Recruitment and Selection
Policy and Procedure
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Leeds City Council Recruitment and Selection Policy

Leeds City Council recognises that good recruitment and selection practices that are fair and transparent are fundamental to building a talented, representative and committed workforce that is crucial to our success. This enables us to achieve ever-improving service standards for our community.

We also acknowledge that recruitment is a two way process. It is essential that all applicants have sufficient information about council jobs, are dealt with in a fair and courteous way and understand how our recruitment process works. Therefore, we set high standards in dealing with applications.

Recruitment and selection must:

- meet our business needs;
- provide a quality service to job seekers that is fair, transparent and equally accessible;
- attract good recruits from across all of our communities;
- help promote a good image of the council as an employer and service provider;
- be consistent and promote the council as a single employer; and
- support the council’s aims on diversity and inclusion

Core Standards

The following core standards apply to all recruitment and selection activities to provide a consistent approach to quality recruitment and to reflect the council’s values.

- **Core Standard 1**
  
  Through the clarity, fairness and courtesy shown to applicants at each stage of the process, all staff involved in recruitment and selection will promote the council as an attractive employer, concerned with excellent services.

- **Core Standard 2**
  
  All recruitment information will be up-to-date, in plain language and accessible.

- **Core Standard 3**
  
  All recruitment opportunities will be considered with a view to promote inclusion and diversity.

- **Core Standard 4**
  
  All selection decisions will be justifiable and based on the fair and objective assessment of applicants against clear job requirements.
• **Core Standard 5**

The recruitment and selection process will be timely, efficient and proportionate to the jobs being filled.

• **Core Standard 6**

The impact of recruitment and selection and compliance with the policy will be monitored to ensure all other standards apply.

**The Aim of the Process**

The success of any organisation depends on the quality of its workforce. To provide the best possible services to the people of Leeds, the council needs skilled, flexible, and motivated employees.

We have in place policies and methods for our recruitment and selection processes that are modern, efficient and effective and ensure we recruit individuals who demonstrate they are committed to working for us. The policy also takes account of relevant legislation and the council’s policies on equal opportunities and for further information see the [Brief guide to key legal provisions](#).

This Policy outlines core procedures and best practice in recruitment and selection activity in the council and is supported by more detailed ‘How to Guides’ on the following key areas:

- Attracting Applicants
- Interviewing Successfully
- Assessment Methods
- Job Description and Person Specifications

These guidelines are written for all council staff involved in recruitment and selection and contain core and optional requirements.

**Scope of the Procedure**

The procedure applies to all employees of Leeds City Council with the exception of teachers, other staff employed by schools and those employed by Education Leeds.

**Responsibility for reviewing this document**

It will be the responsibility of the Chief Officer (HR) to formally review this policy and procedure after one year using the council’s negotiating and consultation processes. Thereafter, it should be reviewed every three years although reviews at other times may be necessary in the light of changes to legislation and council policy.

**Further Guidance**

Anyone using this Policy and Procedure should have regard to the further guidance. Where appropriate the guidance document will direct the reader to other relevant council policies.
and procedures. The Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure is not designed to operate in isolation.

Our Values

It is important that our values are embedded in the workforce and support the drive for excellence in service delivery. The values and their definitions are:

- **Looking After Leeds**
  
  We are committed to improving the quality of life in Leeds and want to inspire pride in our city and communities. We will work with our partners, build on our successes and protect our city for future generations.

- **Putting Customers First**
  
  We will make sure our services meet the needs of our customers and communities. We will communicate clearly and work hard to find out and respond to our customers’ needs. We are committed to providing excellent services that are value for money.

- **Treating People Fairly**
  
  We value the diversity of our communities and strive to ensure that everyone shares in the city’s success. We will tackle discrimination and improve access to our services, especially to those with the greatest need.

- **Valuing colleagues**
  
  We know that the good work of our colleagues is key to providing excellent services. We will support colleagues and encourage them to work creatively.
The Recruitment Process and Core Procedures

This section lays out the key decisions and approaches to recruiting and selecting staff. Managers must adhere to these. Where relevant, decisions and approaches must be agreed with local HR teams; including appropriate local clearance processes.

Governance

When recruiting to posts where these have resulted from structural change, constitutional and procedural requirements must be followed in terms of the establishment of these posts in the first instance. Delegated powers give Directors specific responsibilities for structural change within certain limits, that is, to creating more of the same posts and for creating temporary posts for a limited period. Approvals for those posts outside of this scope remain with the Director of Resources and sub-delegated to the Chief Officer (HR), and prior to any recruitment exercise due process must have been followed and be fully documented.

Evaluating the Vacancy

Managers need to think about the job that has become vacant.

Before starting the process to fill any vacant post managers should carefully consider and make sure it is still required to meet organisational needs.

Some questions to consider

- Is the job still needed in it’s current format?
- Is it permanent, or for a temporary period?
- Is it fulfilling its purpose?
- Can the duties be better distributed between existing staff?
- Does the job specification reflect future Service / Organisational requirements (i.e. as laid out in work-force and service plans)?
- Are the working hours and working arrangements of a particular post still appropriate
- What does exit interview information tell us?
- Is funding in place to allow the post to be filled?

If there are significant changes in the job and / or grade, advice should be sought from HR. This is considered to be best practice and will be done where ever pay and grading issues apply.

Reviewing the Job Description and Person Specification

Where any changes are made to an existing job description or person specification, managers must notify HR to ensure these are appropriate. Key issues are detailed below.

Job Description

Job descriptions describe the duties, role and core working arrangements of an employee.
In recruitment and selection, the job description is a very important tool for potential applicants. Job titles and descriptions should be presented in a concise way which positively reflects the council as an organisation and an employer.

Managers need to review existing job descriptions to ensure that they are accurate and reflect the job requirements. Care needs to be taken in describing the work, duties, pay and conditions which are specific to the post to ensure they match with pay and reward policies.

Job descriptions should:

- be short and to the point, containing clear, crisp statements which detail the main purpose, duties and expected achievements of the job
- use plain, jargon free, easily understood language
- reflect performance standards and outputs rather than just lists of tasks and duties
- be kept up to date and properly aligned to service requirements

The How to Guide – How to write job descriptions and person specifications provides a template, advice and examples to assist in producing quality job descriptions that reflect our requirements and values.

The Person Specification

The person specification sets down the knowledge skills, experience and behaviours, which enable a person to perform their job successfully and in accordance with our values. The person specification should be standard for jobs of a similar nature and simply written. It should also identify where qualifications are needed. Person specifications should show how applicants will be assessed against requirements and if these are essential or desirable.

Potential applicants can self-assess against the requirements and judge whether they should pursue the vacancy further. This decision can be influenced by the quality, tone and clarity of the person specification.

The How to Guide – How to write job descriptions and person specifications gives a template and detailed advice on how to develop a person specification that will reflect the skills, experience, values and commitment required for successful performance within the job.

Deciding How to Fill the Vacancy

Managers must consider the options available. A key consideration should be the cost of recruitment and selection. Advertising costs and staff resource should be assessed, and the costs of the recruitment should be considered in proportion to the role. Managers are asked to agree their approach with HR. This should also include consideration of how to improve workforce diversity.
Options for Filling the Vacancy

Redeployment

Redeployment must always be considered before looking at the other options for filling the vacancy. This is in line with legal and statutory obligations we have to members of staff who are displaced from their substantive posts following restructures and reorganisations.

Once Redeployment has been considered as well as standard advertising arrangements, managers can consider a number of alternatives as given below.

Maternity / Adoption

Those returning from Maternity or Adoption Leave have the right to return to work in the job in which they were employed under their original contract of employment, or to a suitable alternative vacancy if this is not reasonably practicable. This should be borne in mind when deciding on how to cover a post that becomes vacant because of Maternity or Adoption Leave.

Resignation of a Job Share Partner

If one partner in the job share arrangement leaves, the vacancy should be offered to the remaining partner prior to advertising.

Recruitment and Training Programmes

The council works with partners to run recruitment schemes to help priority groups find employment. Managers should check with HR to see if there are any eligible schemes to use.

Previous Shortlists and Talent Pools

If 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.

If appointable applicants who have applied for this vacancy in the past 6 months have agreed to have their names placed in a talent pool, then you may appoint directly from the list held. Suitable talent pool applicants can be approached for shortlisting without a need to advertise.

Talent pools will also be used to enable applicants to express an interest in work areas and ‘pre-apply for jobs’ where there is a high volume of recruitment to common jobs.

High Volume Recruitment

At times there are very high volume recruitment requirements, or due to high turnover there is a constant need to recruit quickly and maximise the number of applicants coming forward.
Managers are particularly encouraged in these instances to discuss with HR simplifying the process. The following may be considered:

**Recruitment Campaigns and Jobs Fairs**

It may be possible to introduce recruitment processes such as targeted recruitment events that seek to identify pools of potential applicants for vacancies that arise on a regular basis. Similarly databases of potential applicants can be held and accessed as vacancies arise. (Talent Pools see section above)

**Fast Track to Interview**

Interested jobseekers ring a telephone / text number provided in the advertisement, or enter their details on our website. They can then be invited directly to interview where an application form is also completed, with help if necessary. Support can also be given to help people apply for entry level jobs where an applicant’s level of literacy or other barrier to completing forms may hinder the completion of the full application form.

**Executive Search**

Agencies can be engaged to help fill senior management positions or hard-to-fill professional occupations. The approval of the Chief Officer (HR) is necessary in all cases where executive searches are used.

**Reorganisations and Restructuring**

Procedures relating to the filling of posts following restructures and reorganisations are detailed in Appendix 1.

**Secondments / Acting Up / Temporary Appointments**

Where a vacancy is time limited, e.g., due to maternity leave, long term absence; funding limits or project length, the acting up or secondment of existing staff may be a more effective way of filling the job. When deciding if such an arrangement is suitable the following should be considered.

- Could the job be used for employee development by opening it up as a secondment or acting-up opportunity?
- Or as a positive action development secondment?
- Will there be a big enough pool of suitable internal applicants?

Whichever option is being considered these should be agreed with HR and posts filled in accordance with the provisions of this procedure. Appendix 2 contains detailed arrangements for recruiting in these circumstances.

**Other Exceptional Options**

In exceptional circumstances the need to recruit can also be met by:
• Moving someone from a work-placement or an agency worker to a temporary or permanent contract.
• Consolidating an employee into the post where she / he has been doing the job on a temporary or acting-up basis for over 12 months and was originally appointed to that post through the recruitment and selection process.

Any such arrangements require approval from the Chief Officer (HR) and will only apply on a limited basis. Additionally such arrangements must be subject to Trade Union consultation with a view to reaching agreement. Reasons for agreeing this would include:

• Demonstrating genuine business circumstances where a temporary requirement becomes permanent;
• Labour market issues, e.g., where we risk losing rare skills; or
• To support positive actions to help disadvantaged people to be permanently employed.

This process will be closely monitored to ensure there are no adverse effects on any other existing under-represented groups within the workforce. Any concerns will be reported to the relevant service areas and to the council’s equality forums.

Convening a Recruitment Panel

The Role of the Panel

The recruitment panel will:

• Assess applicants
• Select the appointable applicant
• Give feedback to applicants if requested.

Training

When a recruitment panel is needed in order to fill a vacant post, it is desirable that all the panel are trained. As a minimum one person on the panel must have undertaken the council’s standard Recruitment and Selection Training. This includes an understanding of equality and diversity issues.

Planning the Process

Good recruitment and selection requires good planning and this should be the first task of the panel. The time it takes to fill a vacancy can be significantly reduced by agreeing the timescales at the start. This includes such things as advert publishing date, closing dates, interview dates, desired start date, etc. This will affect the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the process and also enable applicants to organise their own plans accordingly.

Membership of the Panel

The Chair of the panel is a responsible person appointed to coordinate the process and ensure it is carried out fairly. Usually this will be the line manager of the post being filled.
The choice and number of panel members should be considered in relation to the vacancy and each member should add value to the process. The panel should consist of appropriate individuals who have an interest in the appointment and are able to make the decision on selection, e.g., the line manager or individuals with specific knowledge and skills in that particular field.

Panels must have at least two members. When deciding on the panel members, consideration should be given to having a panel which reflects the diversity of the council’s workforce. Large panels should be avoided and any observers on panels should play no part in the decision making process.

**Elected Member Panels**

Within the Constitution there are specific requirements for Elected Members to determine the recruitment to Directors and Chief Officer posts. Elected Members may, however, be involved in some other appointments (e.g. for Political Assistants). If there are any circumstances where Elected Members are involved, recruiting managers must seek guidance from HR.

**Declaring an interest**

Panel members must declare an interest and / or withdraw from the process if a family member or close friend applies.

They should also do this if they feel there is a conflict of interest due to prior involvement which could be seen to affect their objectivity, e.g., handling disciplinary or grievance matters, and HR advice should be sought if there is any doubt.

**Continuity**

Wherever possible the same people should serve on the panel throughout the entire process. If a substitute is necessary then they need to become familiar with all the applications and receive a thorough briefing on the process to date.

**Attracting Applicants**

**How should the job be advertised?**

Advertisements are a first point of contact with potential applicants and managers need to think about creating a positive image of the council and the job on offer.

**Good advertisements:**

- Are short and to the point
- raise enthusiasm for the job
- Avoid lists of items lifted from the person specification
- Avoid service details, or long explanations
- Exclude jargon, etc.
Often standard statements will be included in adverts, and HR will ensure these are applied where appropriate.

Managers should liaise with the Recruitment Service in the Business Support Centre to determine the choice of advertising media to maximise the number and quality of good applicants. All jobs will appear on our website and in the council’s vacancy bulletin.

More detailed advice on producing a good advertisement, marketing your job and choosing publications can be found in the How to Guide – How to attract applicants

**Information to Applicants**

In response to adverts and enquiries applicants should be able to access or receive advice and information about the particular job. As a minimum this should include the job description and person specification, an application form and guidance about applying for jobs. Beyond this managers should consider what further information will help an applicant to decide whether to apply. This will vary depending on the job but care should be taken to promote professionalism and the image of the council as an employer by providing a ‘one organisation’ approach.

Managers should also give details of a contact point or person who can discuss the position with interested applicants. Often the most suitable person to do this will be the manager themselves, although HR or others can assist.

Finally it is good practice to encourage applicants to register on our recruitment website, where they can access information about current vacancies and to make future job applications easier for them.

**Methods of Assessment**

**How should the applicants be assessed?**

The assessment methods to be used in the selection process should be carefully considered by the panel to determine whether, in addition to an interview, the use of other assessment methods would provide useful information. These should always be agreed with HR and linked to the person specification.

Where appropriate job simulation exercises and relevant ability tests can improve the quality and quantity of information available to help with selection decisions. They also allow applicants to demonstrate how they meet specific requirements in action, rather than simply relying on the application form and performance at interview.

Any assessment method should reflect the requirements of the job in question. It is inappropriate to create a complex assessment process for jobs requiring basic level skills. This would be unlikely to add substantially to the information needed by the panel to assist them in decision making, and may well put off potential applicants. Use of a range of assessment tools for senior management recruitment may well, however, prove a cost effective investment. In all cases, ensure that any proposed assessment methods are both relevant and reliable, and that:
• tasks in assessment exercises compare with tasks found in the job
• exercises assess requirements for the job, at the right level to do the job.

A How to Guide – How to use assessment methods in recruitment is available to support Managers. It provides details of best practice assessment techniques, from basic ‘Interview Plus’ approaches to full Assessment Centre techniques, setting out:

• how and for what purpose they may be used;
• suggested levels / types of job for which they may be relevant; and
• Equality considerations

Shortlisting the Applicants

Which applicants should be considered further?

After the closing date, panel members must assess each applicant’s suitability for further consideration. Normally the Panel then discuss their assessments and reach final agreement on the applicants who should be on a shortlist and invited for interview. It may be that there may be further assessment work needed to reduce a long list to a shortlist for final interview and / or assessment. This should all be based on an evaluation of how well the applicant meets criteria set out in the person specification.

Obtaining a manageable shortlist

In exceptional circumstances if the number of shortlistable applicants is more than can possibly be interviewed, the panel can use one of the options below:

• Agree with HR to include a supplementary assessment arrangement to reduce a “long list” to a shortlist (e.g. use of an assessment test); or
• Agree a random selection process.

Requests for Reasonable Adjustments

If a disabled applicant has requested an adjustment to the assessment process to overcome a disabling barrier to their application, the panel must take the request seriously and be open to all possibilities for achieving a reasonable adjustment. For example the application or assessment process could be modified in some way. Advice should be sought from HR regarding this.

Notifying the applicants

The Recruitment Service will work with panels to inform shortlisted applicants that they are invited to interview, giving the time, date and venue details. If additional assessment methods are to be used, details should be provided of the types of exercises and / or tests to be given and how long the process is likely to take. Applicants should also be asked if they have any special needs, e.g., regarding travel or disabilities.
Interviews

How will the interview work?

A structured interview should form a core part of every selection process. For some jobs this will be sufficient and appropriate as the only method of assessment. Where other assessment methods are used the interview is usually the last stage.

Good interviews have a clear structure which helps keep the panel objective and focused throughout. However, this must allow flexibility and the necessary freedom for probing, supplementary and additional questions as required.

An interview plan should cover:

- an introductory opening
- a schedule of questions that will be asked and by which panel members
- time for applicants to raise any issues or ask their own questions
- the close of the interview and an explanation of what will happen next

This provides a framework for collecting examples and evidence against the job requirements.

More advice and guidance on interviewing are provided in the How to Guide – How to interview successfully.

The Process

Throughout the interview, the panel should focus on all the requirements being assessed. After each interview, panel members should consider all the evidence gathered from the applicant, referring to their notes as necessary.

Panels should use a scoring guide, where appropriate, to assist them in identifying how well the applicant demonstrated they met the requirements. A scoring and rating guide can be found in the How to Guide – How to interview successfully

When all the interviews are complete, along with the results of any additional evaluation methods used, the full panel should meet to discuss their assessments of the applicants. Any large discrepancies between different panel members should be fully discussed and resolved.

The panel should then identify which applicants are appointable, and have a score and rating for each applicant.

Appointments on merit

All council appointments must, and in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act, be made on merit. This means jobs must only be offered to appointable applicants.
Pre-Employment Checks

What checks need to be undertaken before an offer can be confirmed?

All offers of appointment are conditional and subject to:

- Satisfactory references
- Pre-employment checks (health, references, CRB, etc.)
- Passport, National Insurance number or evidence of the right to work in the UK in line with S.8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1997.

Using References

References should be obtained for preferred applicants. This means those that are assessed as appointable at interview and not all those applicants shortlisted, with two standard references being used. The panel should review reference information and seek clarification with referees if there are any concerns. If there and doubts remaining about the suitability of the applicant’s reference this should be discussed with HR. If necessary, any offer of appointment will be withdrawn. Details of this must be recorded. No offer of employment should be made until references have been obtained.

Probationary Periods

The council has a Probationary Period Policy which is designed to help new starters, where applicable, to settle into their new role and to provide the relevant support and feedback during the early part of their career with the council.

Recruitment and Safeguarding – Children and Vulnerable People

There are a range of specified posts where employees who will work with children or vulnerable adults are subject to additional statutory and inspection requirements. These requirements are given in the Brief guide to key legal provisions and are required best practice against which our performance must be inspected. This includes various levels of CRB checking, taking references prior to interview and ensuring applicants are members of Registered Bodies.

Record-Keeping

What record keeping is required?

Panel member interview notes and assessment sheets should be retained for record keeping purposes. Accurate record-keeping is an essential part of recruitment for the following reasons:

- To assist in monitoring adherence to best practice;
- To enable accurate and objective investigation of complaints as speedily as possible; and
- To enable an accurate and speedy response in cases where applicants invoke their statutory rights under anti-discrimination legislation.
The following documents are vital for achieving these objectives:

- The application form and related documents (e.g., C.V., written submission);
- Shortlisting forms;
- The forms recording applicant interview assessment;
- Copies of assessment tests and exercises;
- Applicant’s written exercise responses, test score sheets, presentation handouts (if available);
- Panel member notes; and
- Reference information and discussion of applicant feedback if relevant.

To meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, documents should be stored in a place where confidentiality can be maintained and for a period of 6 months from the date of appointment of the successful applicant, or a longer specified period of time where necessary (i.e., if required as evidence for legal purposes), then destroyed.

Documentation in respect of the successful applicant should form part of the personal file.

**Feedback to Unsuccessful Applicants**

**How will feedback be given to applicants on their performance?**

Panels must agree how feedback will be given to all interviewed applicants. It is a very important part of good practice and can make a significant difference to the way applicants feel about the organisation, even if their application has been unsuccessful. Feedback should be given as quickly as possible.

This includes an overview of the results of any tests and exercises as well as assessments from the interview. The feedback should be accurate, factual and helpful. It is important to provide a balance between those areas where the applicant did well or showed strength, and areas of weakness, where the applicant needs to improve for the future. Where it is necessary to resolve issues such as potential grievances or complaints written feedback should be given where requested by the applicant. However, before feedback is given in writing check with HR first to ensure it is not discriminatory.

**Existing Employees of Leeds City Council**

Where a council employee feels they have been treated unfairly at any stage of the recruitment and selection process they may register a grievance. The grievance will be pursued under existing council procedures.

**External Applicants**

External applicants may also complain if they believe they have been treated unfairly. Any complaint must be raised using the Council’s Compliments and Complaints Procedure and must be raised within three months of the act or event which gave rise to the complaint.

In those cases where a complaint is made by either an internal or an external applicant, the Chief Officer should immediately suspend any appointment for the position in question, provided no contractual obligation has been entered into with the selected applicant.
Appendix 1

Procedure for the Appointment of Staff Following Restructuring Exercises

1. **Purpose of the Procedure**

   1.1 The purpose of this Procedure is to establish the principles and practices which are to be followed by Directorates of the council when making appointments to posts following a reorganisation of services and restructuring of a Directorate or service area.

   1.2 Any restructuring proposals must be agreed by the Chief Officer (HR) and will include the requirement to consult with the appropriate trade unions. This consultation to include discussions on the arrangements for the appointment of staff.

   1.3 In exceptional circumstances and in consultation with recognised trades unions representing the employee group affected, the arrangements set out in this Procedure may be varied to meet particular circumstances which the parties agree do not lend themselves fully to the application of the Procedure.

2. **Scope of the Procedure**

   2.1 The procedure applies to all employees of Leeds City Council with the exception of teachers, other staff employed by schools and those employed by Education Leeds.

3. **Preamble**

   3.1 Local Government is undergoing a period of radical and continuing change. It is subject to significant external influences and direction which affect the scale and delivery of services to the public. It is against this background and the continuing need to review operational and support services in order to develop and maintain an organisation which is flexible and responsive to public expectation and need that this document has been produced.

   3.2 The council is committed to the provision of a high quality, efficient and user friendly service and to safeguarding employment levels and the interests of its employees.

   3.3 The procedures set out in this document are intended to be consistent with these objectives and to facilitate changes in the organisational structure of the council in a manner which recognises the problems, for individuals, that change inevitably produces and seeks to address them in a structured and sensitive way.

   3.4 The council re-affirms its commitment to equal opportunities and undertakes to maintain existing council policies and practices during the application of the procedures set out in this document.
3.5 In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 consideration must be given to any reasonable adjustments which may be appropriate for disabled employees being redeployed under this procedure.

3.6 Directorates will ensure that temporary contracts pending the outcome of restructuring exercises are used only when absolutely necessary. In addition, and in order to avoid having large numbers of staff on lengthy temporary contracts, Directorates will also ensure, as far as possible, that such contracts are not issued too far in advance of the completion of a restructuring exercise.

4. **Arrangements Regarding Protection of Earnings**

4.1 Where employees are appointed / assigned into posts which carry a lower level of earnings than their substantive grade then the current procedure covering this, at that time, will apply for so long as the council’s policy of affording protection remains in force.

5. **General Principles**

5.1 Employees who wish to be considered for redeployment to posts in other areas of work within the Directorate concerned which are not directly affected by the restructuring proposals, will be given the opportunity to consider any possible options before the procedure for filling posts in the new structure begins. Any employee who accepts an offer of alternative employment will be excluded from further consideration under these procedures.

5.2 Employees who are Acting Up will be treated in accordance with the conditions applying to their substantive post.

5.3 Temporary employees will be excluded from Phase 1 (see paragraph 7.1 below) and Phase 2 (see paragraph 7.2) of these procedures. However, depending on the circumstances, they may be eligible to apply for posts under Phase 3 (see paragraph 7.3).

5.4 The procedure for the selection of employees for posts in any new organisation structure is essentially an exercise in assimilation, and relocation, having regard to the individual’s skills, expertise, experience and qualifications. Whilst clearly in certain circumstances formal interviews will be appropriate for the filling of posts on any new structure such arrangements should be kept to a minimum, consistent with ensuring proper and fair consideration of applicants for positions.

5.5 Throughout the process of assimilating employees into the new structure, sympathetic consideration will be given to employees affected by the restructuring, who express an interest in leaving on voluntary early retirement or voluntary severance terms where it is in the interests of the efficiency of the service to do so. Management will make employees aware of voluntary early retirement / voluntary severance schemes.
6. **Trades Union Consultation**

6.1 The Chief Officers of the Directorate(s) concerned or a senior representative of the Chief Officer shall be nominated to exercise management control of the restructuring process and conduct any negotiations and consultations with the recognised trades unions.

6.2 In addition to the consultation which will have taken place in relation to the restructuring itself, consultation will take place with the relevant trades unions on the implementation of the reorganisation of the service or a restructuring of a Directorate or service area.

6.3 Information will be provided to the relevant trades unions regarding proposals for the slotting in of employees under Phase 1 (see paragraph 7.1). In addition the trades unions will be notified of the posts which will be subject to ring-fencing arrangements under Phase 2 (see paragraph 7.2) and Phase 3 (see paragraph 7.3) and of the appointments made at each stage of the process. The relevant trade unions will have the opportunity to make proposals regarding any aspect of the process.

6.4 The procedure for the filling of posts will be carried out in three separate but related phases. Exceptionally it will be open to Directorates to seek by negotiation with the recognised trade unions, a variation to these arrangements if there is a reason for doing so.

6.5 At the conclusion of Phase 3 the relevant trade unions will be provided with details of unplaced employees.

7. **Procedure for the filling of Posts**

7.1 **(Phase 1 - Slotting In)**

7.1.1 The Chief Officer, in association with line managers, will identify posts under the new structure which are substantially the same as posts in the existing structure. In these cases, the employees who occupy these posts should be slotted into the posts without recourse to any selection procedure (see paragraph 5.2). In determining whether current posts are equivalent to those on the new structure consideration should be given to the job content and the grade. In accordance with paragraph 6.2 above, the trade unions will be provided with details of the proposals and given the opportunity to comment prior to implementation.

7.1.2 Where the number of employees who would qualify for slotting-in in a particular area is greater than the number of posts in that area of work then these employees will not be slotted in but be subject to the ring fencing provisions of Phase 2 (see paragraph 7.2).

7.1.3 The employees who have been assimilated by slotting in will be informed of the post to which they have been allocated under the new structure.
7.2 **Phase 2 - Ring Fencing**

7.2.1 Posts which have not been filled by slotting in, either because they have changed under the new structure, or where there are more employees than posts in that area of work, will be advertised on a ring fenced basis, i.e., posts in a given area of work will be restricted, in the first instance, to staff currently engaged in that area of work. Details of these posts will be notified to the appropriate employees and should clearly state which staff groups are eligible to apply. This will include employees carrying out comparable duties who have not been slotted in under Phase 1 and supernumerary employees carrying out comparable duties.

7.2.2 In certain circumstances, where key posts are involved it may not be appropriate to fill specific jobs in accordance with the process set out in 7.2.1 above. It may be more appropriate to advertise such posts externally in the first instance.

7.2.3 Staff within the agreed ring fence arrangements will be required to complete one post preference form, providing details of current duties and responsibilities and other relevant experience, and detailing those posts within the ring fence in which they are interested.

7.2.4 The Chief Officer may also include in this process staff within the appropriate ring fence who have not expressed a direct preference.

7.2.5 Appointments to posts which are ring fenced will be by the usual range of selection methods. This process will normally be carried out on a cascade basis, commencing with appointments to senior positions, and then in descending salary/pay levels.

7.2.6 Following appointment of applicants to each level the situation will be reviewed and any employee not assigned to a post at one level will be identified and automatically included with those under consideration at the next level below.

7.2.7 Because of the preferential treatment given to employees within a ring-fencing arrangement, care should be taken to ensure that restructuring exercises are not merely used as a means of obtaining promotion and excessive increases in grade, therefore, should be avoided.

7.3 **Phase 3 - General Ring Fencing**

7.3.1 At the conclusion of Phase 2 any posts remaining unfilled should be dealt with under a general ring fencing, within the Directorate. At this stage, staff not directly affected by the restructuring will be eligible to apply.

7.3.2 Posts will be filled by the usual range of selection methods.

7.3.3 Posts which are unfilled following this process should be submitted to the Chief Officer (HR) for authorisation to fill in the normal way.
8. **Unplaced Employees**

8.1 Any employees who have not been slotted in or appointed to a post under the new structure will be subject to review to consider possible options. These options may include voluntary early retirement, voluntary severance, retraining or redeployment. As an interim measure, employees will normally be held by the Directorate on a supernumerary basis but may be offered temporary placements which are within their range of skills, either within the Directorate or elsewhere in the council.

8.2 Directorates should endeavour to avoid staff being placed or remaining in supernumerary positions and should make every effort to find suitable alternative work in a substantive post.

9. **Representations and Grievances**

9.1 Representations regarding any stage of this procedure may be made by employees or their trade unions to the Directorate Chief Officer.

9.2 Any employee or their trade union representative may appeal to the Chief Officer of the Directorate regarding their assignment to a post under Phase 1 or their exclusion from the ring-fence arrangements in Phase 2 of this Procedure.

9.3 In the event of these representations/complaints not being resolved under paragraph 9.1 and 9.2 above, the matter may be pursued through the formal Grievance Procedure at Stage 3. Before Stage 3 is implemented, there must have been formal representation to and consideration by the Directorate Chief Officer.
Appendix 2

Procedures of filling posts via Acting Ups/Secondments/Temporary arrangements

Under National and Local Conditions of Service provision is made for an employee, at the request of the Directorate Chief Officer, to undertake the full duties and responsibilities of a higher graded post and to receive additional payment where this will last for a continuous period of four weeks or more.

This arrangement should apply to acting up arrangements which are short term and will not normally last for longer than three months. The Directorate Chief Officer will ensure that all appropriate employees within the relevant work area will be considered for such acting up appointments.

However where a post becomes vacant (or it is envisaged it will be vacant) for a period of more than three months (e.g. cover for secondment, maternity leave etc) then the post should be advertised within the Directorate to provide other staff who have relevant experience with the opportunity to apply for the post and gain experience at a higher level.

In these situations the following procedure will apply:

i) An employee specification for the temporarily vacant post will be prepared to include, as an essential requirement, the immediate availability of appropriate employees to act up.

ii) All employees (including Job Sharers and temporary employees) within the relevant work area will be given an opportunity to be considered for the acting-up appointment. This will be done by a limited distribution advertisement.

iii) Interviews will be conducted by a minimum of two people and may cover the employee's performance in the present job and the final decision will have regard to the overall requirements of the Directorate.

iv) Where an individual employee within the constituent group applies but is not successful, the senior officer responsible for making the arrangements will explain the reasons why and offer counselling if requested.

There may be cases (for example, cover for sickness) where the length of absence is unknown. Arrangements to cover the absences may extend up to the 3 month period. Such cases should be reviewed, in conjunction with the Chief Officer (HR) when it becomes clear that the absence is to extend beyond 3 months.

Acting up arrangements may only continue for a period of 18 months, unless an extension is approved by the Chief Officer (HR).

Directorate Chief Officers also have authority to make temporary appointments within and above the approved establishment and up to grade PO6 to provide cover for situations such as staff absences, peaks in workload and to deal with any tasks which may arise which are outside of the normal workload of the Directorate. Such approvals
are subject to their being budgetary provision available and a check being made with HR to find out whether the cover could be provided by either a redeployment or a secondment. Recruitment to such temporary posts will be undertaken in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure. It should be noted that whilst appointments up to PO6 can be made it will be necessary to secure the approval of the Chief Officer (HR) in the following circumstances:

- temporary appointments up to PO6 which extend beyond twelve months duration but up to 2 years.

- extensions to temporary appointments the effect of which is to extend an appointment beyond twelve months and up to 2 years.

Any temporary appointments up to PO6 but beyond 2 years and all temporary appointments above PO6 will need the approval of the Chief Officer (HR).

When considering temporary contracts Directorate Chief Officers will also refer to the guidance and advice issued by the Chief Officer (HR).

Secondments

Secondments may be made available as follows:

Cover for a temporary vacancy

Where there is no suitable applicant within a Directorate for a temporary post, Directorates may at their discretion advertise the post as a secondment available to internal applicants only. Where a post is advertised as being available on this basis the full provisions of the Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice must be adhered to. The successful applicant will be appointed to cover the duties of the vacant post on a temporary basis and will be regarded as being "on loan" from their employing Directorate. It is a requirement of this provision that the 'exporting' Directorate will have the authority to decide whether the applicant can be released on a secondment basis. The Directorate will not unreasonably refuse to release staff for secondment.

For Career Development Purposes or as part of a Positive Action Initiative

Secondments may also be seen as a way of encouraging career development and helping employees to gain experience in activities they would not normally be required to deal with. There are also general benefits to the Council in developing a more flexible and versatile workforce. At their discretion Directorates may wish to identify a limited number of posts as being available as secondments for career development purposes or in support of positive action initiatives aimed at extending training and development opportunities available to under-represented groups. Individual Chief Officers, therefore, have discretion to second members of staff to alternative posts within a grade/pay range (whichever fits with the new scheme) either within their own Directorate or by mutual agreement with another Chief Officer. However, where the secondment is to be made generally available it will be advertised internally and an appointment made in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure.
Where secondments are used for career development purposes or in support of positive action initiatives there should be a structured learning programme designed to enhance individual skills, knowledge and experience and also satisfy the overall aims of the Council's Corporate Workforce Development Strategy.

All secondments must have specific end dates and must not be allowed to continue as a permanent arrangement beyond 2 years unless approved by the Chief Officer (HR). Additionally the relationships between secondments and honoraria payments should be considered (see Appendix 34 of the council’s Local Conditions of Service).
Brief Guide to Key Legal Provisions

This guide provides advice on the employment legislation that covers recruitment and selection.

Anyone involved in the recruitment and selection of staff for the council should be aware of their responsibilities under the relevant legislation. The following provides a summary of the core legislation that is relevant to the recruitment and selection process. Further advice is provided as part of Recruitment and Selection training.

Discrimination

Types of Discrimination

Direct discrimination

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others would be in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of age, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief or marital status.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a requirement or condition is used which applies equally to all applicants / employees, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on a group of people due to their gender, age, religion or belief, race, sexual orientation or disability. The fact that a person may not have intended to discriminate against someone would not be a defence. Examples of indirect discrimination may include:

- Applying criteria which may not be essential to the job, e.g., asking for the ability to read and write in English for a cleaning job, might disadvantage groups of people born in another country. Although the individual will need to follow instructions, these could be given verbally.

- Insistence on British qualifications without consideration of equivalents may disadvantage those born in another country.

- Stating that only people with ten years continuous employment / service will be appointed may exclude more women than men due to women taking time away from work to raise a family.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when someone is discriminated against because they have brought discrimination proceedings or alleging that discrimination has occurred or given evidence in discrimination proceedings. For example, refusing to appoint someone because they have successfully brought an Employment Tribunal claim against the employing organisation would be victimisation.
Harassment

Harassment occurs when, for a reason which relates to a person's race, age, gender, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation, another person engages in unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Under the terms of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, it is unlawful to discriminate (directly or indirectly) in employment, including recruitment, training and promotion, on the grounds of:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Someone who is undergoing or has undergone Gender Re-assignment.

Examples of Direct Discrimination

- Choosing not to offer a position to a woman because she may, in the future, choose to have a baby.

Examples of Indirect Discrimination

- Requiring applicants to have 10 years unbroken service will disadvantage women more than men due to many women taking time away from work to raise a family.

Genuine Occupational Requirements (GORs)

As a general rule it is unlawful to specify that you require somebody of a particular sex, unless there is a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for the position. An example of a genuine occupational requirement is where there is a need to provide privacy or decency, e.g., the requirement for a male care assistant whose job involves helping men dress or use the toilet. In the event of the GOR rule applying, this must be stated on the advertisement and job details.

GORs are always open to challenge and if an employer is challenged, the burden of proof lies with the employer to show that a GOR applies to the job. It is a matter for an Employment Tribunal to determine whether a GOR has been established.

Race Relations Act 1976

The Race Relations Act 1976 covers discrimination on the grounds of:

- Colour
- Race
- Nationality
- Ethnic Origin
- National Origin
The Act places a duty on all public bodies to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity, promotion of good relations between people of different racial groups; and the elimination of unlawful racial discrimination.

**Examples of Direct Discrimination**

- Requiring applicants to have been born in the UK or requiring applicants to be of a certain religion or faith

**Examples of Indirect Discrimination**

- Requiring applicants to be from a certain area of the city may exclude areas with a high population of Muslims, for example, and therefore, this could be indirectly discriminating against this group.

**Genuine Occupational Requirements (GORs)**

It will be rare that a GOR will apply to discrimination on the grounds of someone's race. It would be very difficult to justify if it was to be challenged. An example may be the restriction of applicants to the Indian community for a position of a support worker based within the community and where they are dealing with clients who may only be comfortable confiding in someone of the same race.

**Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

Under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 discrimination will arise if, for a reason which relates to the person's disability, the employer treats that person less favourably than it would others who are not disabled, unless there is a substantial and material justification.

**Reasonable Adjustments**

The council's policy, in keeping with legislation, requires a recruitment panel to consider all possibilities for making reasonable adjustments to any aspect of the selection process to remove any barriers to disabled applicants from applying / taking up an appointment. Adjustments could be to: methods of assessment; test conditions; venue; arrangements for interview; job requirements; terms and conditions of the job; the fabric of the building; workplace arrangements or equipment; the way the job is to be carried out and specific duties of the job.

**Positive Discrimination**

There is no GOR provision under the Disability Discrimination Act. However, the council is bound by the Local Government and Housing Act (1989), to appoint only on merit. (i.e., all sections of the community must be invited to apply).

**Guaranteed Interviews**

The Council offers guaranteed interviews for disabled applicants who meet the essential shortlisting criteria (taking account of any necessary reasonable adjustments), even if there
are enough applicants to justify using the desirable criteria. Following this, appointments must be on merit (the best applicant for the job, taking account of necessary reasonable adjustments).

Advertisements

When advertising posts, organisations must avoid requirements which may exclude people with impairments unless this can be justified.

Example 1

The advertisement requires that applicants can drive (although this is not strictly essential). If, due to the nature of an impairment, a disabled job seeker is unable to drive, he / she can claim to have been excluded from applying by the advertisement even before there has been any opportunity to explore reasonable adjustments to remove this barrier. In such cases the law will assume that the reason the person was not appointed was because of disability discrimination and the onus is then on the employer to show otherwise.

Example 2

Job advertisements must not state or imply that certain disabled people will not be suitable or considered for a job. For example, stating that the workplace is not accessible for wheelchair users. Again, if this is done, and a wheelchair user complains that they have been specifically excluded from applying by the advertisement, thus denying an opportunity to pursue the possibilities of reasonable adjustments, it will again be assumed that discrimination in law did take place and the onus is then on the employer to show otherwise.

Decision-making stage

If there are more appointable applicants than jobs, then ranking must be used to establish the best applicant for the job (satisfying the merit requirement).

Where there are two or more applicants ranked equally, and one is disabled, the panel has then exhausted its responsibilities to identify an appointment on merit under the LGHA ('89), and is now in the same position as any other employer in applying the DDA. They can, therefore, lawfully offer the job to the disabled person.

This same action cannot be taken, however, to appoint a black / white person, or either a man or woman (which would constitute direct discrimination in law). In such cases the panel would have to use random selection.

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 cover discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. No job applicant should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of his / her religion or belief. An employer should not apply a rule which puts people of a particular religion or belief at a disadvantage which cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
Examples of Direct Discrimination

- Only allowing applicants from the Christian faith

Examples of Indirect Discrimination

- Requiring the wearing of a uniform (other than for safety reasons) may indirectly discriminate against certain groups due to the traditional dress of some religions.
- Requiring the employee to work overtime on a Saturday could discriminate against some religious groups, unless it could be justified.

Genuine Occupational Requirements (GORs)

It will be rare that a GOR will apply to discrimination on the grounds of someone's religion or belief. If a GOR was to be attached to the position it would be the responsibility of the council to prove that it was essential to the position should discrimination be claimed at an Employment Tribunal.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 protect applicants and employees from discrimination on the grounds of their sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is defined as having an orientation to:

- persons of the same sex (lesbians and gay men)
- persons of the opposite sex (heterosexual)
- persons of both sexes (bisexual)

Sexual orientation has nothing to do with sexual practices, which are not covered by these Regulations.

Examples of Direct Discrimination

- Requiring applicants to be heterosexual

Examples of Indirect Discrimination

- Not recognising civil partnerships in the provision of any employee benefits.

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 cover discrimination on the grounds of age. No applicant should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of his or her age.

- Age restrictions applied to positions will have to be considered and only applied if there is a statutory obligation or a Genuine Occupation Requirement, e.g., the statutory age limit for serving alcohol.
- The way in which vacancies are advertised will have to ensure they are fair. For example, advertising certain vacancies within universities may disadvantage older people.
The wording of advertisements and recruitment materials must not contain language associated with certain age groups. For example, words like 'mature' and 'dynamic' may imply certain age groups are preferred.

Qualifications required from applicants will have to be considered and equivalents sought. For example, requiring applicants to possess G.C.S.Es may exclude older applicants who studied when G.C.S.Es had not been introduced.

The length of experience required by an applicant must be justifiable as this may negatively impact on younger people.

Examples of Direct Discrimination

- Requiring applicants to be over the age of 30 without a statutory or occupational requirement.

Examples of Indirect Discrimination

- Requiring applicants to have 10 years' experience. This will greatly disadvantage younger people and it is questionable how much more will be gained from 10 years' experience as opposed to 5 years’ experience. It is also the case that the use of occupational testing (How to Guide – How to use Assessment Methods in recruitment) is a far more effective method of testing someone's skills and knowledge than experience.
- Advertising positions in Universities and Colleges only, could disadvantage older people due to them being unable to access the information.

Other Employment Legislation

Equal Pay Act 1970

The Equal Pay Act 1970 means that men and women in the same employment have the right to equality in the terms of their employment contract. This applies where the person is engaged on like work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value with a comparator of the opposite sex. However, the equality clause will not apply where the employer shows that the variation is genuinely due to a material factor not related to gender.

The act allows parity on a term by term basis of the contract, which includes basic pay, allowances bonuses / honoraria and annual leave entitlement.

Claims are brought in an Employment Tribunal and can be made at any time during employment and within six months of leaving employment.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 concerns the employment of people with a criminal record. If a person has been convicted of an offence, provided they have not been re-convicted for a further offence during a specified period, his / her conviction becomes spent (should be treated as though it had never existed) for the purpose of employment. A prison sentence of more than 30 months can never become spent, therefore, the person will always be required to disclose it, if asked by an employer.
There are a number of areas of employment to which the terms of the Act do not apply. This means that those with a criminal record must disclose the details of all their convictions including those which are 'spent'.

The employment, occupation and professions which are exempt fall into the following areas:-

Work involving matters of national security, e.g., some civil service posts, work that brings the person into contact with vulnerable groups, e.g., the disabled, the elderly, mentally ill and young people under 18 years of age and certain professions with legal protection, e.g., lawyers and accountants.

**Data Protection Act 1998**

The Data Protection Act 1998 applies to personal data held in a structured way in any format (paper, computer, microfiche, tape, etc). To comply with the Act, information must be collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to anyone unlawfully. The Council adheres to the eight Data Protection principles set out in the Act. In summary, these state that personal data shall be:

- processed fairly and lawfully;
- obtained and processed for specified purposes;
- adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- accurate and up to date;
- held for no longer than necessary;
- processed in accordance with subject rights;
- kept secure; and
- not transferred outside the European Economic Area - unless equivalent levels of protection for personal data exist.

**The Employment Practices Data Protection Code Part 1: Recruitment and Selection**

This Code is intended to assist employers in complying with the Act and to establish good practice for handling personal data in the workplace. The benchmarks develop and apply the Act in the context of recruitment practices and are the Information Commissioner's recommendations as to how the legal requirements of the Act can be met.

The code covers the following key areas:

- Managing Data Protection
- Advertising
- Applications
- Verification
- Short-listing
- Interviews
- Pre-employment Vetting
- Retention of Recruitment Records

The Code states that there is no general exemption from the Act's subject access rights in respect of notes or references about applicants. This means that when an individual makes a request for access to the notes about them, or their references, it must be granted. There is,
however, a special exemption from the right of access to a confidential reference when in the hands of the organisation which gave it. This exemption does not apply once the reference is in the hands of the person or organisation to which the reference has been given. The recipient is, though, entitled to take steps to withhold information that reveals the identity of other individuals such as the author of the reference or other third parties. The Code also states that employers should only carry out pre-employment vetting on an applicant (e.g. references) at an appropriate point in the recruitment process, and comprehensive vetting should only be conducted on a successful applicant.

Asylum and Immigration Act 1996

Under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 the Council could be guilty of a criminal offence if we employ someone who does not have permission to work in the UK. The Act applies to all temporary, permanent and casual appointments.

The Fixed - Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002

The Regulations on Fixed-Term Employees came into effect from 1 October 2002. The regulations are intended to protect employees engaged on fixed-term contracts from being treated less favourably than comparable employees on indefinite contracts. The main provisions of the Act are listed below:

The use of successive fixed term contracts will be limited to four years, unless the use of further fixed term contracts can be justified on objective grounds.

- If a fixed term contract is renewed beyond this limit, it shall be seen as permanent. A fixed term employee has a right to ask his / her employer for a written statement confirming that his / her contract is permanent or setting out objective reasons for the use of a fixed term contract beyond the four-year limit.
- Fixed term employees should receive information on permanent vacancies and training opportunities in their organisation.

Safer recruitment


The overriding aim of the new scheme will be to help avoid harm, or risk of harm, to children and vulnerable adults. It aims to do this by preventing those who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults from gaining access to them through their work.
How to attract applicants

The ‘How to Guides’ on Recruitment are designed to provide Managers with practical advice on how to recruit to posts within their teams in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy. This particular guide provides advice on how to attract the best candidates to the post and to make the most of the options available with regards to advertising.

Core Requirements

Recruiting Managers must comply with the following:

All jobs must be advertised, unless exceptional arrangements covered in the policy apply.

Recruitment advertising must be non-discriminatory and comply with the council’s equal opportunities aims and legislation.

Best Practice Requirements

Recruiting Managers should consider the following:

Adverts should normally be structured and designed so that the following core information is given;

The Organisation - Make this relevant to the job, e.g., You do not necessarily need to include information about Leeds ‘the City’ if you are aiming at recruiting people from Leeds.

Post Title - Where possible make it simple so that at first glance applicants know what it is they are applying for as some of our current job titles are not immediately self explanatory to external applicants.

Pay - This is normally shown as a salary range but if in doubt as to the best way to show this, if you are proposing something different, speak to your HR team or the Recruitment Service.

Hours - If the post holder will have to work shifts or weekends you should make clear what hours and working pattern will be needed.

The person, role, key responsibilities, unique selling points, essential qualifications, skills and experience required - This is your opportunity to sell the post but avoid overloading applicants with too much information. Focus on the key elements of the role and the benefits of working for the council. Use relevant messages as opposed to wordy complicated explanations. The e-recruitment site has lots of information about the council and the city so you do not need to repeat this, just refer people to it.

The closing date for applications to be received - Give at least two weeks from the date of your advert to ensure that as many people as possible have an opportunity to apply. Remember that it can take some people longer than others to complete an application form.
**Contact details** - Only include a contact number if it is a specialist role that may benefit from an informal discussion.

**Tips and Helpful Hints**

Planning is the key to successful advertising. Unless properly planned, drafted and carefully targeted, any recruitment advertisements will waste time and money and may result in inappropriate responses which will reflect negatively on the council as a whole.

- **Use of Language** - Your advert should be clear and concise
- Remember that the people that you are attracting may not be existing council employees and, therefore, may not be aware of local government terminology
- Use plain English so that the maximum amount of people can understand the message without any difficulty
- Avoid using jargon and acronyms – for more information on this, refer to ‘A Guide to Plain English’ available on the intranet
- Use direct language, e.g., ‘you’ as opposed to ‘the successful applicant’
- Avoid phrases such as ‘an opportunity has arisen’ and passive verbs for example ‘it is hoped interviews will be held on…’
- Avoid bullet pointing lists of items lifted straight from the person specification, especially items commencing "able to...", or "have the skills to..." Far from creating enthusiasm for the post it can make it seem dull and very unfriendly
- **Checking your advert** - before sending your advert to the Recruitment Service make sure you are happy with the content. Remember late changes and redrafts may delay your advert and the recruitment process.
- If you are having difficulty in writing your advert you can contact the Recruitment Service who can offer help and advice. Ideally do not leave this to the last minute as the Recruitment Service is extremely busy and may not have time to help you immediately prior to a deadline.
- **Image and style of your advert** - adverts must conform to a corporate style using the corporate template and colours. You only need to provide the content of the advert and the Recruitment Service will complete the remaining tasks.
- **Placing your adverts** - when deciding where to place your advert it is useful to consider the following questions:

1. Who are you trying to attract? Different media will attract different applicants and some basic guidance is provided below

2. What media is best for this type of role? The recruitment service can look back at response rates from previous adverts and advise you where best to place your advert

3. Will ‘in house’ advertising be just as successful and more cost effective? The new recruitment site is attracting more and more applicants for all types and levels of post. A list of registered users for the job may already exist.

4. What about applicants who cannot access the internet? Access is available in council libraries and paper copies can be found in other council buildings, e.g., One Stop Shops, Leisure Centres, the Jobshops, etc.
5. How do we still ensure we are reaching all the different communities within Leeds? - As above and also by developing partnerships with groups in local communities.

6. Should I put the advert in more than one publication? Using more than one publication won’t necessarily increase response rates but will increase the cost. Discuss this with the Recruitment Service.

7. Is it appropriate to place an advert in a professional journal or national newspaper? It is suggested that you get advice from the Recruitment Service on response rates before placing adverts in expensive journals or national newspapers.

8. Can I place adverts in council buildings? Tactical positioning of posters in buildings, e.g., sports centres, libraries, etc. can be successful in attracting suitable applicants.

9. How much will it cost? This will vary depending on the publication. The Recruitment Service can arrange quotes and ensure that adverts are more cost effective.

- The Recruitment Service can now provide advertising response data that can inform your decision. This means the council can be smarter about advertising and we no longer have to do what we have always done. Below is some basic guidance based on levels of jobs. For information about specific posts please contact the Recruitment Service about where to advertise.

- Jobs below Scale 4. It is best to use the e-recruitment site rather than the Yorkshire Evening Post (YEP). Huge interest has been gained for all types of jobs from admin, gardeners, and care assistants to cooks.

- ‘Entry level’ jobs - why advertise? The Recruitment Service can help you look at applicants from employment schemes, e.g., Flagships, PATH trainees, etc.

- Jobs above £20,000. It is not appropriate / nor cost effective to use the YEP for this level of post as the response rates are poor. Instead the Recruitment Service can help you develop an advertising strategy based on their professional knowledge and by analysing previous advertising campaigns. Options will include the e-recruitment website, Yorkshire Post, national newspapers and professional journals as appropriate.

- Once your advert is placed the Recruitment Service will monitor the response rates and can provide you with this information after the position has been filled.

Summary of tips

- Think about the pool of job seekers you are wanting to attract
- Produce a first draft. Ask yourself "does everything I’ve written add something to the message?"
- Strip out any unnecessary words or repetition. Simplify sentence structures and amend as far as possible to short statements that flow one from another. Change passive sentences to active ones and be less formal.
- Only include key information about the job requirements and include these into the body of the text rather than in bullet point form.
- Consider your draft from the perspective of applicants.
Further Help

The Recruitment Service can provide professional and specialist advice and help on the following:

- Content and wording of your advert.
- Arranging for quotes and ensuring that adverts are more cost effective and keep within your budget.
- Advising on suitable advertising sources and on copy dates for advertising. They will then organise a production and approval timetable from these deadlines.

Your contacts in the Recruitment Service

Recruitment Supervisor Tel: 0113 39 52126
Recruitment Assistant Tel: 0113 24 74174

Please contact us at: central.advertising@leeds.gov.uk for general enquiries
How to Interview Successfully

The ‘How To' guides on Recruitment are designed to provide Managers with practical advice on how to recruit to posts within their teams in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy. This particular guide provides advice on how to successfully interview applicants for a post and to ensure that you get the best applicant for the job.

This Guide provides support to panels in planning and running effective interviews, either as the sole method of assessment or as part of a wider evaluation process. This includes interview questioning techniques.

Specifically, the following guidelines aim to provide managers with handy hints and tips about interviewing including how to conduct the most effective interview and how to ensure that you abide by the relevant legislation.

Core Requirements

Recruiting Managers must comply with the following:

- More than one person must be on the interview panel. This is compulsory. Good practice would suggest that three panel members is an ideal number to ensure transparency and objectivity.

- The questions asked must be non discriminatory. If you are inexperienced at interviewing or feel that you would benefit from a refresher, please contact your local HR team prior to writing the questions.

- Use the assessment and shortlisting form. This is essential as it enables you to explain, justify and demonstrate the decisions made by the panel following the shortlisting and interviews.

- All notes must be kept and confidentiality must be maintained at all times. You must not discuss the details of someone’s interview with anyone outside of the panel unless it is a member of HR from who you are seeking advice.

- Your notes must be comprehensive and demonstrate how the applicants measured against the criteria.

- You must provide feedback to each applicant interviewed where requested – but see the main policy before providing feedback in writing

Best Practice Requirements

Managing the process

Quality selection processes are well planned and structured to ensure:

- everything runs smoothly on the day
- applicants feel as comfortable and relaxed as possible
• panels are able to fully concentrate on the assessment process
• a good impression of the organisation is created.

Preparation should include:

• Allocate each applicant’s arrival and departure time according to their travel distance and any disabled applicant’s travel or access needs
• Issue travel expense forms
• Book appropriate venues and make sure they meet the access needs of any disabled applicants, and are as comfortable as possible in terms of heating and lighting.
• Where possible aim for an informal setting so that applicants do not feel inhibited, e.g., by removing barriers such as tables, and using comfortable chairs.
• Book equipment, e.g., laptop and projector or OHP for presentations; specialist equipment required by disabled applicants. Book lip speakers or sign language interpreters if required.
• Ensure that you will be free from interruption (transfer telephones, put notices on door, advise others / reception of interviews)
• Book refreshments if appropriate - this is common courtesy and may help to relax applicants
• Ensure all paperwork is ready for tests / exercises and that you have arranged for test administration and marking
• Ensure panel members have copies of recording sheets and scoring sheets
• Design interview structure, questions (see Questioning Techniques below) and panel member roles
• Decide how and when results and scores from other selection exercises will be received by the panel

Prior to the Interview

Panel members should have:

• the schedule of interviews
• the interview plan with list of prepared questions
• copies of application forms, job specification, person specification and any other information relevant to the vacancy
• agreement on how the interview will be ranked and scored
• agreed and appropriate note-taking stationery
• forms for individual and collective panel member assessments
• agreement on who will give feedback to unsuccessful applicants

Conducting the interviews

The Chair is responsible for making sure the interviews flow smoothly. You should introduce and close the interview and co-ordinate the process throughout.

At the outset, try to put the applicant at ease. Structured interviews are fairly formal but try to present a human face and develop a level of rapport with the applicant. This will help you gain better responses. The following will help:

• Greet and welcome the applicant and introduce the panel
• Let them know what is going to happen and when they will be able to ask their own questions
• Explain the purpose of the interview and that the panel may take some notes
• If a test has been used prior to the interview explain how it fits into the selection process and thank them for doing it
• If you have asked for a presentation, after initial introductions, allow them time to set up and then get the presentation underway. Ask some follow-up questions and always thank them
• Allow space for applicant’s questions and be prepared to answer in an open and helpful way
• At the end, thank the applicant, explain what will happen next and who will contact them.

Other Hints and Tips

Interviewing Skills

Effective Interviewing

The interviewer’s job is to make sure sufficient information is collected to assess the applicant against the selection criteria.

The panel may have a different line of questions for one applicant from those for another based, for example, on information supplied in the application which needs to be explored.

Never follow a line of questions mechanically about issues already covered by the applicant in previous answers. However, all applicants must have an opportunity to answer questions on all the selection criteria.

Be prepared to follow up your initial questions with supplementary questions to establish what the applicant is really saying. Remember, interview evidence is entirely reliant on self-report from the applicant, so you need to judge when to probe, check facts, delve deeper on specific areas.

Questioning Techniques

Evidence from the past is a fairly reliable predictor of future behaviour. Ask questions which relate to previous experiences, such as:

• Give an example of your involvement in...
• Why did you...
• Describe a time when...
• Tell me about...

Use appropriate questions, outlined below, to help make the process as meaningful and complete as possible. Avoid making subjective judgements and gather sufficient information on which to base your assessment.

Closed Questions: use only when you require a yes or no answer. For example: "was this your own work?", or for checking facts, e.g. "Do you supervise staff?".
Open Questions: use to get the applicant talking and to cover the topic in depth: "why do you think that situation arose?" , "how did you deal with it?", "what did you do next?" Open questions usually begin with what, why, how and when.

Probing: A good plan is to start with an open question. Follow this with a more specific open probing question to get more detail. Follow with further open probing as you explore the topic in more depth and get further under the surface. Keep digging deeper until you are satisfied the topic and related issues have been thoroughly explored.

This approach is helpful for exploring not only applicant’s technical skills and knowledge, but also their behavioural styles, e.g., concern for service quality, personal responsiveness, enthusiasm, proactivity, innovation, how concerned they are with interpersonal relationships, how they respond to challenging situations, etc. Ask closed questions to check facts and move between closed questions and open probing questions as required. Finish with a final question to close the subject.

Panel members need the flexibility to develop appropriate questions as the interview progresses and depending on applicant responses. Sticking to a rigid script is not an effective way to run a good interview. The example below helps to illustrate the process.

Panel members need to consider the degree to which probing helps gain understanding of the applicant. Probing does not mean applicants are necessarily unaware of issues and need coaxing. Instead some applicants may be nervous or unable to immediately understand issues, especially if they have less direct experience.

Open: Introduce Subject

- What was the project you were involved in?

Open Probe: Dig Deeper

- What was your particular role in the project team?
- What aspects did you enjoy most?
- What aspect did you find the most challenging?
- How did these difficulties impact on inter-team relationships?
- What did you personally do to help resolve this?
- What do you think would have made the team more effective?
- What difference has the project made to service quality?

Closed: Check Facts

- Was the deadline met?
- Was the final report your own work?

Close Subject

- Is there anything else you would like to tell us?
A line of questioning like that above is likely to gain a lot of information for an attentive panel about, for example, the applicant’s enthusiasm, their approach to relationship and team working, their concern for quality and how proactive they are. The questioner needs to be ready to pick up on particular issues of relevance to the job requirements and pursue further as required.

**Use silence after a question**

Use silence after a question to give the applicants time to think and again after the initial answer to encourage them to say more.

**Summarise**

If in answering a question the applicant digresses or talks in more detail than necessary, gently stop them and summarise back the main point(s) of their response.

**Move on**

Move on if, having been given sufficient opportunity, the applicant does not demonstrate the required depth of knowledge or competence on a particular question or range of questions.

**Reflective Techniques**

These can be useful if the issue is sensitive or emotionally charged. For example, if in the course of probing you discover that the person left a previous job because of what she / he describes as bullying, avoid saying "it sounds like you were treated badly". Rather, reflect their statement back to them: "So you feel that you were not treated fairly."

**Questions to avoid**

**Hypothetical questions**

Asking applicant’s how they would deal with a certain situation will tell you more about how well they can ‘think on their feet’ and how good they are at judging the kinds of response you are seeking, than the way they actually behave at work. They also tend to help people who are good at remembering theory, but do not have actual experience. The answers will be how they think they will act in a situation, rather that how they actually handle it.

**Multiple Questions**

These are usually long, complex questions with several parts and show the interviewer has not thought about exactly what she / he wants to ask, for example “when did you do the project, how long did it take and what was your personal contribution to achieving it’s goals?”. In response, the applicant may focus on only one part of the question, or talk about the project in vague and general terms, or give a very long and complicated response. Avoid confusion, keep questions simple and be clear what it is you are trying to find out.
Leading Questions

These prompt the interviewee with the expected response. For example, "You enjoy working with budgets, don’t you?" or, "You get on well in a team don’t you?"

Evaluative Questions

These ask the applicant to make a general assessment of their abilities and will tell you little or nothing about their real capabilities. For example, "How good are you at problem solving?" will probably get a result like "quite good" or "Yes, I do a lot of problem solving in my current job and this is something I enjoy". You are none the wiser.

Personal questions

Avoid asking personal questions unless this is strictly relevant to the job, for example, whether the applicant can move to take up warden accommodation.

Questions about the nature of a person's disability or how they would overcome an impairment cannot form any part of the interview. Disabled applicants should be assessed against the requirements of the person specification only. Exploring how reasonable adjustments can be made to remove disabling barriers should be done only after the decision, based on merit, has been reached.

Feedback

Panels must agree how feedback will be given to all interviewed applicants. It is a very important part of good practice and can make a significant difference to the way applicants feel about the organisation, even if their application has been unsuccessful. Feedback should be given as quickly as possible.

This includes an overview of the results of any tests and exercises as well as assessments from the interview. The feedback should be accurate, factual and helpful. It is important to provide a balance between those areas where the applicant did well or showed strength, and areas of weakness, where the applicant needs to improve for the future. Where it is necessary to resolve issues such as potential grievances or complaints written feedback should be given where requested by the applicant. However, before feedback is given in writing check with HR first to ensure this is not discriminatory.
How to use assessment methods in recruitment

The ‘How To’ guides on recruitment are designed to provide Managers with practical advice on how to recruit to posts within their teams in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy. This particular guide provides advice on how to successfully recruit the right person for a post.

Specifically, the following guidelines aim to provide managers with handy hints and tips about assessments that can be used during recruitment and selection including how to run the most effective selection process.

For many jobs, a panel interview alone will be the most appropriate approach, however, using additional selection tools can help make a better informed decision and manage the risks involved by reducing the reliance on performance at interview alone. There are two main reasons for using additional selection tools;

• Improve the quality and quantity of information on which to judge applicants
• Allow applicants to demonstrate how they meet requirements (assessments are designed to give applicants more opportunities to demonstrate skills)

Assessment methods add costs and time to the selection process. Panels should carefully consider whether, in addition to an interview, the use of other assessment methods would provide useful information. The Recruitment Service will advise on the use of assessment methods, costs and timescales.

Core Requirements

Recruiting Managers must comply with the following:

• You must only use assessment methods, other than a panel interview, with the prior agreement of your HR team.
• Once you have agreement to use an alternative method of assessment, all tests must be administered by qualified people. Speak to your local HR team for more details
• All applicants must receive feedback following any form of assessment (please refer to feedback section in the main policy, particularly where feedback is to given in writing)
• All assessments must be linked to job requirements and must, therefore, be relevant to the role
• Before using any test or assessment exercise, always consult in advance with disabled applicants about adjustments they will need to the test arrangements, materials or equipment to ensure they get a fair assessment equal to other applicants. If it is not possible to make the required adjustments or supply necessary equipment/materials an alternative method must be used.
Best Practice Requirements

Types of assessment methods

If, following discussion with your local HR team, you decide that you wish to use an additional assessment method in support of a panel interview some suggested recognised methods are given below:

- Ability tests
- Technical tests
- Job simulation (work sample) exercises, including:
  - presentations
  - data input exercises
  - written exercises
  - in-tray exercises
  - role-play exercises
  - group discussions exercises

- Occupational Personality Questionnaires
- Full Assessment Centres (using multiple assessment techniques with trained assessors)

Other Hints and Tips

When to use additional assessment methods

1. To reduce a large pool of applicants. In such cases, the tests can be held at a separate date before the interviews are arranged as a way of producing a manageable shortlist for interview. For instance if there was a large response to a job which involved a lot of data inputting, short tests could be arranged to assess the ability level of applicants and establish a ranking order.

2. Key posts at higher level where there is a need to check out competence in a particular area. This should be related to the job role, e.g., presentations, written reports, or even a full Assessment Centre using a range of tests and exercises for Senior Management positions.

Standardised tests, designed and published by experts in occupational psychology, have been used to good effect in recruitment. However, they carry costs and may only be administered, scored and interpreted by people qualified and registered to do so under the British Psychological Society.

More details about the assessment methods available:

Technical Tests

These tests assess an applicant’s technical skills only, not his / her style or behavioural competencies. These tests contain right and wrong answers and are scored out of a maximum available. Applicants can be asked to write down the correct answer or choose
from multiple choice options. Tests can either be designed in-house or bought in and provided on-line or in hardcopy form.

- **In-house tests**

  It is possible to design and run your own tests. This is most suited for testing a fairly limited range of skills, e.g., numeracy, typing accuracy, etc. You must make sure that the test is relevant to the job and thought should be given to the quality of the instructions, time permitted, as well as how you will interpret the results.

- **Bought in tests**

  Bought in tests must only be sourced from reputable companies who can supply them in other formats and are recognised by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

**Types of test**

The main types of test that you might consider using are;

- **verbal** - from testing spelling and grammar to more complex verbal reasoning
- **numerical** - from basic numeracy tests to critical reasoning tests and business simulations
- **mechanical** - presenting pictures or diagrams of mechanical problems to be solved
- **diagrammatic** - test of logical reasoning ability by asking the applicant to make sense of abstract shapes and patterns
- **clerical** - tests used to measure typing speed and accuracy, filing, etc.

**Job Simulation Exercises**

Job simulation exercises are tools which allow you to see the applicant ‘in action’ carrying out a task (or tasks) that reflect actual situations he / she would encounter in the job. They are also useful as they allow the applicant to demonstrate his or her skills and knowledge in practice. Job simulation exercises include presentations, written exercises, role plays, In-tray exercises, manual exercises and group exercises.

**Presentations**

Presentations can add value to the selection process as they are relatively simple to design and can be incorporated into the interview itself. They should only be used where this level of formal communication is relevant to the job. Presentations can give information on an applicant across four main areas;

- **Oral communication**

  Presentations can give an insight into an applicant’s fluency, persuasiveness, confidence, ability to inspire and ability to explain often complex information / knowledge / concepts.

- **Organisation / prioritisation skills**
Allows an assessment of how well an applicant structures his / her presentation. Presentations require the prioritisation of information giving, due to the time constraint, and thus can show how well organised the applicant is.

- **Areas of knowledge**

  If a presentation is on a particular area of knowledge, relevant to the job, this can give an insight into how much the applicant knows about the subject and allows the panel to assess the extent to which the applicant’s knowledge in a particular area is up to date / the level required for the post.

- **Depth of thinking / awareness**

  The presentation may assess the extent to which the applicant thinks strategically and is able to come up with innovative solutions to problems. In addition, if it is relevant, applicants could be given the opportunity to display an awareness of the unique local government context.

You must decide whether or not to give the topic of the presentation to the applicants in advance. This decision should depend on what exactly you are wishing to test.

- **Presentation topic in advance**

  This will allow applicants to thoroughly prepare and rehearse a presentation. Giving the topic in advance allows an assessment the quality of the applicant’s ability to research the topic, draw upon relevant information and present it as best as he / she can.

- **Presentation topic given on the day**

  This will demonstrate what an applicant is capable of delivering within a short timescale and under pressure. The topic area given in this instance should be relevant to a particular area of knowledge, awareness, understanding or expertise required for the job.

It is important that you set expectations at the outset. The applicant should be told in advance how long his / her presentation should last, who he / she will be presenting to and what materials are available for presenting, e.g., flip chart, PowerPoint, overhead projector, etc.

**Written Exercises**

Written exercises can be a useful tool for assessing applicants against the requirements of the job. They can be fairly simple to design, however, assessing them can be quite time consuming (depending on the length of the exercise set). It is vital you develop clear scoring criteria before assessing them to ensure transparent decision making. As with all assessments, written exercises should only be used if they reflect what is needed in the job. Depending on the design, written exercises can give information on an applicant across two main areas;
• awareness of the local government context, ability to analyse and interpret information, write for the target audience and planning and organising skills
• ability to write clear reports, memos and letters

You must decide whether or not to give the written exercise to the applicant in advance. This decision should depend on what exactly you are wishing to test.

• **Written exercise given in advance**

  This will allow applicants to thoroughly prepare a written piece of work. Giving the topic in advance allows an assessment of the quality of the applicant’s ability to research the topic, draw upon relevant information and present it as best he / she can.

• **Written exercise given on day**

  This will demonstrate what an applicant is capable of delivering within a short timescale and under pressure. The exercise set in this instance should be relevant to a particular area of knowledge, awareness, understanding or expertise required for the job.

It is important you set expectations at the outset. Decide what materials to give applicants, e.g., pencils, pens, laptops, etc. For consistency, make sure applicants either all use laptops or all hand write their responses (unless you agree with a disabled applicant that they will do something different as part of a reasonable adjustment).

**Role Plays**

Role play exercises simulate real life situations and are used to assess applicants on how well they communicate and interact with other people in a work setting. They can be useful for assessing skills and behaviours such as persuasion, negotiation, ability to take the lead, handling difficult situations and dealing with sensitive issues, etc.

The applicants need to be briefed on what is expected of them, what they are being asked to do and how long they have to do it in. The panel need to be clear about what behaviours and skills they are assessing and how they are going to score them. Similarly, thought must be given to any other parts or roles required for the exercise as other employees may be needed to take part in these. A specific results form should be designed for assessors to record their observations during the role play.

**In-tray Exercises**

In tray exercises are designed to see how an applicant performs under the kind of day to day issues likely to be faced in the job. Applicants are presented with an in-tray of information, usually a mixture of emails, letters, telephone messages, etc, which are relevant to the job. The exercise assesses applicants on how they have prioritised the different pieces of information and what actions they see fit to take with them.

In–tray exercises can measure a number of skills and give an insight into how applicants prioritise information and perform under pressure. They do not measure any softer skills.
such as face to face communication, negotiation, etc. In–tray exercises can take some time to design but are fairly straight forward to link to the requirements of the job. Preparation is the key as you will need to organise the following;

- decide the criteria and a transparent scoring system
- develop the information needed (emails, briefing notes, memos, etc)
- book resources (desk space, laptops, etc.)
- write a clear brief which should explain the applicant’s job title, contextual information, what tasks they will be asked to do, how long they have, etc.

**Manual Exercises**

Manual exercises are designed to see how an applicant carries out a particular task which they would be required to perform in the job. An example of this is asking an applicant for a cleaning job to do some cleaning, or a mechanic to carry out a routine mechanical task. Such an approach allows the applicant to demonstrate skills relevant to the job. Some preparation will be required and it is important to have a clear understanding of what will be judged as successful upon completion of the task.

It is also very important to communicate to the applicant that they will be required to perform a task and to provide them with the tools necessary to carry this out. Unless the task and success criteria are very straight forward, a specifically designed results form should be used for the assessor to judge performance.

**Group Exercises**

Group exercises are used to test how a applicants interact with each other as they carry out tasks assigned to them. Multiple applicants (usually up to 6) are brought together at the same time, observed and assessed individually. Group exercises allow you to assess an applicant’s behaviour in a job relevant situation.

Group exercises can give you an insight into an applicant’s influencing, leadership, team working and team building skills. Group exercises will also allow applicants to demonstrate their social confidence, flexibility, adaptability, creativity, commitment to equality and interpersonal sensitivity.

Group exercises are complex to design and organise and are resource intensive (one assessor is required per applicant). Assessors must be trained and fully briefed on their role and level of responsibility. Because all applicants need to be available at the same time, group exercises are commonly held as part of assessment centres. These should only be used with appointments to senior posts and possibly graduate posts where the most rigorous assessment methods are needed.

There are three different types of exercises you can set, depending on what you want to assess.

- **Assigned roles**

  Applicants all work to the same overall brief / problem. Within this, however, each is given an individual brief. This could be a simulated partnership meeting, for example,
where applicants must work to an overall objective whilst trying to push their own agendas at the same time.

- **Group discussion and presentation**

  Applicants are each given a different problem and are given a set amount of time to consider the issues involved, and present to the group both the problem and their proposed solution. In this variation, group discussion follows each presentation.

- **Leaderless groups**

  Applicants all receive the same brief and are required to collectively carry out a particular task. It is left to the group how to organise themselves to achieve this.

### Assessment Centre

Assessment centres are very rigorous and combine the use of a range of selection tools. Assessment centres involve a structured approach investigating the extent to which an applicant meets the person specification. Due to their complexity, assessment centres can prove more valid than using a single selection tool for identifying applicants who will be successful in the job.

At an assessment centre, each requirement of the person specification is assessed through more than one measure. This can provide a more balanced selection experience, as applicants who perform less well in one type of exercise are given the opportunity to do well in another.

All the exercises are scored by a team of trained assessors who, at the end of the process pool their individual scores to obtain an agreed assessment of each applicant. Due to their complexity, and the training required for assessors you should seek the advice of your HR team before considering using an assessment centre as part of your recruitment exercise.
How to write Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

The ‘How To’ guides on recruitment are designed to provide Managers with practical advice on how to recruit to posts within their teams in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy. This particular guide provides advice on how to successfully write job descriptions and person specifications for a post to ensure that you get the best applicant for the job.

Core Requirements

Recruiting Managers must comply with the following:

Whether writing a new job description or person specification or updating an existing one, you must adhere to the authorised formats (see attached).

Any changes must be agreed with HR who will consult with the Trade Unions and Job Evaluation team if required. This would include circumstances where pay and grading issues are affected, or whether new qualification, skills or working arrangements apply and would be a concern to existing or prospective employees.

Best Practice Requirements

Corporate Values

It is vital that the council’s values are embedded in the workforce and support the drive for excellence in service delivery. These values are to be used in service planning, service monitoring, self-assessment and, very importantly, recruitment. The values are:

- Looking After Leeds
- Putting Customers First
- Treating People Fairly
- Valuing Colleagues

How do you build in values?

Values underpin the way we do things. They are not separate items but the basis of service excellence and should be embedded in the main duties of the job, whether the service delivered is for internal or external customers. They inform the key behaviours and performance standards required for successful performance of any job.

Some examples of values incorporated into specific duties as the required standards of behaviour or outputs for carrying out the duties, are given throughout this guide.

Other Hints and Tips

Part 1 - The Job Description

A good job description, whatever the professional area or level of responsibility, should if possible be no more that one side of A4. It should consist of a series of clear, crisp statements which express the main duties in plain language.
Cutting the detail

The job description should not include every task a person may have to carry out under each main duty. Precise detail of what is expected in the job should be part of the induction process.

For example:

"Assist in carrying out efficient financial administration for the team; following council systems and financial regulations (training on in-house system will be given)."

Build in expected Performance Standards

The job description should detail not just what should be done but the standards of performance required for doing it. In other words, the difference between just doing the job and doing it well.

Flexibility, responsiveness, being adaptable to change, customer care, concern for quality and equality, are all core requirements for every employee in the council. Employees' attitudes and styles of behaviour can be crucial to individual, service and organisational success.

For example, an employee may be required:

"To deal with all initial enquiries from members of the public either face to face or by telephone".

This tells the applicant what they would have to do but says nothing about how they are expected do it. Consider this alternative:

"To provide a courteous and responsive reception service for all members of the public who contact the office by telephone or in person".

Another example:

"To carry out photocopying"

A person may do photocopying but if this is done only at certain times regardless of priorities or urgent need, the employee will not be supporting, as intended, the effectiveness and efficiency of the team in delivering its area of service. A better form of wording might be:

"Meet all the photocopying needs of the team in an efficient and timely manner".

We need to recruit motivated, flexible and committed employees who really want to make a contribution and care about a job well done. Applicants who have these values and commitments are more likely to be enthused if they can see the styles of behaviour and commitments they value reflected as success factors in the job description.
Outputs - not just tasks

Today’s organisation is very fluid - nothing is cast in tablets of stone. Job descriptions need to support this organisational fluidity. To do this, focus on the outputs expected from a job rather than only the precise tasks for achieving them. The exact methods used today may have changed tomorrow.

For example:

A Head of HR may be required to:

"Develop initiatives to maximise take-up of council employment opportunities by local residents".

This statement is all that is needed in the job description about this area of responsibility. The duty will remain important over some considerable time. It is output based and links closely to the council’s aims and objectives. It provides the basis for target setting, developing and reviewing the success of initiatives and monitoring outcomes over time.

If the job description went on to detail all the ways this might be achieved, the effect would be to:

- limit the scope of what might be done to achieve the intended outputs
- fix activities to the way things are done now
- stifle innovation
- introduce unnecessary length into the job description

Be direct about what employees are expected to achieve. If it is a duty of the job to "develop and deliver best quality services which are responsive to the needs of Leeds residents", say so.

Do not build in introductory phrases, like "To ensure that..." If the duty will be the direct responsibility of the employee. This turns the sentence from active to passive and seems to remove the responsibility from the individual concerned.

Employee Development

Organisational success depends on continuous improvement - continuously looking to do things better. Job descriptions should make clear the need to continuously develop self and skills for the job.

All management jobs must include the duty to develop and motivate staff

For all staff: Make clear in simple terms the need to continuously develop self and skills for the job. For an entry level job, for example, it would be enough to state:

"Contribute to ways that the team’s services can be improved; or

"Take an active interest in your own development and take full advantage of training provided".
Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion

These are mainstream issues for all jobs and, again, relate to our values. Responsibilities relating to these organisational priorities should be incorporated into the body of the job description. It’s not enough to rely on a standard equality statement at the end of job descriptions.

Revisit the Main Purpose of the Job

Having reviewed the main contents of the job description now reconsider the explanation given in the Main Purpose section. This should be a clear and straightforward summary of the job purpose. Could this now be improved or made clearer in any way?

Standard Statements

The following statement should be included at the end of the job description:

"Where the postholder is disabled, every effort will be made to supply all necessary aids, adaptations or equipment to allow them to carry out all the duties of the job. If, however, a certain task proves to be unachievable, job redesign will be given full consideration"

Part Two - The Person Specification

Incorporate not just hard skills, knowledge and abilities needed to do the job, but also the styles of behaviour, personal commitments and values a person needs to bring to the job for effective performance. These are listed under the heading: Personal Styles and Behaviours.

Format

Follow the format shown in the example.

Head the document with the Job Title. The panel may feel it helpful to commence the list of criteria with a simple explanation, such as "You will have:"

The only other heading that should be included is for Personal Styles and Behaviours. Do not include Methods of Assessment (MOA) in the Person Specification. Your aim is to simply tell applicants what the criteria is and, therefore, what you are looking for from applicants.

Length, style and contents

Person specifications are less than a side and a half of A4. One side will be sufficient for most jobs. If it is much longer than one side, the requirements are definitely too detailed and need to be simplified.

It should be in plain language, free from jargon, buzz phrases, acronyms and management speak. When you have drafted the person specification, consider your target market again. Is it appropriate, clear and helpful for this pool of applicants? Try to read it from their point of view.
Key Considerations in producing the Person Specification

Go back to the Job Description

As a panel, ask: What makes a person able to do that task, deliver that output, and perform that role? This involves translating the role and duties of the job into the various skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications, styles of behaviour, commitments and values a person needs to bring to the job to perform the role effectively. It is not the same as listing duties from the job description and adding the words “able to...” in front!

Keep focus on the job level and the pool of applicants

Council person specifications should be clear to people regardless of whether they have a local government or public sector background. We need to attract good recruits from across the employment market.

Measurable Criteria

Everything included in your person specification must be clear, valid, job related and measurable by an objective method of assessment. Try to put yourself in the applicant’s position and think through how they could show that they fulfil the criteria.

Avoid excluding particular groups

Equality legislation requires that only requirements that are actually necessary for effective performance are used to decide whether someone is appointable.

- Asking for a driving licence when the job can be done without driving will exclude a disabled person from applying who could do the job but is unable to drive
- Requiring in-depth knowledge of specific council policies and procedures would exclude external applicants

Think about the whole job

Many requirements may be relevant to a range of duties of the job and trying to deal with each separately can be unhelpful and lead to an overly long list of criteria.

What to include

- **Skills/ abilities/ aptitude** When specifying skills, discuss the requirement, and develop shared understanding of what you are looking for. Pitch your criteria at the right level for the job.

- **Essential skill, or aptitude to learn?** Is the skill something an applicant has to possess before starting work, or is it something that can easily be learnt once in the job, through induction training? Particularly for jobs at entry level, panels should not be looking for recruits who can “hit the ground running”!

- **Example**: Part of a clerical job may involve using a computer to carry out word processing and data inputting. Therefore, the new recruit must be reasonably
comfortable in using a computer and have some basic familiarity with using information technology.

But they do not need prior experience of using the specific software packages used in the office, nor to have done this type of work before. This can be covered as part of a planned induction process. For assessing at interview, the panel might explore what the applicant has used at home, for study, for leisure or in a voluntary capacity, for example, programming the home video.

- **Knowledge** Include only knowledge which the new recruit has to bring to the job. Is it something that can easily be learned in the job without effecting performance within the necessary timescale? Do not require knowledge of internal systems, rules or regulations.

- **For example** it is not fair to expect applicants to have knowledge of the council’s policies and procedures. This isn’t useful and places external applicants at a disadvantage.

- **For many jobs** which involve working inside people’s homes, it may be best to require commitment to good customer service taking account of individual needs and circumstances. This will enable the panel to explore simple equality related issues as part of the interview.

- **Alternatively, for entry level jobs** it may be most appropriate to require an understanding of why equal opportunities is important.

- **For higher level jobs** it is more appropriate to require personal commitment to equality and an understanding of what this means in practice

- **For management jobs** you might require demonstrable commitment to equality in employment and service delivery.

- **For senior management jobs** applicants should be required to demonstrate achievements in promoting and integrating Equal Opportunities into all aspects of employment and service delivery.

- **Qualifications** only include essential qualifications and never simply for the panel’s own convenience, to save having to assess whether the person has skills and knowledge which it is assumed they will have if they possess the qualification. A qualification may be essential, for example, because it is a national requirement at that grade in that profession, or because the job is a traineeship and it is essential for entry to the relevant course.

Supporting staff to attain qualifications may be important for improving professional standards across your service, so it is acceptable to require that applicants either:

- have the qualification
- are currently studying towards it, or are willing to study to attain the qualification
may be sufficient to require willingness to undertake job related training. For many jobs it may be appropriate to require ‘an active interest in own personal development’.

- **Experience** is it essential, and if so, which part of the job do applicants need to have experience in and what type of experience?

- **Employee Development** there are new standard requirements for assessing applicants to all management and supervisory positions, to ensure they have the skills, knowledge and commitment to effectively develop the staff they manage.

- **For supervisory / first stage managerial jobs** applicants should be required to demonstrate understanding and commitment to staff development.

- **For higher level management jobs** applicants should be required to provide demonstrable evidence of having developed staff in the past.

- **For all non-management staff** the need to participate in their own development should also be an element of the person specification. For basic grade jobs it may be sufficient to require willingness to undertake job related training. For many jobs it may be appropriate to require ‘an active interest in own personal development’.

### Personal Styles and Behaviours

Think about the job again, its purpose, how it fits into the service, how it contributes to service and organisational goals and relates to our values. Focus on underlying competencies such as commitments / values / styles of behaviour / softer skills needed for success in the job. These underpin performance and make the difference between simply doing the job and really effective / superior performance in the role.

Consider qualities like:

**Styles of behaviour / values / personal attributes / commitments:**

- Positive outlook, enthusiasm
- Personal motivation to achieve results
- Flexibility
- Adaptability to change
- Responsiveness
- Empathy (e.g. for customers experiencing crisis or distress)
- Commitment to customer service
- Concern for people (essential for staff motivation, customer care, team building, all direct service jobs)
- Concern for relationships (essential for team working, partnership working, coalition building, jobs involving negotiation)
- Quality orientation (essential for service management, service planning, monitoring and delivery internal or external)
- Commitment to equality and social inclusion
- Commitment to continuous improvement, of self, of staff, of service (see ‘Employee Development’ section above)
Underlying competencies / softer skills, for example:

- Creativity
- Emotional resilience under competing demands
- Interpersonal sensitivity
- Active listening skills

The above list is illustrative only, suggesting areas you may need to consider. However, any requirement included must be strictly job relevant and clearly identified for effective performance from a proper analysis of what is required in the job. It should be described in a way that is understandable to applicants, and the panel must use objective methods for assessment (see also How to Guide - How to interview successfully and How to Guide – How to use assessment methods in recruitment.
Leeds City Council Job Description

Service

Post Title

GRADE

Post(s) to which directly responsible

Post(s) for which directly responsible

Purpose of job

Responsibilities

Relationships

Physical Conditions

The post is currently based at

has access by stairs and lift and is accessible by disabled persons to the ground floor by a portable ramp on request

Leeds City Council operates a non-smoking policy.
**Economic conditions**

Grade: *
Annual Leave: * days per annum plus 5 days pa for 5 years local government service, plus 11 statutory holidays, pro rata for part time working.
Hours: 37 hours per week
Flexitime: Eligible to participate in flexi-time scheme
Conditions of Service: NJC Conditions apply

**Prospects**

**Promotion**
Whilst there is no automatic progression to any more senior posts, opportunities do exist for advancement and promotion, dependent upon normal staff movements and on the capabilities of the individual post holder.

**Training**
The Department encourages training both “in-house” and external to meet the needs of the individual and of the Department.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

Job Description Prepared / Reviewed by: Date:
Job Description Approved by: Date:
**EMPLOYEE SPECIFICATION:**
Detailed below are the types of skills, experience and knowledge that are required of applicants applying for the post. The ‘Essential Requirements’ indicate the minimum requirements, and applicants lacking these attributes will not be considered for the post. The points detailed under ‘Desirable Requirements’ are additional attributes to enable the applicant to perform the position more effectively or with little or no training. They are not essential, but may be used to distinguish between acceptable applicants.

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Willing to abide by the Council’s Equal Opportunities Policy in the duties of the post, and as an employee of the Council.

*  
*  
I

Willing to carry out all duties having regard to an employee’s responsibility under the Council’s Health and Safety Policies

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<th>METHOD OF ASSESSMENT(MOA)</th>
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<th>T = Test</th>
<th>I = Interview</th>
<th>C = Certificate</th>
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Signed off at JCC 30th July 2008