

Recruitment & Selection Policy



1 Introduction

The council recognises that effective recruitment and selection practices are fundamental to its future success. We recognise the need to recruit from the widest possible talent pool and ensure that we identify the best person for the job in the most time and cost-efficient way, without compromising fairness, confidentiality or commitment to having a diverse workforce.

We are an inclusive employer and are committed to recruiting individuals in a fair and non-discriminatory way. The policy has been developed in line with the Equality Act 2010, which provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It requires employers to treat people fairly and protects those with protected characteristics which include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We also recognise the need to embed our core values across the workforce. Our values are at the heart of everything we do and it is important that recruiting managers incorporate the council's desired values and behaviours when undertaking recruitment and selection activities.

1.1 Exclusions from the recruitment procedure

There may be circumstances where the standard recruitment procedure will not apply. This may be in relation to recruitment for senior level, specialist or hard to fill posts. In these circumstances it may be deemed more appropriate to use the services of a recruitment consultant and this approach would need considered by Head of People and Talent Management.

Corporate Directors have delegated responsibility for the appointment of all employees up to and including Heads of Service.

The appointment of Corporate Directors is the responsibility of the Chief Officer's Appointment Committee and the appointment process may differ from this policy.

2 Recruitment process

2.1 Identifying a vacancy

A vacancy may arise for many different reasons, including someone leaving or retiring, an increase in workload or the creation of a post as a result of additional funding. All vacant posts will be reviewed, and consideration given as to whether the post needs to be filled on a like for like basis.

The manager will consider whether the post is still required, whether changes are required to the hours or job description and person specification to make it fit for purpose or whether the post could be filled through an apprenticeship. Where changes are made to the job description and person specification, it may be necessary to re-evaluate the post to ensure that the grade is still appropriate. Further information regarding [Job Re-evaluation](#) or [Apprenticeships](#) can be found on the intranet.

The service grouping will identify a Lead Officer who will be responsible for the recruitment and selection exercise. This will usually be the manager of the vacant post. The Lead Officer must have attended the council's Recruitment and Selection Briefing Session and completed the Equality and Diversity e-learning course. All employees involved in the appointment process should have a good understanding of this policy.

Those involved in recruitment to posts involving working with children, young people or vulnerable adults will need to adhere to the [Key Safeguarding Employment Standards](#).

2.2 Advertising the post

Posts are advertised using the following stages, however it is possible to combine stages 2 and 3, where appropriate:

Stage 1	Redeployment	All posts are restricted to employees on the council's redeployment register for a period of 7 calendar days, in the first instance. In some circumstances, for example specialist or hard to fill posts, the post will bypass this stage. Further information on Redeployment can be found on the intranet.
Stage 2	Internal	The post will be advertised internally for 10 calendar days. The post will be advertised via the North East Jobs website and employees need to be registered and logged into the jobs website to see internal vacancies. Internal vacancies can be applied for by council employees who are employed at the date of interview and agency workers who are on assignment with the council at the date of interview.
Stage 3	External	The post will be advertised externally for 14 calendar days. As a minimum the vacancy will be advertised via the North East Jobs website and will appear in the weekly vacancy bulletin issued to local jobcentres as well as employees on the redeployment register.

To ensure we recruit from the widest possible talent pool and to attract and retain a high-quality workforce, additional and/or alternative forms of advertising may be considered where appropriate and approval will be sought from the Head of People and Talent Management.

At any stage of the process, the Lead Officer has the discretion to consider candidates who were considered appointable from a previous recruitment exercise for the same post, providing it is within 6 months of the original interview date. This can be applied where the vacancy details are the same as those advertised and interviewed for previously.

2.2.1 Short term temporary posts

Operational situations can arise when there is a need to cover a post on a short term basis (not exceeding 6 months), while more formal arrangements are put in place. In these situations, an

honorary arrangement could be considered and advertised within the team or service area. Further information can be found in the [Honorary Guidance](#) on the intranet.

Similarly, where a short term internal opportunity arises e.g. 3 months work on a specific project, a manager may wish to advertise for 'expressions of interest' from within their team or service area, rather than advertised on the North East Jobs website. Details of the post should be provided to all members of the service area concerned, even if they are absent from work. Managers must seek approval to fill a vacancy in this way through MyWorkforce.

2.2.2 Job share posts

For job share vacancies (where one job share partner leaves), if there are no suitable employees via redeployment, the remaining job share partner will be offered the remaining hours. If the post remains vacant the post will be advertised.

2.3 Applications and shortlisting

All individuals, regardless of race, age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy, maternity or marital status, are encouraged to apply for council vacancies. All applications are treated confidentially. Further information about the council's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) can be found on the intranet.

The council will not usually consider applications received after the closing date, however, in exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to accept a late application at the discretion of the Lead Officer and in conjunction with Pay, Reward and Employment Services.

The shortlist will be determined by the Lead Officer and panel members by matching the information provided by candidates against the essential qualifications, experience and skills criteria of the person specification. Where a high number of applications are received, the Lead Officer may decide to apply all or a reduced number of desirable criteria. The same desirable criteria must be applied to all candidates, with the exception of those detailed in the following sections.

2.3.1 Disability Confident scheme

This is a voluntary scheme that aims to help employers make the most of opportunities provided by employing disabled people.

As a disability confident employer, the council has given a commitment to guarantee an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum essential criteria for the job. In addition the council is:

- Actively looking to attract and recruit disabled people;
- Providing a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process;
- Demonstrating flexibility when assessing people so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job;
- Proactively offering and making reasonable adjustments as required;
- Encouraging suppliers and partners to be disability confident;
- Ensuring employees have appropriate disability equality awareness.

2.3.2 Looked after young people

The council has a responsibility as a corporate parent to young people who are leaving care and making the transition to adulthood. Looked after young people are guaranteed an interview,

provided they meet the essential criteria for an advertised post and meet the following criteria at the time of application:

- Currently looked after by a Local Authority;
- OR**
- A care leaver up to 25 years old

Candidates will be expected to identify themselves within the application form as being registered as looked after or a care leaver and this should be taken into account by the Lead Officer when shortlisting.

2.3.3 Veterans guaranteed interview scheme

Those leaving the armed forces face a number of challenges within the labour market. As part of the council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, those who have served in the regular armed forces (veterans) are guaranteed an interview provided they meet the essential criteria for an advertised post and meet the following criteria:

- Are currently serving in the regular armed forces and are within 12 weeks of their discharge date;
- OR**
- The regular armed forces was the veteran's last long term employer and no more than 5 years elapsed since the veteran left the armed forces.

Candidates will be expected to identify themselves within the application form as being a veteran who meets the above criteria and this should be taken into account by the Lead Officer when shortlisting.

2.4 Selection

The selection process will be as efficient and clear as possible to ensure a positive candidate experience. The selection process will be determined by the Lead Officer and the stages involved will be in line with the complexity of the job requirements. Candidates may be required to complete assessments such as psychometric tests, case studies, presentations and/or other job related exercises, as appropriate.

The council has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the recruitment and selection process to give disabled people an equal opportunity. An applicant can include requests for adjustments on their application form or inform us at any stage of the process.

Interviews are an essential part of the selection process and will focus on the needs of the job and the experience, knowledge, skills and competencies needed to perform it effectively. The interview should afford the opportunity for two-way communication to occur.

The Lead Officer and panel members will reach a decision regarding the appointment and make an offer, subject to clearances, to the successful candidate as soon as possible following the interview. A start date will not be arranged with the candidate until clearances are satisfactory.

2.4.1 Fluency duty

The council is required, under Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016, to ensure that all employees working in a customer facing role are able to speak fluent English.

The Lead Officer will determine whether or not the post is considered to be a customer facing role and the level of English language skills will be stipulated in the job description and person specification for the post.

Where appointing to a customer facing role, the Lead Officer and panel members will need to satisfy themselves that the candidate has the required level of fluency for the post.

Candidates can demonstrate their fluency in English in a number of ways, including:

- Competently answering interview questions in English;
- Possessing a relevant qualification for the role attained as part of education in the UK or fully taught in English by a recognised institution abroad;
- Passing an English spoken language competency test; or
- Possessing a relevant spoken English qualification at CEFR Level B1 or above, taught in English by a recognised institution abroad.

The fluency duty is not intended to discriminate against a person on the grounds of race or disability and does not relate to international accents, dialects, speech impediments or the tone of conversations. The fluency duty can also be met by the provision of a sign language interpreter.

2.5 Appointing new employees

Before finalising an offer of employment, the council requires:

- Satisfactory references, see [Reference Policy](#);
- Completed pre-employment health declaration;
- Proof of essential qualifications;
- Confirmation of the individual's [right to work in the UK](#).

In addition, depending on the nature of the role, the following clearances may also be required:

- Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS)
- Disqualification from Caring for Children Regulations (DCCR) Disclosure (Children's posts only);
- Prohibition Order check (Teaching posts only);
- Proof of current driving licence;
- Completion of a Driver Induction Assessment;
- Proof of professional registration (e.g. HCPC).

Further information about clearances can be found in the [Vetting Policy](#).

2.6 Complaints procedure

The aim of the recruitment and selection procedure is to afford every candidate a fair and appropriate process that accommodates individual needs and gives the opportunity to compete on a level playing field.

If a candidate feels that they were not afforded this opportunity they should contact the Lead Officer within 5 working days of receiving the interview decision or from being informed that they had not been shortlisted. This can be done verbally or in writing, explaining the reasons for the complaint.

The Lead Officer will respond to the complainant within 5 working days.

2.6.1 Formal process

If the complainant is not happy with the Lead Officer's response, they should explain why they are not satisfied with the response, in writing, to the Head of People and Talent Management within 5 working days of receiving the response.

The Head of Talent and People Management will appoint an Officer to review the decision and will provide a response within 25 working days.

The decision of the Head of People and Talent Management is final. There is no right of appeal.

3 Temporary internal posts

Employees are able to apply for a temporary post within the council and seek approval from their manager to undertake the temporary post with the guarantee that they will be able to return to their substantive post when it comes to an end. This agreement will be reflected in the temporary contract.

The employee will need to seek agreement from their manager to continue in the role should there be any extension to the term of the temporary post.

Managers are encouraged to support employee requests to pursue temporary vacancies, wherever possible, to enable them to expand their knowledge and develop their skills for future career development. Business needs must also be taken into consideration.

Where an employee does not seek or is not granted approval to return to their substantive post after a temporary contract, and still accepts a temporary post, they will relinquish their substantive post.

4 Secondments

4.1 Secondments to external organisations

An employee seconded to an external organisation will retain their employment with the council, including all related terms and conditions, whilst carrying out work for the other organisation.

Once the employee has been offered a secondment, a secondment agreement will need to be drafted and it is suggested that the employee, their manager and a representative from the host organisation meet to discuss the terms. Once the secondment agreement has been finalised and signed, a letter will be issued to confirm the arrangements.

If the period of secondment is extended, the employee will be required to seek agreement to the further period from their manager within the council.

4.2 Secondments into the council

Any secondment opportunity within the council will be recruited to in the same way as any other vacancy, as set out in this policy.

Once a successful candidate has been identified and offered the post, a secondment agreement will be drafted, finalised and signed.

FOI Response

For advice regarding the application of this policy please contact:

HR Advice and Support

hradviceandsupport@durham.gov.uk

Service Pay, Reward and Employment Services can be contacted by emailing:

Neighbourhoods and Environment

PESNE@durham.gov.uk

Regeneration, Economy and Growth

PESREG@durham.gov.uk

Children and Young People's Services

PESCYPS@durham.gov.uk

Adult Health Services

PESAHS@durham.gov.uk

Resources

PESResources@durham.gov.uk

Chief Executive's

PESCES@durham.gov.uk

Further support can be accessed by contacting:

Occupational Health

occhealthadmin@durham.gov.uk

Health and Safety

hsteam@durham.gov.uk

Employee Assistance Programme

wisdom.healthassured.org/login

Employer Code MHA042951

Tel 0800 0280199

Durham County Council complies with all relevant statutory obligations. Personal information processed by the Council will be handled in accordance with the Council's privacy statement, which can be accessed [here](#). Human Resources privacy notice provides more specific information on the data collected and how it is handled, a copy of which can be accessed [here](#).

If you have any concerns about how your data is handled, please contact either the Data Protection Officer at dpo@durham.gov.uk or the [Information Commissioner's Office](#).

Author	Version	Last review	Next review
Senior HR Officer	v15.9	1 April 2021	HR policies will be reviewed as and when required in line with legislative changes / best practice



We work together with partners and communities to achieve the best outcome



We put people and communities at the heart of everything we do



We value, trust and support each other



We embrace change and look for better ways to deliver services