

# Recruitment Procedure

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North Tyneside Council

## 1. Introduction

North Tyneside Council is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive organisation – a place where we can all be ourselves and succeed on merit. The recruitment process is a key method to supporting this commitment.

Recruitment and selection is a key managerial task and therefore to support managers there is a Managers' Toolkit available on Learning Pool. The toolkit contains all of the forms a manager needs as well as practical guidance and advice. The recruitment process is a confidential process and therefore all aspects of the procedure should be treated as such.

This procedure takes managers through all the things they need to consider, and steps to take, when recruiting to a role.

## 2. Why recruit?

The potential need to recruit will arise in the following situations:

- an employee leaves the organisation resulting in a vacant position in the structure
- new work is awarded /identified
- the volume of existing work increases

These scenarios all provide an opportunity to evaluate how the work can be delivered in future, with the aim of realising efficiencies and/or service improvements.

For example:

- can the additional tasks be undertaken by existing employees
- can any of the tasks be automated to free up time
- can the job be redesigned to make it more attractive
- do all the tasks still need to be done

## 3. What type of role is needed?

If after considering the alternatives it is decided that additional staff resources are required, the first part of the process is to clearly define the role required and how the work is best delivered.

Considerations should include:

- What is the business need?
- Are there any current workforce planning and/or restructuring activities that may have an impact on the role and the timescales for these?
- What funding is available for the post?
- If it's an existing post are all of the tasks still required? Can they be delivered in a different way? Are any changes anticipated which will require additional and/or different skills?
- Is the post potentially suitable for an apprentice, either as an a apprenticeship or as an opportunity for an apprentice who has completed or will shortly complete their apprenticeship with the council?

- Is there information from exit interviews with previous post-holders that suggests a way the post could be improved?
- How will the service be affected if the vacancy is not filled?
- How should the post be filled? On a temporary, permanent or secondment basis?
- Would fixed term be appropriate?
- If there is a very short term/immediate need, would an agency worker be appropriate?
- What are the hours of the post? Full time, part time, flexible or annualised?
- What kind of working arrangements can be accommodated?
- Can additional hours be given to existing employees?
- Which recruitment checks are required? (for example is a DBS check required?)
- Is it a politically restricted post?

The recruiting manager will need to demonstrate that consideration has been given to the above as they will need to provide a business case to their Head of Service as part of the recruitment approvals process.

#### 4. How to create a new position or amend an existing role

In some cases and particularly in respect of senior and management roles, it may be appropriate to use a generic job description. If a new position needs to be created or an existing role **significantly** amended, this needs to go through the job evaluation process. It should be noted that any change may have an impact on the grades of other employees in the same or similar roles, or the hierarchical structure.

Most new roles will be under the standard council terms and conditions and the Green Book (National Joint Council for Local Government Services) pay and conditions of service unless there is a specific professional requirement (such as Educational Psychologists or Health Visitors) or it is a Chief Officer post.

Once the outcome of the job evaluation is known the line manager needs to create the post on BMS (guidance is available on the intranet).

#### 5. Advertising the role

##### 5.1. The advert

An effective advert allows prospective candidates to self-select maximising the field of those who meet at least the essential criteria for the role. It should accurately portray the role and the organisation. Guidance on writing job adverts is available in the Managers' Toolkit on learning pool. There is also an advert template which includes all the key details enabling managers to focus on the role they are recruiting to and the specific competencies applicants need to demonstrate.

##### 5.2. The Fluency Duty

The Fluency Duty applies where employees are required, as a regular and intrinsic part of their role to speak to members of the public in English. This could be speaking face

to face and/or over the telephone. If this is a requirement it is recommended that the person specification includes the following in the essential criteria:

*The ability to converse at ease with members of the public and provide advice in accurate spoken English*

Setting the necessary standard of English spoken language proficiency will depend on the role. Managers should consider the nature and extent of the spoken communication necessary for the effective performance of the role including the complexity of the information to be communicated. Further guidance is in the Managers' Toolkit.

### **5.3. Where to advertise**

It is important to carefully consider where to advertise, taking into account the costs and the level of the position. You should also consider other factors such as previous advertising methods and whether they provided value for money in attracting the right calibre of applicants in manageable numbers. Options include advertising internally only, externally on NorthEast Jobs, and/or in specialist publications.

You should also consider promoting employment at job-fairs, open days and events attracting diverse communities eg Northern Pride.

### **5.4. Obtain approval**

The recruiting manager will complete an Advert Request Form and submit it to their Head of Service for approval. This will then be forwarded to the HR Recruitment and Safeguarding Team in Employee Services for final approvals to be obtained. When the relevant approvals are completed the role will be advertised.

### **5.5. Redeployment candidates**

Where redeployment candidates meet the essential criteria for the role, the council will normally guarantee them an interview and they will normally be considered before advert or if the post has already been advertised before any applicants. The council is also committed to supporting its apprentices who will be treated as redeployment candidates for the last 4 weeks of their apprenticeship.

### **5.6. What happens after the closing date?**

The Recruitment and Safeguarding team from Employee Services will collate the applications, separate out the equality monitoring form, and send the applications to the recruiting manager.

If there is only one applicant, the same process will apply as if there were multiple applicants.

If no-one applies for the role the recruiting manager should try to ascertain why this may have happened before deciding how to proceed.

Potential issues could be:

- the role itself – for example the job content or the salary offered in comparison with other organisations
- the way in which the advert was presented did not appeal to the target audience
- it wasn't advertised widely enough or the timing wasn't ideal, for example over the Christmas or summer holiday periods when job seekers may be away.

## 6. The Selection Process

### 6.1. Selection panel

The recruiting manager is responsible for setting up and chairing a selection panel. The panel members should have the required skills in interviewing and understand the job being recruited to. There should be a minimum of two people on the panel to ensure fairness and impartiality, and the panel will usually consist of representatives of the management team. In some instances this may be supplemented by service users and/or internal or external experts, for all or part of the selection process, where appropriate.

The panel should also understand the danger of unfair discrimination in the process which has legal implications and consequences for the diversity of the organisation. Further guidance on how to avoid discrimination is in the Managers' Toolkit.

To ensure consistency the selection panel will usually consist of the same people throughout the selection process, unless there are exceptional circumstances (i.e. sickness or unavoidable absence).

### 6.2. Ensuring fairness

If a member of the panel is a relative of or has a personal relationship with an applicant, they must declare this and a new panel member should be appointed to replace them.

### 6.3. Involving service users (including children and young people)

Service users, for example children and young people can make a valuable contribution to the recruitment process. Their participation should be considered for key strategic and managerial posts and posts where staff will have a high level of responsibility for their day to day care, such as residential staff. They will not be responsible for deciding who will be appointed and consideration needs to be given as to how their input is factored into the process whilst still maintaining objectivity. Their role in the process and how their feedback will be factored into the overall process must be agreed and clarified at the outset, and they should be given suitable preparation and/or training. Further information and support is available from the Participation and Engagement team at [participation@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:participation@northtyneside.gov.uk)

### 6.4. Written records

The panel must keep written records to support their decisions at all stages of the process. Templates are available to assist with this in the Managers' Toolkit. This helps to demonstrate that the selection process has been fair, non-discriminatory and

transparent in the event that an appointment decision is challenged. Candidates may ask to see the records made about them so the panel must ensure they only record factual information and avoid making any comments that cannot be substantiated.

Where a number of candidates have been through a selection process, the records will aid the panel's recollection of what each person said and how they performed in any tasks or exercises if these were used. As well as assisting the panel's decision of who to appoint, they will also enable the recruiting manager to provide feedback to candidates on their performance if requested.

## 6.5. Short-listing of applicants

Short-listing is a screening process used to identify which applicants will be invited to interview. When the panel have agreed on the short-list, their decisions should be recorded on the short-listing form, including the reason(s) for non-selection.

All application forms should be scrutinised to ensure:

- they are fully and properly completed
- the information is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies,
- any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment and the reasons for this should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short-list the applicant

Once unsuitable applicants have been screened out, a check should be made to see if any of the applicants

- has declared they have a disability – if the applicant meets all of the essential requirements of the role, in accordance with the 'Disability Confident' scheme, the council has committed to these applicants being guaranteed an interview
- has served in the Armed Forces - if the applicant meets the essential and desirable criteria for the role the council has committed to these applicants being guaranteed an interview.

## 6.6. The assessment process

The aim of the assessment process is to identify the most suitable candidate for the position from the short-listed candidates. All candidates for the same post **must** go through the same selection process, and the selection methods chosen will depend upon a number of factors including:

- **Type of position.** What is the type of work to be undertaken?
- **Status and salary.** The more complex and demanding the role is the greater number of competencies may need to be tested involving a variety of methods, such as presentations or report writing.
- **Budget.** There needs to be a balance between accurately assessing the candidates for the post and the time and money spent on the process.
- **Timescales.** Timescales should be taken into account for each selection method and factored into the recruitment

The selection methods chosen must not unfairly discriminate against any of the candidates, and should only test competencies directly related to the role. Further guidance on selection methods is available for managers in the Manager's toolkit.

## 6.7. Interviewing

Interviewing is the most commonly used selection method and can be used to recruit to all jobs. Structured interviews predict job performance better than unstructured job interviews and therefore they should be planned carefully. The interview should consist of questions focussed on the specifics of the job. This could be done through a combination of questions that ask what people have done in previous positions and questions on how they would handle specific situations. They should be relevant to the job and link clearly to the job description and person specification.

All candidates should be asked the same set of questions but supplementary questions can be different depending on their response. The council interview template and scoring system should be used to record the candidate's responses.

To help ensure consistency managers are encouraged to focus questions around the competencies required for the role. A set of questions based around the council's competencies is available for managers to use and/or adapt.

## 6.8. Assessment centres

An assessment centre is a series of activities designed to fully test the candidates' abilities and potential abilities. All candidates should be given the same tasks and they should relate directly to the person specification and reflect the reality of the job. The activities chosen will depend on the nature of the job and could include a written exercise, a presentation, a group activity or an IT/computer skills test. Tests that ask candidates to 'try out real work' are the strongest predictor of performance in the job.

The selection activities and the roles of the panel should be fully prepared and agreed in advance. This will include

- where the assessment centre will take place to ensure a suitably quiet and uninterrupted environment
- making adjustments to accommodate candidates who have indicated a specific requirement.

All members of the panel should take full notes using the template forms in the Managers' Toolkit.

## 6.9. The appointment decision

At the end of the selection process the panel should total their scores and determine their first and second choice candidates, recording their decision on the appropriate form. On occasion none of the short-listed candidates may be suitable for the position. In this situation the recruiting manager should try to ascertain why this may have happened before deciding how to proceed. They should **not** simply appoint the best

candidate from those assessed simply to fill the position. The issue may lie with the role itself, for example the job content or the salary, or it may be that the advert (where it was placed or the timing of the advert) did not reach or appeal to the target audience.

Where pay is considered to be the main factor in attracting suitable candidates, a market supplement may be appropriate; see the Market Supplement process for further details.

## 7. How do I make a job offer?

The recruiting manager should contact the chosen candidate by telephone to offer the post making it clear it is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks including:

- medical clearance
- references
- evidence of a candidate's eligibility to work in the UK (usually obtained at interview)
- evidence of a candidate's qualifications/professional memberships as appropriate (usually obtained at interview)
- *if required* a Disclosure and Barring (DBS) clearance
- *if required* a Disqualification by Association self-assessment

Candidates **cannot** start employment before all checks have been successfully obtained.

The recruiting manager will forward all documentation for the successful candidate to Employee Services to enable them to send out the formal offer letter and contract of employment subject to clearances.

The recruiting manager will then notify the unsuccessful candidates by email or letter using the standard template. The recruiting manager will retain the documentation for the unsuccessful applicants for one month so that they can provide feedback to candidates if requested, and then forward the file to Employee Services who will retain it for a period of 6 months from the date of appointment.

## 8. Why do we need pre-employment checks?

Having carried out the selection process to determine suitability for a job role the pre-employment checks are used to ensure the candidate meets the minimum criteria for recruitment in terms of:

- Identity – to establish the right to work in the UK
- References – to provide a check of the factual information provided by the candidate during the recruitment process
- Medical clearance – to establish whether a candidate can carry out the tasks that are intrinsic to the job role
- Disclosure and Barring Checks and Disqualification by Association assessments – to minimise the risk of unsuitable people being employed to work with eg children or vulnerable adults
- Professional registration and/or qualifications – if a specific requirement for the job eg lawyer, social worker or health visitor



Employee Services will liaise with the candidate to complete the pre-employment checks relevant to the post, and pass the results to the recruiting manager.

When written references are received Employee Services will forward them to the recruiting manager. In respect of posts where a DBS check is required for safeguarding purposes the recruiting manager will telephone the referees to verbally verify that the reference has been supplied by the person named on the reference request and that this person is an appropriate one to supply a reference (see Guidance on References). The recruiting manager will make a written record that they have completed the verification check on the form provided by Employee Services and return it to them to place on file.

If any of the pre-employment checks are not completed or something is highlighted that brings the candidate's suitability for appointment into question, Employee Services will notify the recruiting manager. Depending on the nature of the concern, it may be necessary for the recruiting manager to:

- Discuss the situation with the candidate and/or request further information
- Conduct a risk assessment
- Withdraw the offer of employment

Where the concern relates to a medical condition, the recruiting manager will discuss it with the candidate to explore whether any reasonable adjustments can be made to enable the candidate to take up the post. Under the Equality Act 2010 the council is duty bound to seek reasonable adjustments for any employee whose medical condition may be deemed to be a disability. Where reasonable adjustments are agreed, the recruiting manager must ensure that they are in place prior to the employee's first day, taking into consideration that putting them in place may take some time.

## **9. Confirming the offer**

When the recruiting manager is satisfied that all pre-employment checks are in order, they will contact the candidate to agree their start date. When this has been agreed the recruiting manager will inform Employee Services, who will confirm the offer and start date in writing to the candidate.

## **10. Withdrawing a job offer**

If any of the pre-employment checks are unsatisfactory it may be necessary to withdraw the job offer. The recruiting manager should seek guidance from Human Resources in this instance. If the decision is taken to withdraw the offer the recruiting manager should contact the candidate by phone. They should clearly state the reason(s) for withdrawal, the steps taken prior to reaching the decision and confirm that the decision will be confirmed in writing.

If the pre-employment clearance checks are not completed within 8 weeks, the appointment should be withdrawn and only in exceptional circumstances will the appointment be kept open beyond this timeframe.

## **11. Can I offer the job to the second placed candidate if the selected candidate appointment is not successful?**

If a job offer is withdrawn because of unsatisfactory pre-employment checks, the recruiting manager can offer the position to the second candidate provided they were suitable to appoint.

If a selected candidate withdraws from the process, a new appointee leaves or if an identical post becomes vacant within three months of the original recruitment, recruiting managers can review the applications and make an offer to the second choice or another suitable candidate if they are still available.

If the vacancy occurs after 3 months, a new procedure should normally be undertaken if the post still needs to be filled.