

Recruitment and Selection Policy

1. Scope

- 1.1 The Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy applies to all Council Vacancies. Any Council Employee involved in recruitment and selection has a duty to act in line with this policy.
- 1.2 The exception to this is Chief Officer Vacancies for which separate arrangements are in place, please refer to the council's constitution for further information.

2. Objectives and Principles

- 2.1 Lancaster City Council recognises the need to ensure that a robust and efficient recruitment and selection process is in place for Council vacancies to ensure that the best employees are recruited and selected to contribute to the work of the Council in line with appropriate legislation and guidelines.
- 2.2 The Council recognises the link that can develop between a poor recruitment and selection process and an employees' inability to perform in a new role. It is therefore important to ensure that the selection process is appropriate to assess the skills and knowledge of the applicants and is fitting to the role.
- 2.3 The objectives of this policy are:
- To ensure that applicants are treated fairly and lawfully at all stages of the recruitment and selection process.
 - To ensure that safe selection is carried out for posts working with vulnerable groups.
 - To ensure that recruitment to council vacancies is carried out in line with Equalities legislation.
- 2.4 The following principles apply to the Council's procedures for dealing with recruitment:
- The council will ensure that all recruitment is conducted in a fair and transparent way and that selection decisions are based on objective and justifiable criteria.
 - Recruitment will be undertaken in a cost efficient and effective way.
 - The process will promote the Council as an employer of choice in order to attract the best candidates.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Management responsibilities

- to apply objective and fair recruitment practices which comply with this policy.
- recruit and select skilled people to ensure organisational success.
- control staffing establishments and seek appropriate authorisations where applicable to recruit to vacant positions.

3.2 HR responsibilities

The HR Team are responsible for providing advice and support to managers and employees during the recruitment and selection process.

To this end HR will:

- provide advice and guidance to managers, employees, and trade union representatives on the correct implementation of the policy and procedure.
- Provide advice to managers to ensure that they treat all applicants in a fair and equitable manner through the consistent application of this procedure.
- administer the recruitment process including corresponding with applicants shortlisted for interview, carrying out pre-employment checks, producing offer letters and processing DBS applications.
- Monitor equal opportunities in line with council recruitment procedures.
- Liaise with the Council's advertising agency and ensure that vacancies are placed on Jobs Go Public and other relevant advertising medium.
- keep records in line with the Data Protection Act.

4. Authorisation to Recruit

- 4.1 Prior to advertising a vacancy, recruiting managers must seek authorisation from the relevant Chief Officer and additional signatories when required if filling a new post.
- 4.2 This should be done using the Councils Vacancy Authorisation Form
- 4.3 Managers should confirm the duties of the role by revisiting the job description and person specification in line with section 6 prior to seeking authorisation to recruit.
- 4.4 For all vacancies, particularly grade 5 and 6 roles, consideration should be given to whether the post could be converted into an apprenticeship or career graded role.
- 4.5 All posts should also be considered for part time and flexible working arrangements that differ from the standard 37-hour week, should the duties of the post allow it. For these vacancies It should be noted on the advertisement that alternative hours and working arrangements will be considered. Applicants should then state their preferred hours/patten of work in their application.
- 4.6 In addition to the above two considerations, recruiting managers and Chief Officers should also consider that a like for like recruitment to an existing post is the best value for money and best decision for the service and the Council. Factors such as whether the post is still needed and if so could be done in a different way, e.g. is the

job required on the same hours or the same duties or will the job be affected by current or future organisational objectives or restructuring, could it be done partnership with another organisation.

5. Job Evaluation

- 5.1 All of the council's posts are graded in line with the Willis Towers Watson Global Grading System.
- 5.2 Any new posts should be evaluated and moderated by Human Resources prior to the completion of the relevant vacancy authorisation process.
- 5.3 Prior to advertisement recruiting managers should revisit the job description for existing posts and ensure that this is updated. Should this mean any significant changes to the post, for example a reduction or increase in the number of staff that the post manages, the grade of the post should be re-evaluated by Human Resources.

6. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

- 6.1 Recruitment records will be retained by Human Resources and recruiting managers should ensure that all information is sent to the recruitment team with the selection information for the successful candidate. This includes the short-listing scoring matrix, records of tests and interviews and any scoring sheets.
- 6.2 Recruitment records will be kept for a maximum of 1 year at which point they will be destroyed in line with the council's retention and disposal schedule.

7. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults and Rehabilitation of Ex-Offenders

- 7.1 The council has a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults as well as ensuring that ex-offenders are not unfairly discriminated against due to any previous convictions (Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974).
- 7.2 All applicants will be asked to declare whether they have any unspent criminal convictions on their application for employment.
- 7.3 Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position with the Council. This will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offence/s.
- 7.4 When an applicant has disclosed on their application form that they have a conviction that is not spent, consideration should be given to the seriousness of the offence, the length of time that has elapsed since the conviction and the age of the applicant at the time. Recruiting managers must consult with human resources and their Chief Officer when considering unspent convictions, and decisions relating to these documented. It should be noted that if the conviction will not have an adverse effect on the candidate's ability to carry out the duties of the job, then they should be treated as any other candidate.
- 7.5 If a furthermore detailed check is required on conditional offer of appointment the employee will be asked to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service application form through the councils DBS check provider, Personnel Checks. Any posts that require a DBS check will clearly state that a clearance is required on the advert, person spec and job description. DBS checks may be standard or enhanced dependent on the level of contact with vulnerable adults and children.

- 7.6 The Council requires DBS Disclosures for all individuals whom it wishes to employ in jobs which:
- may potentially give them one to one access to children.
 - give them regular access to vulnerable adults in a one-to-one caring, training or supervisory role.
 - are otherwise eligible because of the nature of the post.
- 7.7 Any matters revealed by Disclosures will be discussed with the candidates before any final recruitment decision is made.
- 7.8 The Council will not retain any information with regards to disclosures only the certificate reference number and issue date, all data will be processed and retained by Personnel Checks in line with their Privacy Policy.
- 7.9 Posts which require a DBS check will require the postholder to have regular DBS checks at 3-year intervals throughout their employment. Renewals should be monitored and arranged by Line managers. Renewals can be requested from Human Resources.

8. Permission to work in the United Kingdom

- 8.1 The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 requires the council to ensure that all new employees are legally allowed to work in this country. As such it is an offence to employ a person with no immigration entitlement to work in the United Kingdom.
- 8.2 Applicants will be asked on the Application for Employment form to provide their national insurance number and to confirm that they are eligible to work in the UK. Applicants shortlisted for interview will also be required to provide verification of their national insurance number at the interview stage.
- 8.3 As of 01 July 2021 all EU, EEA and Swiss citizens are no longer be able to use their passport or national identity card to prove their right to work. The council are therefore required in these cases to check applicants your right to work status online. Applicants will be requested to provide the recruitment team with their online share code and date of birth to do so.

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 Equality Monitoring

The council will ask job applicants for information on a voluntary basis for equality monitoring purposes. This information will not be made available to the recruitment panel.

Human resources will monitor equality information to ensure recruitment and selection procedures comply in full with employment law and the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

9.2 Guaranteed Interview Schemes

The council operates guaranteed interview Schemes for those who declare a disability and those who have served in the Armed Forces. This is because there are often barriers to employment for these applicants. The Council therefore seeks to remove any disadvantage they may face by making an adjustment to our recruitment process.

This approach to recruitment and selection is recognised in the Councils Disability Confident membership and Ministry of Defence Gold Employer Recognition Scheme Award.

Those applicants who meet the minimum essential criteria for the role will be guaranteed an interview. Should the minimum essential criteria not be met, recruiting managers will be asked to note which of the essential criteria have not been met and therefore justify why the applicant has not been selected for interview.

HR will inform the recruiting manager of any adjustments required for the interview and it will be the managers responsibility to implement these. More information regarding interviewing through the guaranteed interview scheme can be found in section 12.

It should be noted that it is unlawful to ask a disabled applicant, who has been shortlisted through the guaranteed interview scheme about their disability prior to any offer of employment being made.

More information regarding Veteran Applicants through the guaranteed interview scheme can be found in the Armed Forces Community Employment Policy.

10. Advertising

- 10.1** Consideration will always be given in the first instance to any employees who are at risk of redundancy and are on the council's redeployment register. Adverts will be held back until redeployees have had a minimum of three working days to express an interest.
- 10.2** In order to support career progression opportunities for internal staff managers should consider carefully for all roles whether posts can be advertised internal only prior to external advertisement, except for Grade 5 and apprenticeship posts.
- 10.3** All external vacancies should be advertised through the council's advertising platform, Jobs Go Public. External Vacancies will also be advertised on Indeed job search recruitment board, DWP 'find a Job' Forces Families Jobs and the Career Transition Partnership. Adverts will also be boosted on social media.
- 10.4** Internal only vacancies will be advertised on the council's intranet site and internal applicants will be asked to complete a modified word version of the online application form, an expression of interest form.
- 10.5** If wishing to advertise further Human Resources can assist with sourcing appropriate publications, upon advice from the Council's advertising agency regarding factors such as readership, copy deadlines and number of hits on websites. Cost of further advertising should be met from service budgets. Services are responsible for arranging their own purchase orders and paying any subsequent invoices.

11. The Application Process

- 11.1** All external candidates will be required to apply using the council's online application process hosted by Jobs Go Public. For most vacancies, a full application form should be completed. CV's and paper applications will not be accepted.
- 11.2** A shortened version of the application form which involves completion of key monitoring information and attachment of a CV can be made available should recruiting managers feel that a more streamlined application process would be preferable for a particular role e.g., specialist hard to recruit to roles. Recruiting Managers should discuss this option with their HR business partner should they wish to explore it.
- 11.3** For applicants with disabilities alternative methods of application can be made available including paper formats as part of a reasonable adjustment to the recruitment process. Candidates are asked to request these alternatives from the Recruitment Team.

12. Shortlisting

- 12.1** The Recruiting Manager has a responsibility to ensure that only the criteria stated on the Job Description and Person Specification are used for shortlisting purposes and that the same criteria is applied to all applicants using a shortlisting matrix. Short-listing decisions must be based on the information contained in the application form only.

- 12.2** The recruiting manager can make the decision, with agreement from all panel members, to re-advertise a post if it is not possible to form a shortlist from the applications received.
- 12.3** Shortlisting panels will be a minimum of two employees and should be the same employees that form the interview panel.
- 12.4** If many applicants meet the essential criteria, then the desirable criteria should be considered to reduce the shortlist. This can be all the desirable or certain specific desirable criteria which have priority. The important thing is that all panel members are consistent and that this is applied to all applicants. Any criteria used must be in the original person specification and be job related.
- 12.5** Applicants are informed during the online application process that they should assume they are unsuccessful if they are not contacted within three weeks of the closing date.
- 12.6** Shortlisting for all vacancies should be completed within 10 working days of the closing date if managers know that the shortlisting may take longer due to, for example, the likely popularity of a vacancy and number of resultant applications this should be discussed, before advertising, with Human Resources.

13. Declarations and Restrictions

13.1 Politically restricted posts

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 imposes restrictions on political activities by employees who hold certain posts. This includes the Chief Executive, Chief Officers, and any posts that are 'politically sensitive' i.e., giving advice on a regular basis to Elected Members or speaking on behalf of the Council on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters. If a post is deemed politically restricted this should be indicated on the advertised job details and job description.

13.1 Declaration of interests or relationships

Applicants are required to declare any relationships to existing employees or Elected Members. Applicants also have a duty to declare any interests that they may have in respect of any aspect of the Council's business. Further details are in the Code of Conduct.

It is the recruiting manager's responsibility to ensure that if an applicant declares an interest or relationship, that the person concerned does not take any part in the recruitment process.

If the recruiting manager themselves or any member of the recruitment panel identify that they have an interest or relationship with an applicant they must declare the fact to Human Resources immediately and either remove themselves from the recruitment process or agree with the Human Resources appropriate measures and safeguards to ensure that the recruitment and selection process is fair and cannot be influenced by any personal interest or relationship.

14 Selection Methods

- 14.1** The Application Form and interview remain central to the selection process. To ensure the right fit for the role however other selection methods should also be considered that are relevant. Using a mixture of selection methods demonstrates the council's commitment to trying to ensure that the best person is appointed as a more rounded view of individuals may be obtained. Additionally, all candidates are allowed the opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for the role in different situations.
- 14.2** The purpose of any selection method is to gather information about candidates and to help predict their performance in the job. They should be fair, objective and add value to the selection process. Selection methods used may include:
- Assessment Centres
 - Case studies
 - Group discussions
 - In-tray exercises

- Presentations
- Problem-solving
- Tests
- Work based tasks.

14.3 Guidance on selection methods is available on the HR pages of the intranet or from the HR team itself.

15. Interviews

15.1 The panel

All recruitment interviews should be performed by employees who are competent and have previous experience in recruiting staff. Where an employee is inexperienced, they should seek to have two other experienced managers on the panel.

As with all management essential skills a variety of learning and development options are available to ensure those undertaking recruitment are suitably skilled to do so, ranging from online recruitment and selection toolkit guidance and e-learning to ad hoc face to face recruitment and selection training and coaching with the service HRBP/Advisors.

Panels should be made up of a minimum of 2 employees however, where possible and appropriate to the vacancy, 3 panel members are advised to ensure that there is a third party should the two panel members disagree.

The council encourages the use of shortlisting and interview panels which represent a mix of gender and ethnic origin where possible and this should be considered when appointing panel members.

If an applicant has been flagged as applying through the guaranteed interview scheme for reasons of disability a member of the HR team will attend the interview and shortlist for the role.

If an applicant is flagged as having applied through the guaranteed interview scheme as an armed forces veteran, a member of the councils armed forces network can assist with interviews and shortlisting. Manager should request the assistance of a network member by contacting HR.

15.2 Pre employment checks on the day of the interview

On the date of interview recruiting managers should conduct initial employment checks of candidates.

This includes witnessing any essential qualifications for the role, taking copies and signing them to confirm the original has been witnessed and sending the relevant copies on to HR.

Managers should also conduct right to work checks to ensure that the applicant has permission to work in the UK. Guidance on how to conduct these can be found on the Recruitment Pages of the HR intranet and will be sent to recruiting managers by the recruitment team prior to the interview.

15.3 Appropriate Notice of an Interview

All candidates should receive at least 5 working days' notice of their interview. To assist in the administration of this, recruiting managers should provide shortlisting information to HR at least 7 working days before the proposed interview date.

15.4 Recruiting to Our Values

Recruiting managers should ensure that recruitment is conducted in line with the councils Values of Pride, Ownership, Working Together and Ambition.

It is essential that the interview questions include values-based questions and that the values are discussed at interview to ensure that employees with the correct values to drive the councils' ambitions are recruited.

15.5 Second Interviews

If there is a substantial number of candidates shortlisted for interview it may be appropriate to conduct an initial short first stage interview followed by a more detailed interview with a shorter number of candidates.

Additionally, if a recruitment panel is unsure of their decision or require further information then a second interview should be arranged. This is to ensure all candidates are asked the same questions and that the correct selection decision is made.

16. Feedback and Offers of Employment

16.1 The recruiting manager should contact the successful candidate to make a verbal offer of employment.

16.2 When making the verbal offer the following should be confirmed:

- The salary being offered.
- That the offer is subject to satisfactory references, probation and any other checks (e.g. a DBS Disclosure, evidence of qualifications if for some reason this has not already been obtained) It should also should be confirmed with the candidate that they are happy for references now to be obtained.
- A formal written offer will be sent from human resources.
- That the candidate accepts the offer.

16.3 All unsuccessful interviewed candidates must also be informed by the chair of the panel that they have not been selected for the position and given verbal feedback on their interview within three working days. Should applicants wish to receive their feedback in writing the chair of the panel should provide this to them within 10 working days of the interview.

17. Pre-Employment Checks and Probation/Appointment Review

17.1 Successful candidates will be required to undertake a number of pre-employment checks before they take up their post. The specific pre-employment checks will be determined by the nature of the role and could include references, medical, DBS, qualifications (including driving), professional registrations and right to work in the UK.

17.2 In no circumstances must an employee begin work without the relevant checks being confirmed as completed by Human Resources.

17.3 Internal applicants will still be required to have a modified number of pre-employment checks and provide the relevant documentation before they are able to transfer into their new role.

17.3 All appointments are subject to a 6-month probation review (appointment review in the case of internal applicants) for an advertised vacancy.

18. Recruitment Difficulties

18.1 If a candidate accepts an offer and subsequently gives backword or leaves a post quickly upon appointment, and a similar or the same job in the same work area at the same grade was filled in the last six months, and there was more than one appointable applicant, it is permissible to offer the job to the next ranked applicant from that recruitment process.

18.2 Where a recruiting manager is struggling to fill a vacancy, they should discuss this with their HR Business Partner who will be able to advise on further recruitment strategies and options.

18.3 Under no circumstances should vacancies be temporarily filled by alternative means such as off payroll workers or agency staffing without prior discussion with Human Resources.

19. Recruitment Complaints

19.1 Applicants who have a complaint to make about the recruitment process can do so through the council's complaints procedure or by writing directly to the Head of HR and OD.

19.2 Internal employees who have a complaint about the recruitment process should use the council's grievance procedure.

20. Appointment of staff who have previously left on the grounds of voluntary redundancy/early retirement

20.1 In line with the provisions of the Councils' early termination of employment policy applicants who have within the last 12 months left the council on the grounds of voluntary redundancy/early retirement will not be permitted to return until 1 year has elapsed.

20.2 For those who have left the council at Chief Officer level on the same grounds it is the councils' policy that only in exceptional circumstances will they be permitted to return.

21. Review

21.1 This policy will be reviewed 2 years after implementation or earlier in the event of changes in legislation.

Document Control:

Version no.	Effective Date	Reason	Review due
1.0	03.06.13	New Policy replacing old Recruitment of Selection code of Practice with shorter policy and accompanying guidance.	03.06.15
2.0		Policy revised and rebranded to new master policy template.	