

PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Inclusive Recruitment

Report of the OD Manager and Senior HR Business Partner

20th November 2025

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update members of the People and Organisational Development Committee on on-going work to ensure that Lancaster City Council's recruitment processes are inclusive and effective.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee approve the report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Inclusive recruitment is concerned with the way an organisation designs its recruitment processes to ensure fairness and remove bias at every stage, from job design and advertising, to selection and onboarding. It ensures that the most suitable person for a role is appointed, regardless of background or identity. By creating fair and transparent processes, a diverse range of talent is recruited, and outcomes are improved for residents and businesses.
- 1.2 The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has conducted research that just 28% of employers train all interviewers on legal obligations and objective interview practice.

2.0 The Legal Background

- 2.1 UK legislation requires that employers do not discriminate against someone with a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) in the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 Lancaster City Council commits to going beyond the legislation to build an inclusive workplace where people feel able to thrive, and that they belong without needing to mask their identities.

3.0 Stages of inclusive recruitment, including the actions being taken and future plans

- 3.1 The following stages are set out by the CIPD and have been used as a basis to describe the work that is currently taking place and plans for the future:

Stage	What we're doing	Future plans
Role design and job adverts	<p>Clear templates and guidance provided, checked by HR.</p> <p>Roles job evaluated.</p> <p>Flexible/hybrid working offered by default (managers need to state if not applicable).</p> <p>Salaries clear in job adverts, starting salaries at the bottom of the grade.</p> <p>Organisational accreditations such as Disability Confident are clearly advertised.</p>	<p>Role profiles due to be launched in the new year, using Co-Pilot to help transform traditional job descriptions to outcome focussed and strategic documents with plain English behaviours and competencies.</p> <p>Minimal use of essential requirements in person specifications – only used if absolutely necessary.</p> <p>Adverts will also be supported via Co-Pilot to ensure consistency.</p> <p>A flow chart to be created to assist managers in understanding time frames and each step of the recruitment process.</p>
Attracting diverse candidates	<p>Marginalised groups are targeted during the advertising phase, using specific websites such as the Armed Forces site and social media, where they are more likely to be seen.</p> <p>In the last 12 months, we advertised 144 jobs, and our advertised roles received a total of 1,134,586 views. 13,137 applications were started however only 2,784 applications were submitted. The disparity between started applications and submitted applications could be due to pre-application questions such as right to work and holding of a driving licence.</p> <p>Applicants are invited to tell us about any reasonable adjustments required.</p>	<p>Introduction of a new Application Tracking System (ATS) is underway – this will include tools to assess gender bias in advert wording, as well as how easy it is to read.</p>

	<p>Expectations are made clear in terms of how to apply, job details, benefits, the timelines for closing dates and interviews.</p> <p>Outreach work continues: jobs fairs, hosting school events, etc</p>	
Application process	<p>Applications are web based so that applicants can use computer based accessibility tools.</p> <p>Applications are anonymised and no sensitive data is shared with recruiting managers, including name, age, dates of employment/education, equality data.</p>	<p>Creation of bespoke application processes dependent on the role – ie quick questions for manual based roles, more in depth application process for professional positions.</p>
Selection process	<p>Limited automatic sifting – only those who do not have the right to work in the UK are excluded from the selection process.</p> <p>Guaranteed interview scheme for those with a disability and armed forces veterans.</p> <p>Structured interviews based on the knowledge, skills and experience required – each applicant is asked the same questions and scores are allocated by a panel of interviewers. Values based questions are included, with example questions available to recruiting managers.</p> <p>Training is provided to interviewers.</p> <p>The interview panel all shortlist the candidates to interview, put the questions together as a group and agree scoring criteria (applied independently before</p>	<p>Development of training for managers</p> <p>Use of updated ATS to allow applicants to choose interview slots that suit them.</p> <p>Managers take more control of the recruitment process to reduce time to recruit by increased access to the ATS which has improved means to shortlist candidates.</p> <p>Development of guidance and training to support the creation of role based selection techniques (skills based assessments)</p> <p>Use the ATS to collect feedback from all candidates to improve processes.</p>

	<p>discussing as a group).</p> <p>Use of skills based assessments is encouraged, such as situational judgement tests, work sample tasks, simulation exercises.</p> <p>Documents are checked to ensure processes are adhered to (shortlisting matrices, etc)</p> <p>HR support for managers to offer reasonable adjustments such as providing questions in advance.</p> <p>Accessibility information provided at interview invite stage.</p> <p>Pre-employment checks do not include health questions (ie making a job offer subject to health conditions) but occupational health support is sought when appropriate. Our average time to hire from request to recruit to completion is 72.55 days. We have had 121 new starters within the last 12 months. Where a role has not been successfully recruited to, we will look at alternative methods of recruitment such as accepting CV's and advertising in wider publications relevant to the sector.</p>	
Monitoring and measuring	Data developed to assess where successful recruits apply from (this needs to be improved however)	<p>Data gathered through new ATS to inform success of recruitment.</p> <p>Inclusion efforts to be identified and evaluated</p>

Please note all figures referenced are from the period 24 October 2024 – 25 October 2025. All figures are as accurate as possible as per our HR System (Resourcelink) and our ATS reporting functions, however there may be minor discrepancies.

4.0 Beyond Recruitment

- 4.1 New starters are welcomed into the council using a refreshed induction and onboarding programme, with a standard induction list for managers to use, training that is tracked using a Learning Management System, a corporate induction where new starters are invited to meet one another and find out about the council as a whole, and through the use of Wellbeing Passport, a tool to support managers and new starter to get to know each other so that they can bring their whole self to work and be productive as soon as is reasonable. This is all supported by the Probation Policy, followed by the Annual Conversation process.
- 4.2 During the last 12 months, 7 employees have left our employment during their probation period which is approx. only 5.89% of all new starters.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Lancaster City Council remains committed to inclusive recruitment, through delivery of the Recruitment Strategy and Workforce Inclusion strategy within the over-arching People Plan. In addition the People team works closely with service areas to ensure inclusive and effective recruitment practices to ensure that the Council is well-resourced to deliver for our residents.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 This report is for noting but feedback is welcome.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):

n/a.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Update only – continued application of relevant equality, employment and data protection laws in recruitment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces:

None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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