercise without the need to re-advertise the role further.