



**RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

APPROVED BY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
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Section 1: Purpose, Scope and Policy Principles.

1.1. Purpose

- 1.1.1 To provide a fair and objective method of recruiting employees who have the skills, knowledge and experience to do their jobs
- 1.1.2 To ensure that we adhere to our Equal Opportunity in Employment Policy in recruiting employees
- 1.1.3 To provide a method of recruitment suited to the Council's needs within its workforce planning framework
- 1.1.4 To meet our legal obligations, including a commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults when recruiting to posts with access to these groups ('vulnerable groups').

1.2. Scope

1.2.1 The principles set out below will apply to ALL Reading Borough Council recruitment, whether internal or external. In addition, more specific **mandatory** guidance exists as follows -

- Recruitment and pre-employment Checks for Community Schools
- Recruitment and pre-employment Checks for Posts dealing with Vulnerable Groups outside of Schools
- Guide to the Procurement of Supply Teachers
- Corporate Policy on -
 - the engagement of [Casual workers](#),
 - the engagement of [Interim Managers and Consultants](#)
 - the use of volunteers

1.2.2 The processes set out in the Recruitment and Selection procedure may be adapted to meet particular circumstances providing that all the key policy principles in 1.3 are observed.

1.2.3 Posts, which are part of jointly agreed career, trainee or succession planning frameworks, are also subject to the principles set out below unless they contain specific provisions to the contrary. Likewise, some jointly agreed Council Policy and Procedures may contain variations to the principles below to meet specific circumstances (eg Employment Stability Agreement)

1.3 Policy Principles

1.3.1 The following important principles are encompassed within this procedure:

[Recruitment to Posts Dealing with Vulnerable Groups](#)

A key element of the Council's recruitment and selection policy is its commitment to the protection of vulnerable groups.

In order to comply with statutory requirements and best practice, the Council's recruitment and selection procedure contains requirements to protect vulnerable groups as well as detailed guidance for particular occupational groups (see Section 1 above). This Policy and Procedure sets out the minimum processes and principles that must be applied in all cases to ensure that people in vulnerable groups are protected. Failure to do so not only exposes vulnerable groups to unnecessary risk, but also leaves the Council at risk of prosecution.

- Equality of opportunity in recruitment is a cornerstone of the Council's [Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy](#)
- Applicants with a declared disability will be assessed against the minimum criteria for the post when shortlisting
- 1. Redeployees will be given prior consideration if the minimum criteria are met
- 2. The Council is committed to 'simultaneous advertising' where all posts will be advertised internally and externally at the same time except where Council Policies, procedures and agreements with the Trades Unions provide otherwise.
- 3. The complexity and sophistication of the recruitment process applied for each vacancy must be proportionate to the level of post to be filled - it must be fair but not overly bureaucratic or daunting to potential applicants
- 4. Recruitment for posts with access to children or vulnerable adults will be safe and promote the welfare of these groups.
- 5. All applicants can expect fair treatment and high quality of service
- 6. Employees are selected only on the knowledge, experience, skills and competencies needed for the job - as a minimum this should involve an application, shortlisting and interview.
- 7. A job description, person specification and/or competences are essential benchmarks against which candidates can be assessed and should be used throughout the process
- 8. Selection-Shortlisting and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person
- 9. Training in this policy and procedure is an essential requirement for all those involved in the selection and appointment processes
- 10. Monitoring is essential to assessing the effectiveness of the process
- 11. Each new employee shall receive a full induction to their workplace and the Council
- 12. Each new employee shall undertake a probationary period of employment

Dissatisfaction and Complaints

The Council operates a right of complaint for applicants who feel their applications have not been fairly considered. Applicants may complain in writing to the ~~Lead Head of HR Service Manager~~ at any stage in the recruitment process. This must be within 5 working days of the alleged act complained of. ~~The Head of HR will arrange an investigation. A complaint about the Head of HR will be referred to the Chief Executive. All complaints will be dealt with through the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure.~~

The recruitment process will normally be halted at the point that the complaint is received.

Each new employee will be included in the regular programme of one to ones and appraisals.

SECTION 2 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1.1 The Corporate Director

The Corporate Director is responsible for ensuring that recruitment and selection is carried out in accordance with the policy and procedure, is consistent, fair, objective and meets statutory requirements.

Each Directorate is responsible for making its own detailed arrangements for recruitment and selection, ensuring it recruits staff with the necessary skills and experience to do their jobs, and who are suitable for the role to which they are appointed.

Once the recruitment process starts these arrangements become the responsibility of the appropriate Lead Officer for the individual recruitment exercise. The Lead Officer's responsibilities are set out in the Recruitment and Selection Procedure.

2.1.2 The Manager

Managers have the responsibility to ensure that:

- Recruitment and selection is carried out in their service areas consistently, fairly, objectively and in accordance with Council Policy and statutory requirements so that those appointed are suitable for and have the necessary skills and experience to do their jobs.
- They understand the Council's policy and procedure on recruitment and selection
- Both they and their staff have had adequate training before taking part in selecting candidates for jobs.
- That staff receive appropriate guidance and training in the systems and principles that exist to protect people in vulnerable groups - not just with regard to the recruitment to posts that deal with vulnerable groups.

2.2 HR RESPONSIBILITIES

2.2.1 The role of the HR Service is to act as a key partner to directorates in the assessment, organisation and delivery of the recruitment process. In particular -

- Ensure all required pre-employment and other suitability checks are carried out.
- Provide day-to-day advice to managers.
- Ensure that monitoring is carried out and that it is used to good effect.
- Review the quality of the process, look for improvements to make it more effective and provide briefings for managers as necessary.
- Review how well the procedure is achieving its aim and to recommend any improvements that may be necessary.
- Provide briefings and corporate training for staff involved in the process according to their needs.
- Work with managers and trades unions to implement any changes to the policy/procedure.
- To provide guidance and advice on statutory requirements and best practice in the protection of people in vulnerable groups - not just restricted to recruitment
- Investigate any complaints from applicants, managers or trades union representatives.

SECTION 3 - RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE - THE MAIN STAGES

3.1 The Lead Officer is responsible for making the appointment and has the key role of ensuring that the process runs smoothly, fairly and effectively. HR, particularly the Recruitment Payroll and Employment Services Team (RESTPEST) will provide advice and support throughout the process. There is also other supplementary guidance shown at the end of this document.

3.2 Pre-Planning

3.2.1 When a vacancy arises, consider:

- The job and team structure:

- ☐ Arrange an [exit interview](#) with the departing member of staff to provide useful information about the job.
- ☐ Is the team structure still appropriate?
- ☐ Do you need to fill the post?
- ☐ Are the team's skills being used effectively?
- ☐ Is the balance of skills in the team right?
- ☐ Do the members of your team have the skills they need?
- ☐ Review the **job description and person specification** and / or competencies. Does it still accurately reflect the role and skills that you need? **Does it contain accurate information about the postholder's responsibility to protect vulnerable people, the appropriate level of pre-employment checks and the postholders responsibilities for Health and Safety, business continuity etc?**
- ☐ Any reasonable adjustments that could be made to make both jobs and the process accessible to disabled people under The Disability Discrimination Act (see the Council's [Guide to the Disability Discrimination Act](#)).

For further information see [Manager's Guide to Job Descriptions, Person Specifications and Competencies](#).

If you identify changes to your structure, you will want to refer to the Council's [Employment Stability Agreement](#).

- The methods of filling the vacancy:

- ☐ Is this part of a career structure or pathway? Are there any employees ready to move into the post? See [Guide to Career Grades](#)
- ☐ Is this an opportunity to provide development through secondment or job swaps? See [Guide to Secondments](#)
- ~~☐ Does HR have suitable candidates in a pool of interested applicants?~~
- ☐ Are there any suitable employees seeking redeployment who should be given prior consideration? (Speak to HR adviser about the current redeployee list)
- ☐ Is this suitable as a development opportunity for your apprentice/trainee? Are there any suitable apprentices/trainees elsewhere in the Council? (Speak to HR, L&D)

~~4.~~ Advertising and preparing for selection

- ☐ Decide how and where to advertise the post. ~~REST-PEST~~ will advise on writing and placing advertisements (See [Manager's Guide to the Recruitment Process](#)).
- ☐ Decide who will form the shortlisting / interview panel.
- ☐ Check whether the post is:
 - Subject to Elected Member involvement, see [Member Involvement in Recruitment](#)

- Politically restricted under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- Exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and therefore subject to an Enhanced DBS check.
- Any statutory or best practice requirements relating to the protection of vulnerable groups

- Decide which of the person specification's criteria (if not all) will be assessed at shortlisting and which will need to be assessed at interview.
- Decide whether using tests would provide a more informed assessment of any of the person specification's criteria.
- If you need to recruit someone quickly on a short-term, interim basis, you may want to use ~~one of~~ the recruitment agencies used by ~~in~~ the Council's ~~Agency Agreement~~ or the Council's [Policy on the Use of Consultants and Interim Managers](#)
- If you need a pool of staff to cover fluctuating operational needs, such as casual workers, or where you have recurring vacancies, recruitment should be carried out at regular intervals to maintain the pool at an appropriate level (see [Guide to the Recruitment of Casual Staff](#))

3.3 Dealing with Applications

3.3.1 The HR REST-PEST team will handle the application stage. This may include the dispatch and receipt of all application forms or whatever form of application process you agree

3.4 Shortlisting

3.4.1 Shortlisting may not be necessary in all cases. For instance, where you are recruiting to a pool or you have few applicants and want to see them all. The Lead Officer will normally lead the shortlisting and ensure that before starting the Shortlisting process that the panel is clear about:

- The person specification criteria being used for shortlisting
- The information applicants should provide in order to demonstrate that they meet these criteria and to ensure consistency of selection.
- The minimum requirements of the post (see applications from candidates with a disability and from redeployees below)

3.4.2 The panel should assess each application against the person specification criteria or competences to agree the shortlist. The Lead Officer has discretion to decide how this will be done depending on the circumstances. See **Manager's Guide to Recruitment and Selection**. Whichever process the Lead Officer decides upon, the principles of fairness, legal compliance, and selection based on objective relevant criteria must be applied. The Lead Officer must record and sign off the panel's decisions and reasons for rejection. The record must include:

- ☒ The criteria used for assessment, and which were agreed as minimum criteria
- ☒ The evidence required from applicants to demonstrate that they meet the criteria
- ☒ A simple matrix showing how each applicant did against the criteria
- A brief note of the discussions, decisions and reasons for rejection
- ☒ If a disabled candidate or a redeployee is not shortlisted, an explanation of why they did not meet the minimum criteria

3.4.3 To meet our commitment to candidates with a disability, those who meet the **minimum criteria** for a job vacancy **must** be shortlisted and interviewed. You will be told which candidates have a disability at the Shortlisting stage and you will be provided with a copy of [Brief Guide to Shortlisting and Interviewing Disabled Candidates](#). The HR Service will assist you in dealing with questions or issues arising from these requirements.

3.4.4 In accordance with the Council's Employment Stability Agreement and other employment policies, a member of staff designated as a redeployee must be given prior consideration for the post provided they meet the minimum criteria for the post.

3.4.4-5 All papers used during the Shortlisting stage **must be** sent back to HR for recording and audit purposes.

3.4.56 This is also a good time to agree the questions that you will ask at the interview.

3.5 Employee References

3.5.1 It is important to note here that there are two methods of handling and using references depending on the type of post being recruited to.

3.5.2 Posts with Access to Vulnerable Groups

Where a new recruit will be taking up a post with access to vulnerable groups references for **all candidates must** be available to the Chair of the selection panel **prior to interview**. The purpose of this is to give the panel the opportunity to review the contents of the references, and discuss any aspects of them with the candidate. The details of this policy can be found in ['Recruitment and Pre Employment Checks' for schools or non school based staff working with vulnerable groups](#) (see above). This policy guidance also contains guidance on verbal references as does the Council's ['Managers' Guide to Employment References'](#).

3.5.3 Other Posts

Where a post does not give the post holder access to vulnerable groups, the references will be sought **for the preferred candidate once identified by the panel. They will therefore be viewed after the interview and are before the interview (where the employee gives their consent) and must be viewed after the interview for the preferred candidate only. The references are a final check once you have selected the preferred candidate (see below 'Interview Process and Assessment'.) to confirm the panel's decision. Any concerns raised by the references must be explored with the referee and candidate before a decision is made.**

3.6 Interviewing and Assessment

3.6.1 Preparing for Interview

HR can advise you in preparing for interview in, among others, the following areas:

- Information sent to candidates and dealing with their queries
- Location of the interviews
- Reception of the candidates
- Interview room layout
- Interview schedule
- Structure of the interview

- ☒ Interview questions (if not already agreed)
- ☒ Evidence required from the candidates
- ☒ When you will make a decision

3.6.2 If a candidate has a disability and has identified a specific need for assistance, you will have to make the appropriate arrangements as part of your preparations; we are obliged to make such necessary adjustments by law (see '[A Brief Guide to Shortlisting and Interviewing Disabled Candidates](#)')

3.6.3 Planning the Interview

3.6.3.1 For consistency, the interview panel must have the same membership as for shortlisting. The panel must agree a list of standard question areas to test the person specification criteria, which must be asked of each candidate. Use probing or follow up questions to test the candidate's experience and explore vague responses.

3.6.3.2 You must agree what evidence you expect candidates to provide in order to demonstrate that they meet the criteria. You should also consider what other documentation you want candidates to bring with them to the interview (eg identify checks, work permits, qualifications etc). **You must take copies of these documents for the file record.**

For further details on question design and interviewing technique, see [Guide to Selection: Shortlisting and Interviewing](#).

3.6.4 Interview Process and Assessment

3.6.4.1 The Lead Officer normally opens, directs and closes the interview to make sure the interview flows smoothly, professionally and fairly. See [Guide to Selection: Shortlisting and Interviewing](#).

3.6.4.2 The panel should assess each candidate against the job criteria with the aim of achieving a joint agreement on the successful candidate. Each member of the panel should be satisfied that the successful candidate has demonstrated that her/his knowledge, experience and skills meets those required for the job.

3.6.4.3 The Lead Officer must record the interview process. It must include:

- The list of the questions and which of the criteria they are designed to assess
- The evidence you expected the candidates to include in their answers to those questions
- Any tests and the results
- Notes on the answers from each candidate and whether they met, part met or did not meet the criteria
- A simple matrix showing how each candidate fared, including a clear indication of who was appointed
- A brief note of any discussions

3.6.4.4 All papers (including copies of identity/work permit checks and qualifications etc) **must** be sent to HR, where they will be kept in case of complaint, audit or a request for feedback.

3.6.4.5 Two satisfactory references must be received before making a formal offer of employment. A **qualified** offer of employment **may** be made where the circumstances warrant it. However, this should not be the norm and the preferred candidate must be told verbally and in writing that the offer is conditional upon receipt of 2 satisfactory references and that **they should not terminate their existing employment until the Council makes a firm offer** (see the [Manager's Guide To Employment References](#)).

3.6.4.6 Except for posts in contact with vulnerable groups where there is separate guidance, the panel will also consider any declaration of criminal convictions or cautions made by the preferred candidate.

3.6.5 Tests in Selection

3.6.5.1 A range of tests can be used in selection, from tests of manual dexterity through simple clerical tasks, language and numeracy to higher order reasoning. Tests must assess criteria on the person specification if they are to be of any use. You may need to consider adjustment to these tests if one of the candidates has a disability.

3.6.5.2 If you would like to know more about tests in selection, please see **Guide to Tests in Selection**. If you wish to use one of these tests, you must discuss this initially with HR.

3.6.6 Unsuccessful Interviewees

3.6.6.1 Inform unsuccessful interviewees, preferably by letter, confirming the panel's decision, thanking them for attending and offering advice/feedback from a member of the interview panel. The candidate(s) should be informed as quickly as possible.

~~3.6.6.2 If an unsuccessful candidate is also a Council employee, the Lead Officer should speak personally to him/her to explain why it was not possible to offer the position.~~

3.6.7 Medical Questionnaires

3.6.7.1 The successful candidate must have a medical assessment carried out by the Council's Occupational Health Provider.

3.7 Appointment

3.7.1 Offer of Employment

3.7.1.1 There are a series of checks, which HR must carry out before ~~an offer can be made~~ a new recruit can start work. These are:

- Satisfactory references,
- Medical clearance,
- ID and work permit/nationality right to work checks.
- ~~CRB-DBS~~ checks in appropriate cases, for example where jobs have regular contact with vulnerable groups.
- Service specific checks, e.g. qualifications, professional memberships

References must be completed before a final offer is made, and all clearances completed before the person starts work. These checks will be requested by and returned to HR, who will keep you informed of any delays.

3.7.1.2 It is possible to make an offer subject to receipt of satisfactory references (see above in the case of references). This **must be discussed with HR** before contacting the candidate.

Conditional Offers of Employment to Staff Working with Vulnerable Groups and/or Prior to the Receipt of Immigration/Identify Checks

Where it is necessary to make a formal offer of employment before receipt of ~~CRB-DBS~~ or identity/~~immigration-right to work~~ checks, this should be carefully considered and a **written risk assessment** carried out and retained by the manager (with a copy sent to HR). The offer of conditional employment **must be approved by a Head of Service or above**. Suitable controls should be put in place to eliminate risk to vulnerable groups before the employee commences work and any offer of employment must be made conditional upon the receipt of satisfactory checks. Such 'conditional offers' must not be for an indefinite period and the risk assessment and practical arrangements must be reviewed by the line manager on a regular basis.

3.7.1.3 HR will send out the letter offering employment, including the main terms and conditions of employment documents and any other conditions and controls relating to the commencement of employment.

3.7.1.4 Once a start date has been agreed, you must ~~reserve~~ensure a place with the Learning & Development Team is booked on the next available Corporate Induction and on the Health and Safety training, normally within three months. Each new starter must also receive an induction to their workplace, service and directorate to ensure that the Council's values, culture, expectations, rules and conditions are explained at this stage. REST will advise on induction.

3.7.2 Monitoring Recruitment

3.7.2.1 HR will monitor recruitment and selection for improvement in the following areas:

- ~~1.~~1. Access to council jobs (~~sex, ethnic origin, disability and age~~Protected Characteristics Equality Act 2010)
- ~~2.~~2. Applicant satisfaction
- ~~3.~~3. The efficiency of the process, whether it meets client requirements and standards, through random sampling of parts of the process
- ~~4.~~4. The effectiveness of recruitment, i.e. whether we are recruiting suitable candidates, through random sampling of parts of the process
- ~~5.~~5. Whether panel members have received appropriate training
- ~~6.~~6. The quality of recruitment and selection, through observing a random sample of shortlist sessions and interviews, by HR Officers and trained Trade Union Representatives.

3.8 Training

3.8.1 All members of shortlisting and interview panels must have appropriate training, either the Council's course in recruitment and selection or equivalent training in previous employment. HR will discuss previous training with employees to decide whether further training is necessary.

3.8.2 Managers should arrange for those without appropriate training, to attend the next available course. It is also useful for prospective interviewers to attend shortlisting and interviews as a non decision-making observer before their training.

- 3.8.3 Newly trained staff should interview alongside those with some experience until they have enough confidence to chair or assist other recently trained staff. In times of low recruitment, they can use these newly acquired skills to assist managers in other sections or directorates short of interviewers. Please contact HR for details.
- 3.8.4 Workshops can be arranged to cover the different stages of recruitment and selection, depending on the nature of and the demand for the particular need. Please contact Learning and Development for details.

3.9 Supporting Documents and Guides to Assist Managers

Mandatory Policies/Procedures

- Recruitment and pre-employment Checks for Community Schools
- Recruitment and pre-employment Checks for Posts dealing with Vulnerable Groups outside of Schools
- Guide to the Procurement of Supply Teachers
- Corporate Policy on the engagement of Casual employees, Agency Workers and Consultants
- Corporate Policy on the use of volunteers
- Shortlisting & Interviewing Candidates with a Disability
- Probation Procedure
- Induction Checklists
- Trade Union Observer Agreement
- Manager's Guide To Employment References
- Employment Stability Agreement
- Member Involvement in Recruitment

Guidance

- Guide to Selection: Shortlisting and Interviewing
- Disability Discrimination Act Guide
- Guides to Succession and Career Planning, Secondment, Acting-Up
- Guide to Tests in Selection
- Managers' Guide to Probation
- Managers' Guide to Job Descriptions, Person Specifications and Competencies
- Managers' Guide to the Recruitment Process