

Recruitment and Selection Policy

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Version 1.1	Incorporating TU comments
Version 1.2	Final version agreed with Joint Trade Unions in August 2020 (Next review is due August 2022 or sooner if required by legislation)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is committed to providing efficient and effective services to the diverse communities of Reading Borough Council (RBC). However, in order to achieve this, the Council recognises that it is crucial to recruit the right people with the right skills and values to the right job and that these individuals should reflect, as far as possible, the diversity of the local community it serves.
- 1.2 This policy provides a framework to ensure the Council has a fair, objective, consistent and transparent recruitment and selection process that promotes good practice and a positive approach to equality and diversity. As it only sets out the broad principles, recruiting managers should read it in conjunction with the more detailed guidance relating to each stage of the process published on the Intranet. Managers should also be familiar with the separate Guidance on Recruitment and Retention of Disabled People.

2. Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all Reading Borough Council recruitment.

3. Aims

- 3.1 This policy aims to:
 - Ensure the Council has a talented, skilled, flexible and motivated workforce that can deliver effective, value-for-money services in line with the organisation's strategic priorities, both now and in the future
 - Set out the standards to ensure that the Council's recruitment processes are fair, consistent, transparent and comply with relevant legislation and good practice
 - Increase the diversity of the workforce through the attraction and recruitment of high-quality candidates from across the community, particularly from under-represented groups
 - Balance the benefits of recruiting externally with the aspirations of existing staff to develop and progress within the organisation
 - Ensure that new recruits are assessed not only on their technical ability, but also for their compatibility with the Council's Team Reading values and behaviours
 - Promote a positive image of the Council as an employer

4. General Principles

- The recruitment and selection process must be appropriate to the job concerned and be able to deliver a quality candidate for the job at a reasonable cost
- The process must be fair but not overly bureaucratic or daunting to potential applicants
- Safer recruitment practices must be employed for all posts involving contact with children and/ or vulnerable adults
- Council Redeployees (i.e. staff who are at risk of redundancy) will be given prior consideration if the minimum criteria for the role are met (refer to the Employment Stability Agreement for more detail)
- Applicants with a disability, RBC Care Leavers and people who have completed the New Directions Work Experience Programme and who meet the minimum criteria for the job will be guaranteed an interview (see also the Guidance on Recruitment and Retention of Disabled People)
- No job will be advertised without having been job evaluated
- All appointments must be made on merit following assessment against clearly defined criteria
- The process should be undertaken by competent managers who have received appropriate training
- The process must be transparent and auditable with detailed written evidence available to support the decision made in respect of each applicant
- The required pre-employment checks must be carried out on all preferred candidates
- No appointee can start work before receipt of satisfactory pre-employment checks

5. Responsibilities

5.1 **Executive Directors and Assistant Directors** are directly responsible for ensuring that:

- This policy is followed within their own service areas,
- Their managers attend recruitment and selection training, including refresher training
- Their managers are held accountable for their practices

5.2 **Recruiting Managers** are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with, and adhering to this policy
- Adhering to the Council's recruitment and selection processes, including safer recruitment practices where appropriate to the job role

- Carrying out recruitment fairly, transparently and without prejudice in accordance with Council procedures
- Maintaining their technical knowledge and skill levels by undertaking recruitment and selection training, including refresher courses, as required

5.3 **Human Resources** are responsible for:

- Ensuring all required pre-employment and other suitability checks are carried out
- Providing specialist advice to managers
- Ensuring that monitoring of recruitment and selection activity is carried out
- Providing briefings and corporate training for staff involved in the process according to their needs
- Providing guidance and advice on statutory requirements and best practice in the protection of people in vulnerable groups – not just restricted to recruitment
- Investigating any complaints from applicants, managers or trades union representatives
- Work with managers and trade unions to implement any changes to the policy

6. **Recruitment and selection process**

6.1 **Reviewing the Vacancy**

Before beginning the process to fill any vacant post, managers should review it against their service area's strategic plans to make sure there is still a need for the role in its current form and consider potential redeployment opportunities for staff under the [Employment Stability Agreement](#).

6.2 **Vacancy Control Procedures**

Managers must follow the vacancy control procedures in place at the time they propose to recruit.

6.3 **Opportunities for Young People**

The Council is committed to helping young people get into work through its work placements and apprenticeships. Managers are, therefore, encouraged to consider creating suitable opportunities that would enable young, unemployed people to gain valuable work experience and skills. Managers should contact their HR Partner in the first instance if they are interested in taking on an apprentice.

6.4 **Use of Agency Workers**

The Council aims to fill all vacant posts with directly employed staff. The use of agency workers should therefore be kept to a minimum and at all times subject to vacancy control procedures. The use of agency workers will also be reviewed at Directorate Joint Forum meetings with trade unions.

6.5 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

All posts must have an up-to-date, accurate job description/ person specification or job role profile.

6.6 Customer-facing Roles

When recruiting to roles where the employee is required, as a regular and intrinsic part of the job, to speak to members of the public, either face-to-face or over the telephone, managers must have regard to the guidance within the “Code of Practice on the English Language Requirement for Public Sector Workers”. This means that they must ensure that employees in such roles, irrespective of their nationality or origins, have a command of spoken English which is sufficient to enable them to perform the role effectively. The level of fluency required must be appropriate to the demands of the role and this must be specified in the person specification or job role profile. Fluency does not relate to regional or international accents, dialects, speech impediments or the tone of conversations.

6.7 Advertising the vacancy

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.

6.8 Advertising Media

Advertising will be designed to ensure that job opportunities are accessible to as wide and diverse an audience as possible and that they attract the strongest possible field of candidates.

6.9 Adverts

Recruitment advertisements should reflect the realistic requirements of the job with regard to skills, qualifications and experience and shall not include any unjustifiable or discriminatory requirements.

6.10 Executive Search

For a limited number of senior management positions or hard-to-fill professional posts, it may be appropriate to use a consultancy firm to assist with finding potentially suitable candidates. This approach may be used to complement advertising on the open market to attract a wide pool of suitable candidates. The approval of the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development is required in all cases where it is proposed to use executive search techniques and the company to be used must be selected in accordance with the Council's procurement rules.

6.11 Selection Process

The recruitment and selection of employees is one of a manager's most important responsibilities. In view of this, only those managers who, as a minimum, have undertaken the Council's recruitment and selection and equalities training can be involved in the recruitment and selection process. Normally all members of the recruiting panel should shortlist and it will be usual for the same managers who were

involved in shortlisting to also sit on the interview panel. It is not permitted for a manager to interview alone.

An interview must form the core part of every recruitment and selection process and, for a large number of posts, it will be sufficient to use it as the sole method of assessment. However, for others, particularly more senior or technical roles, a more challenging selection process involving some form of testing might be appropriate. Care must be taken to ensure that tests do not unfairly discriminate. Where a candidate is known to have a disability that may put them at disadvantage, the panel should make reasonable adjustments to the tests to enable the candidate to participate fairly. All proposed tests should be discussed with HR. At the beginning of an interview the chair of the panel must check with all candidates that their access needs have been met.

Under no circumstances must an individual who is a friend, family member or has, or has had, a personal relationship with a candidate, participate in shortlisting or sit on an interview panel. The same would apply if an individual's knowledge of an applicant is such that their objectivity may be compromised. In these circumstances an individual must declare an interest and withdraw from the process. If a panel member has any concerns about this then they must seek advice from the Council's Resourcing team well before the interviews are due to take place.

6.12 Involvement of clients/service users

Where the successful candidate will have to work extensively and closely with children or vulnerable adults, it may be desirable to involve representatives of the clients/service users in the recruitment and selection process.

6.13 Post Selection Checks

The Council reserves the right to undertake such pre-employment checks as are necessary to ensure the suitability of the applicant for the job in question. This means that before a conditional offer of employment is confirmed, a number of pre-employment checks must be carried out and the outcomes considered satisfactory. These include:

- appropriate written employment references
- health clearance
- verification of qualifications and/or professional registration where appropriate
- Disclosure & Barring Service check where appropriate
- Right to Work in the UK check
- Driving licence check where appropriate to the post

6.14 Record Keeping

Recruiting managers must keep accurate and detailed records of the recruitment and selection process in order to be able to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates and as evidence in case the appointment decision is challenged. All records must be kept confidential and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

6.15 **Feedback**

Applicants will always be notified by email of the outcome of their application at every stage of the process. Recruiting managers should always offer to provide feedback as soon as reasonably practicable to candidates on the outcome of their application. Feedback given must be accurate and any comments must be able to be substantiated by documentary evidence if required. Feedback must relate specifically to the individual's personal application and must not include comments about the specific performance of other applicants.

6.16 **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 Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development at any stage in the recruitment process. This must be within 5 working days of the alleged act complained of. 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.

6.17 **Monitoring**

In order for the Council to ensure that recruitment and selection practices are undertaken in accordance with the principles set out in this policy, HR will monitor and review arrangements through any of the following:

- Structured telephone discussions with recruiting managers prior to, and on completion of, the recruitment process
- Random scrutiny of individual recruitment exercises
- Manager surveys to review the ongoing effectiveness of the recruitment and selection procedures
- Ad hoc surveys to review the candidate experience
- Production and analysis of recruitment and selection statistics for the purposes of equalities monitoring
- Through trade union representatives observing a random sample of shortlisting meetings and interviews