

Managers Guidance

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION



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1 Introduction

This document is designed to be read in conjunction with the [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) and aims to provide all those involved in the recruitment of employees with additional advice and guidance to enable you to manage the process effectively.

All templates and supporting document referred to in this document can be found on the intranet.

1.1 Exclusions from the recruitment procedure

Please note, 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 The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 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.

Discrimination can take a number of forms and it is important that the Lead Officer and all selection panel members are aware of the protected characteristics to avoid discriminating against candidates. Some examples of the different types of discrimination are provided below.

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic that they have. Examples include:

- A job advert states 'this job is unsuitable for disabled people';
- Refusing to employ a pregnant woman;
- Refusing to offer a job to a person with the required skills because they belong to a particular ethnic group.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition, rule, policy or practice applies to everyone, but disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Examples include:

- A requirement that the person has more than 5 years' experience;
- Requiring applicants to use a car for work – alternative transport could also be appropriate for people with a disability or younger applicants who may not be able to afford a car;
- Requiring applicants to have graduated in the last 5 years – this could have an adverse impact on older candidates.

Discrimination by association occurs when someone is discriminated against because they are related to or associate with another person with a protected characteristic e.g. a candidate is refused a job because they have a disabled partner.

Discrimination by perception occurs when someone is discriminated against because other believe that they have a protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic e.g. a candidate is refused a job because the interviewer thinks the candidate is gay.

Harassment is unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. A complaint can be made even where the behaviour was not directed at them e.g. a member of the interview panel makes a joke about a colleague's religion when introducing the recruitment panel.

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance or are suspected of doing so e.g. an applicant is not shortlisted because they have previously raised a grievance about unfair treatment.

3 Recruitment process

3.1 Identifying a vacancy

Before advertising a vacancy, consideration must be given as to whether the post could be filled by other means i.e. redeployment, Honoraria, or by utilising the six-month rule. When advertising an entry level post, you should consider whether it would be possible to convert the post into an apprenticeship post. Further information about the scheme is available in the [Apprenticeship Guidance](#). For further information on [Redeployment](#) and/or [Honoraria](#), please see the available policies and/or guidance.

3.2 Review job description and person specification

You must also ensure that the job description and person specification is up to date, making any changes to the responsibilities that may have occurred and incorporating any information obtained through the previous job holder's exit interview.

The content of the job description and person specification should be reflective of the council's values and behaviours and managers should use the [Values and Behaviours Framework](#) to ensure these are incorporated.

Where any changes are made to the job description and person specification, you will need to check with Pay, Reward and Employment Services whether a re-evaluation of the post is required to ensure that the grade of the post is appropriate.

A template job description and person specification is available on the [intranet](#).

3.3 Advert wording

As Lead Officer, you are responsible for writing the advert for the post you wish to advertise. The advert should provide jobseekers with a brief overview of the post, including the main duties and responsibilities in order to attract appropriate candidates. You will also need to include contact details should candidates wish to request additional information and specify the closing date for applications. Care must be taken to ensure the wording is not discriminatory. See section 5 for more information regarding discrimination and the Equality Act.

If a post is subject to an occupational requirement (under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010) it must be clearly stated in the advert. An occupational requirement is where a particular protected characteristic e.g. gender, is central to the role and can therefore be used to select candidates. Occupational requirements often apply to situations where intimate personal care is provided on the grounds of decency or safety. You must be able to justify the characteristic is essential and include it in the person specification otherwise it may be challenged as being discriminatory. When considering applying an occupational requirement, please seek advice from the HR Advice and Support Team prior to advertising the post.

Where a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) check is required for the post, this must be reflected in both the wording of the advert and the job description.

All adverts must include the following wording:

As a disability confident employer, we are committed to employing disabled people and people with health conditions, making reasonable adjustments to support disabled applicants when required.

You must also consider whether any the post meets either of the following criteria and include the associated standard wording as necessary.

3.3.1 Customer facing roles

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. When determining whether a role is customer facing, you should consider the following aspects of the work involved:

- Is there a business need for interaction with the public;
- What is the frequency and form of interaction;
- What is the level of service quality and responsiveness expected by the public;
- What proportion of the role requires spoken interaction with members of the public;
- What is the nature of the role;
- Is English the primary language for the role?

As an example, customer facing roles within the council would include a social worker, as they will have face-to-face interactions with the public on a daily basis and a customer services officer receiving calls and queries from the public.

In line with Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016, if the post is deemed to be customer facing, the following wording must be included in the advert to explain the level of fluency required for the role:

Where our roles are customer facing and you are required to speak to members of the public, the ability to converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English is essential for the post.

The level of English language skills required will also need to be reflected in the person specification for the role.

3.3.2 Politically restricted posts

The Local Government and Housing Act (1989) sets out categories of council employees who are to be regarded as holding politically restricted posts. These employees are prevented from holding or standing for election for various elected offices and engaging in a range of political activities. The advert and job description must state whether a post is politically restricted.

Politically restricted posts fall into two broad categories; specified posts and sensitive posts. Specified posts include:

- Head of Paid Service;
- Statutory Officers e.g. Head of Children Services, Head of Adult Services, Chief Finance Officer;
- Non-statutory Officers e.g. officers reporting to Head of Paid Service;
- Deputy Officers e.g. those reporting to a Corporate Director;
- Monitoring Officer
- Officers exercising delegated powers i.e. specified in the council constitution;
- Assistants to political groups.

Further information regarding specified politically restricted posts can be found in the council [Constitution](#).

Sensitive posts are those that meet one or both of the following criteria:

- Giving advice on a regular basis to the council itself, to any committee or sub-committee of the council or to any joint committee on which the council is represented; or where the council is operating executive arrangements to the executive of the council, to any committee of that executive or to any member of that executive who is also a member of the council;
- Speaking on behalf of the council on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters.

Teachers and Head Teachers are exempt from political restrictions and will not be regarded as holding politically restricted posts.

3.3.3 Hard to fill posts

Approval must be received from the relevant Head of Service that a post is hard to fill and therefore may attract relocation expenses etc as set out in the [Removal, Lodging and Separation Expenses Guidance](#).

Confirmation must be forwarded to Pay, Reward and Employment Services who will ensure that the relevant wording is included in the advert. Applications for relocation expenses cannot be processed unless the appropriate wording was included in the advert.

3.4 Approval to fill the post

Once you have reviewed the job description and person specification and drafted the advert, you will need to seek approval to fill your post(s) through MyWorkforce.

You will need to select the appropriate option from the home page of MyWorkforce, depending on the circumstances in which the vacancy has arisen:

- I want to create and advertise a new post
- I want to fill a vacant post (no amends)
- I want to fill a vacant post with amends

You will be asked to complete a form, providing details of the post that you wish to advertise and attaching the completed job description and person specification and advert wording.

The request will be sent to Pay, Reward and Employment Services, who will check the advert details to ensure that it does not include any inappropriate wording, allocate a service vacancy reference number and make arrangements to advertise the post through the North East Jobs website. The Lead Officer can nominate another manager to receive the confirmation if they are likely to be out of the office after submitting the request by contacting the Pay, Reward and Employment Services.

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 maybe considered. Advice should be sought from the HR Advice and Support Team and approval will need to be sought from the Head of People and Talent Management.

If you request to advertise the post externally using a newspaper, magazine, management journal etc, Pay, Reward and Employment Services will liaise with you directly to confirm the costs and final draft advert for your agreement.

3.5 Selection panel

As Lead Officer, you are responsible for identifying a panel of employees who will assist with the selection process.

The panel should consist of:

- A minimum of 2 people;
- A mixture of male and females, where possible;
- At either the same or higher grade as the vacant post;
- Consist of the same members throughout the selection process to ensure consistency. In exceptional circumstances, if a panel member is no longer able to participate, a suitable replacement should be nominated by the Lead Officer as soon as possible and the reasons for the change noted in the recruitment file. However, the Lead Officer should remain the same throughout the process.

If the post is part of a partnership arrangement, a representative of the partnership organisation should be included on the selection panel in addition to the 2 council representatives. If there is a specific requirement for the representative from the partnership organisation to be the Lead Officer, further advice should be sought from Pay, Reward and Employment Services.

If the post involves working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, at least one person on the selection panel must have received specific training in safer recruitment. This is provided by the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP).

Any relationships between the candidate and councillors or council officers should be declared to the panel prior to interviewing any candidates. In line with the council's [Code of Our Values, Behaviours and Conduct](#), the panel should not include anyone who is related to an applicant.

For some posts it may be beneficial to ask a panel of stakeholders or service users to provide feedback to the main recruitment panel, in addition to the interview. This panel should be supported by a member of the selection panel.

3.6 Shortlisting

It is the responsibility of the Lead Officer, in consultation with the other panel member(s), to identify candidates who meet the requirements of the role to go through to the next stage of the selection process.

The Lead Officer will receive an email from Pay, Reward and Employment Services, which will include a link to the application forms on the North East Jobs site and details required to commence the online shortlisting process. The Lead Officer will be provided with guidance notes, the job description and person specification and a shortlisting matrix, which will highlight any candidates where the guaranteed interview scheme applies for disability, veterans or looked after children.

The Lead Officer will be the only panel member who will have access to shortlist online and it will be their responsibility to ensure that discussion has taken place with other panel members and agreement reached as to who should be shortlisted.

Further information can be found in the [Online Shortlisting Guidance](#).

If at any point it is identified from the application form that a candidate is related to a panel member, this must be declared and the panel member should be replaced.

Where a large number of candidates remain following the shortlisting process, you should consider using an assessment or test as a further method of shortlisting candidates for interview.

3.7 Interview and selection methods

The interview provides the opportunity for two-way communication to occur. Whilst the interview panel need to obtain as much information as possible regarding the candidate's ability to fulfil the criteria for the post, the candidate needs to feel that they were provided the opportunity to do their best and also determine whether the post is right for them. See section 3.9.2 for further information about setting and asking interview questions.

Where appropriate, e.g. for senior roles, it is recommended that another method of assessment is also used in conjunction with an interview or as part of an assessment centre style approach.

The decision to use an additional method of testing should be taken as early as possible in the recruitment process. The chosen test must measure skills and/or abilities specifically related to the requirements of the post. Examples of additional testing are:

- Psychometric testing
- Group exercises
- Task based assessments
- Written report
- Presentation

Please inform Pay, Reward and Employment Services if you intend to use any additional testing.

Interviews will be face-to-face in the majority of circumstances, however there may be circumstances where, a virtual interview process can be adopted. Microsoft Teams is the council's communication app of choice for hosting 'virtual' interviews. Candidates can access Microsoft Teams either via their laptop/pc or by their mobile phone (if they do not have access to a computer). It will only be in exceptional circumstances that other systems will be considered, and this will need to be referred to the ICT service desk. [Virtual Interview Managers Guidance](#) is available. Traditional telephone interviews will only be accommodated in exceptional circumstances and recruiting managers must seek advice in the first instance from HR Advice and Support Team.

3.8 Reasonable adjustments

The council has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the recruitment and selection process to give disabled people an equal opportunity. This can include providing documents in other formats, allowing people extra time to complete applications or to take tests at interview and ensuring the interview venue is accessible.

For further information can be found in the [Reasonable Adjustments Guidance](#).

3.8.1 Access to work

Access to Work is a publicly funded organisation that aims to help more disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or long term physical or mental health condition.

Job applicants can get financial support that they may need due to their disability or long term health condition, such as:

- Communication support at interviews;
- Travel to interview or work;
- A wide variety of support workers;
- Provide equipment in the workplace;
- Other support, such as a sign language interpreter.

Any new starters to the council may be eligible for a full grant if they apply within 6 weeks of starting their new post. If they apply after 6 weeks of starting, the council may have to share some of the costs. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/access-to-work.

3.9 Interview and/or testing preparation

The Lead Officer will make the necessary arrangements for disabled candidates prior to the interview stage. Reasonable adjustments will be made, in agreement with the candidate, to identify an appropriate individual solution and allowing sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements e.g. booking a British Sign Language interpreter.

The Lead Officer is responsible for making the arrangements to obtain or set up any equipment required for presentation, in-tray exercised etc. Any rearrangement of interview dates or times will be at the Lead Officer's discretion.

3.9.1 Venue

The Lead Officer must ensure that there is an appropriate venue for the interview and/or testing, taking into account the following:

- Where possible, interviews should take place at the workplace where the post will be based to allow the candidates to view the workplace;
- Ensure that the room and route to the room is easily accessible to candidates with a disability;
- Try to ensure there is a seated waiting area close to the room where the interview will take place;
- Ensure that someone is available to greet candidates and take them to the appropriate room;
- Arrange for water to be available for candidates;
- Ensure that equipment required is available or that other reasonable adjustments have been made.

3.9.2 Interview questions

The Lead Officer and the selection panel should discuss and agree the core interview questions to be asked of all candidates and determine the role of the panel members in asking the questions.

It is considered that the best way to assess a candidate's future performance is to question them about their past performance, therefore it is recommended that managers use competency based questions during interviews. These questions aim to find out how a candidate has used specific skills in their previous experience and should also incorporate the council's values and behaviours. For example:

Outcome focused

- Can you give an example when you have used your skills to help others?
- Describe a situation where you have solved a problem.
- Describe a situation in which you were working as part of a team. How did you make a contribution?

People focused

- Give an example of how you have tailored your communication to ensure different audiences understood the message.
- Describe a time when you have had to manage a project. How did you ensure that it was completed successfully on time?
- How have you supported a colleague with a wellbeing concern?

Empowering

- Tell me about a time when something didn't go according to plan. What did you learn from it and what was the outcome?
- Give an example of a time you have handled conflict in the workplace.
- Describe a time when you have had to make a difficult decision

iNnovative

- Can you describe a time when you have had to do something different to the norm? How did it make you feel and what was the outcome?
- Tell me about a change initiative that you have implemented. How did you go about it and what was the outcome?
- How have you implemented continuous improvement within your service area and/or team?

The interview questions should be appropriate in number and complexity and focused on measuring the specific criteria in the person specification.

Core questions should be asked of all candidates and supplementary questions can be used to clarify, check facts or probe answers. Probing questions can often result in extracting more detailed and useful information from the candidate regarding their skills and competencies that can

be transferred to the role. These additional questions and the candidate's responses should be noted on the interview recording sheet. The Lead Officer should always explore gaps in a candidate's employment history, particularly for posts working with children or vulnerable adults.

There are significant restrictions on the type of questions and information relating to a person's health or disability that can be asked or considered during the selection process. Questions about health or disability should not be asked until the person has been offered a post. This means that selection panels cannot ask for or consider sickness absence information as part of their decision making.

It is lawful to ask questions relating to a candidate's ability to carry out a function that is intrinsic or fundamental to the job. There are few situations where this will need to be asked and the Lead Officer must seek advice from the HR Advice and Support Team in advance if they believe that a health or disability question may be relevant.

3.10 At the interview

Each panel member should complete an [Interview Recording Sheet](#) for each candidate and take appropriate notes to ensure that an objective decision can be made. The interview recording sheet should be signed by the panel member. A numbered scoring system should **not** be used.

The Lead Officer should introduce members of the panel to each candidate and explain that the interview panel will be taking notes. The Lead Officer should also check the preferred contact number for each candidate and let them know the anticipated timescale for when they will be informed of the outcome.

The panel should ask the core interview questions in the agreed format i.e. which panel member is asking which questions. A copy of the questions may be offered to candidates at the start of the interview as a reminder; if this approach is followed then it must be consistently offered to all candidates and provided in alternative formats, if required.

Time should be allowed for the candidate to ask questions and/or add any points they wish to make at the end of the interview questions.

The interview panel should be careful not to make assumptions about candidate behaviour e.g. lack of eye contact, as this could be due to their cultural background or a disability. Advice can be sought from the HR Advice and Support Team, if required.

Candidates will have been asked to bring an original identification document and also a copy. The Lead Officer will need to see the original identification document, verify that the copy is valid and retain the copy for their recruitment records.

3.10.1 Decision making

The Lead Officer should ask each panel member for their views on how each candidate's answers meet the job description and person specification using the notes from the interview recording sheet. The Lead Officer should then express their own views and lead the discussion to reach a panel view as to the most appointable candidate. Once a decision has been reached, the Lead Officer should complete and sign the [Interview Summary Sheet](#) and send it to Pay, Reward and Employment Services.

The Lead Officer should contact the successful candidate(s) as soon as possible to offer them the post, subject to clearances. All newly appointed employees should be placed on the lowest point of the salary scale, although exceptions to this are allowed in certain circumstances. If it is proposed to offer more than the bottom of the grade, the Lead Officer should speak to Pay,

Reward and Employment Services before contacting the candidate to ensure that the proposal is in line with the Local Collective Agreement on pay and allowances.

If they decline the offer, the job should be offered to the next appointable candidate until the offer is accepted or no other appointable candidates remain. All other applicants should then be informed that they have been unsuccessful.

The Lead Officer should offer interview feedback to unsuccessful candidates as soon as possible. The feedback should be constructive and focus on the degree to which the candidate met or failed to meet the job description and person specification. An accurate and written record of the feedback should be kept in the recruitment file.

The Lead Officer and Pay, Reward and Employment Services should update the relevant sections of the Recruitment Checklist.

4 Appointment procedure

The Pay, Reward and Employment Services Team will issue a conditional offer of employment to the successful candidate, stating that the offer is subject to satisfactory clearances.

The letter will also request information regarding any previously issued redundancy payments by the council within the last 12 months, as set out in the [Recovery of Redundancy Payments Policy](#).

Pay, Reward and Employment Services will ensure that all information required in the conditional offer letter is sighted and recorded before agreeing a start date with the Lead Officer and issuing a statement of particulars.

4.1 Pre-employment checks

4.1.1 References

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references. Please see the council's [Reference Policy](#) for further information.

4.1.2 Identity checks

The Lead Officer will be responsible for verifying original ID documents for the successful candidate to confirm their legal right to work in the UK or have the right to carry out the type of work that is being offered. A list of relevant ID documentation will be sent to the candidate with the conditional letter of appointment.

The Lead Officer will need to see the original documents, check them in the presence of the candidate and make a clear copy. The Lead Officer should sign and date the copy and send it to Pay, Reward and Employment Services.

If the successful applicant needs to access information via the Public Services Network (PSN) secure link to Central Government, then the Lead Officer will need to ensure that the identity checks are equivalent to the Cabinet Office HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) guidance on pre-employment screening. This will ensure that the council meets the checks required by the Government Code of Connection. The BPSS pre-employment screening includes:

- Identity check;
- Nationality and immigration status;
- Employment history (last 3 years); and

- Verification of criminal record (unspent convictions only). The verification of criminal record must be independent and obtained through applying for a basic disclosure through DBS.

More information can be found in the [Right to Work in the UK](#) policy.

4.1.3 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Where a DBS check is a requirement of the role, and this was stated in the advert, the successful candidate will receive a link to an online DBS application form in their conditional letter of appointment. They will need to complete the online form and you will be able to validate their application form using the identification documents provided at the interview stage.

This is a crucial part of the recruitment process and their appointment cannot be confirmed until appropriate clearance has been received.

It is the responsibility of the Lead Officer to see the original DBS certificate once the candidate has received it. Candidates who subscribe to the DBS Update Service and are applying for a job within the same workforce as their current DBS check, will need to give permission to the council to carry out an online status check and present the original DBS certificate to the Lead Officer. Further information can be found in the [Vetting Policy](#).

4.1.4 Criminal convictions

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order) 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are protected and are not subject to disclosure to employers and, therefore, cannot be considered.

Applicants are asked to declare if they have any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not protected and to provide relevant details of the offence, date of offence and sentence. They are also asked to declare that they have read the guidance notes, including information regarding criminal convictions and declare that the information given is true in all respects. Further information can be found in the [Vetting Policy](#).

4.1.5 Qualifications

Original qualification certificates should be sighted by the Lead Officer and copies provided to Pay, Reward and Employment Services.

Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are grouped into levels from entry level to level 8. Qualifications at the same level are a similar level of difficulty but the size and content of the qualifications can vary. Further information about equivalent UK qualifications can be found at www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean.

Please contact Pay, Reward and Employment Services for further information about qualifications obtained outside the UK.

4.1.6 Non-fraud declaration

The council is under a duty to protect the public funds that it administers and has a responsibility to create a strong anti-fraud culture within the organisation. In order to meet these responsibilities, the council is committed to an effective [Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy](#) and aims to ensure that it does not unwittingly engage organised criminals through the recruitment and selection of its employees.

As a preventative measure, all job applicants are required to sign a non-fraud declaration, stating that the information they have provided on the application form is true and complete. The council may check the details provided with other agencies, including local authorities and the police for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies administering public funds solely for this purpose.

4.1.7 Pre-employment health clearance

The successful candidate will receive a Pre-employment Health Declaration (PEHD) from Occupational Health via email from the Cohort system. Where the job role involves working with vulnerable clients, the candidate will also be emailed a questionnaire to be completed. However, internal candidates who are already working with vulnerable clients will not be required to complete this form.

If the candidate indicates that they do not require any specific aids, adaptations or adjustments, there will be no requirement for any for Occupational Health involvement and the PEHD will be held on the recruitment file.

If they indicate that they do require specific aids, adaptations or adjustments, Pay, Reward and Employment Services will refer them to Occupational Health for advice. Where the job role has been identified by risk assessment as requiring OHS intervention e.g. Health Surveillance, the Pay, Reward and Employment Services Team will refer the applicant to Occupational Health irrespective of the candidate's declaration.

Following the health assessment, Occupational Health will provide a statement of fitness including any appropriate advice on adjustments to Pay, Reward and Employment Services, who will then provide this to the Lead Officer. The manager must consider any adjustments required and seek further advice if there are any concerns regarding their reasonableness.

4.1.8 Food handler questionnaire

If the post involves directly touching open food, food contact surfaces or other surfaces in rooms where open food is handled as part of their work, a Food Handler Questionnaire will be emailed to the successful candidate by Occupational Health via the Cohort system.

The questionnaire will help reduce the spread of infection by advising which illnesses and symptoms the applicant has suffered from.

4.1.9 Driver induction assessment

If the successful candidate is required to drive a council vehicle as part of their role, the appointment will be subject to the production of a valid driving licence for the required category of vehicle and the satisfactory completion of the Driver Induction Assessment.

Pay, Reward and Employment Services will arrange the driver assessment for the successful candidate.

4.1.10 Risk assessment for young employees

In accordance with the council's [Young Employees Procedure](#), a risk assessment must be carried out by the manager before any person under the age of 18 years starts work.

4.1.11 Sickness absence information

A sickness absence form will be sent to the successful candidate with their conditional offer of employment.

If the information reveals a poor sickness record, with no explanation and not linked to a disability or maternity, the Lead Officer may wish to consider whether they still consider the candidate suitable for the post. If they feel they would like to withdraw the offer of employment, the Lead Officer must justify the reason why and this information must be retained in the recruitment file.

In considering all clearance information received the Lead Officer needs to be certain that all checks and references are satisfactory.

Advice should be sought from the HR Advice and Support Team before any decision is made to withdraw an offer of employment.

5 Complaints

If a candidate feels that they were not afforded the opportunity to participate appropriately in the recruitment and selection process, they can raise a complaint within 5 working days of receiving notification that they were unsuccessful. If the Lead Officer is aware that they will not be available at the time a complaint may be received e.g. on annual leave, they must make alternative arrangements for someone else to deal with the complaint.

5.1 Dealing with a complaint

In most cases, issues raised by complainants can be dealt with by an explanation being provided by the Lead Officer who must respond within 5 working days of the complaint being received.

The response should be provided using the same method as used by the complainant and a note of the nature of the complaint and the response provided should be retained in the recruitment file.

Your response should also include information about the complaints procedure.

5.1.1 Formal process

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response received, they can raise the issue with the Head of Talent and People Management, who will:

- Nominate an officer to undertake the investigation;
- Set terms of reference with the investigating officer;
- Set timescales to ensure a response to the complainant within 25 working days;
- Monitor the progress of the investigation;
- Liaise with Pay, Reward and Employment Services and HR Advice and Support Team to maintain records and outcomes.

5.2 Training and support

There are various training courses available for managers in relation to the council's recruitment and selection practices, including a 'policy briefing' which is mandatory for Lead Officers. Available courses can be accessed via the [Durham Learning and Development System](#) on the intranet.

Managers can search for 'recruitment' which will provide both online and face-to-face courses available as part of the corporate learning and development programme.

This list is not exhaustive, but includes:

- Recruitment and Selection Policy Briefing

- Safer Workforce
- Interviewing skills for Recruitment
- Equality and Diversity
- GDPR/Data Protection

Support for recruitment and selection can be provided by Pay, Reward and Employment Services and the HR Advice and Support Team.

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	V1.8	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