

**HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

June 2021



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# Aims of the policy

1. The *Recruitment and Selection Policy* outlines Hertsmere Borough Council's policy and approach to the recruitment and selection of all employees to the council. This includes workers recruited on a temporary basis from recruitment agencies.
2. The council's aim is to ensure that all appointments are made in a fair and consistent manner.  No bias should be shown at any part of the procedure and full regard will be given to all laws regarding equal opportunities as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
3. All departments/services are required to follow the policy and recruitment procedure to achieve consistency of practice across the council.
4. A skilled, diverse, efficient and effective workforce is crucial to the council’s success in delivering excellent quality services.  Therefore, the council aims to attract, appoint and retain the best candidates for jobs, and build a high quality workforce that will achieve the objectives of the council.
5. Efficient and effective recruitment should minimise the use and cost of recruiting temporary agency workers.
6. The recruitment and selection process aims to promote a positive image of the council.
7. The roles and responsibilities outlined in the council’s equality policy in relation to acting fairly and appropriately apply to the recruitment and selection process as well as other areas of the council’s work.
8. The recruitment process takes proactive measures to mitigate the risks of Modern Slavery. The council ensures that agencies used for temporary staff and/or in the recruitment of fixed term and permanent staff have appropriate due diligence in place to prevent exploitation and human trafficking (as specified in section 3.6).
9. Chief Officers and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedure is fully implemented in their departments. HR will be responsible for monitoring this.
10. This policy will be available to external candidates on the Hertsmere website.

1. **Introduction**

It is essential that a high quality recruitment service provides a high standard of customer care and treats all applicants with dignity and respect.  Although a candidate might be rejected for an appointment it is important that she/he retains a favourable impression of the council. The impression that Hertsmere Borough Council wishes to convey to all potential job applicants is that of an efficient, effective and caring council, which cares for all its applicants, provides them with good information and treats them fairly.

Before recruiting for a new employee, any employees who are seeking redeployment or who require suitable alternative employment as part of a management of change process should be considered. Managers should ensure that they are maximising the skills and experience of the existing workforce.

The council has a duty to make adjustments for any candidate who requires it, and a duty to interview any disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria.

Part of the council’s workforce strategy is to use succession planning, however, to ensure equality of opportunity for all employees and to carry out an assessment process to select the best candidate, all vacancies should be advertised internally in the first instance.

The Recruitment and Selection Operational Handbook which accompanies this policy is required reading for anyone who may participate in a recruitment process and is essential reading for managers who chair selection interview panels.

2. **Responsibilities**

2.1 **Human Resources** will provide support and professional advice at all stages of the process. HR are also responsible for the administration of the process, arranging relevant training courses for recruiters and selectors, monitoring the implementation of the policy and procedure across the council.

2.2 **Chief Officers and Heads of Service** are responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedure is fully implemented in their departments and that those involved in recruitment and selection in their service areas have attended the required training courses.  Chief Officers and Heads of Service are also responsible for taking appropriate action regarding complaints made in connection with recruitment and selection, using the council’s disciplinary procedure where necessary.

2.3 All Elected Members, employees, or workers involved in recruitment and selection must have undertaken the relevant and required training beforehand; that is, recruitment and selection training and on line equality and diversity training.  Training will be ongoing and regular refresher training courses will also be provided.

2.4 **All parties involved in any aspect of the recruitment and selection of staff have a duty to act fairly and appropriately.**

# 3. The Process of Recruitment and Selection

3.1 Recruitment should not be entered into if there are employees eligible for redeployment. This may be for medical reasons or as a result of a management of change process. Managers should always consider whether replacing the role is the best option or whether they could consider maximising the skills and experience of the existing workforce.

3.2 The process for recruiting and selecting employees on a Hertsmere contract of employment (permanent/fixed term) comprises of the following stages.

**Key Stages of recruitment and selection:**

### Analyse the vacancy and update the job description and person specification.

### Obtain authorisation for Job Evaluation (if substantial changes are required).

1. Check if any employees are seeking redeployment.
2. Complete the online form, Authorisation to Recruit.
3. Advertise the post internal/external.
4. Prepare the recruitment pack.
5. Prepare the interview questions and assessments.
6. Arrange psychometric testing if required.
7. Select the interview panel.
8. Shortlist suitable candidates to be interviewed.
9. Send out interview letters.
10. Conduct interviews/assessments.
11. Make decision and provide evidence to support it.
12. Manager makes verbal offer to the successful candidate.
13. Complete online form, Authorisation to Appoint.
14. Send out offer pack.
15. Send out reject letters.
16. Respond to any requests for feedback.
17. Agree start date.

Full details of the process and the procedures that must be followed are in the accompanying operational handbook.

3.3 Managers will receive training on how to shortlist, plan interviews and assessments, frame interview questions, conduct interviews and evaluate candidate performance. Guidance will also be provided in the operational handbook.

3.4 **Approval Process**

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| **Recruitment**  | **Method** | **Approval Required from** |
| Job evaluation | Job description to HR | Head of Service |
| Permanent post | Authorisation to Recruit Form | Head of Service/Director/Managing Director |
| Fixed term post | Authorisation to Recruit Form | Head of Service |
| Agency worker | Authorisation to Recruit Form - agency worker | Head of Service |
| Employment offer on HBC contract | Authorisation to Appoint Form | Head of Service including offers above the MRP |
| Agency worker offer | Authorisation to Appoint Form - agency worker | Head of Service |
| Agency worker, extension to contract | Email justification | Head of Service |

3.5 **Advertising the post**

All posts must be advertised internally. In the first instance, managers can advertise the post internally for up to two weeks and both temporary and permanent staff will be eligible to apply. This decision should be made in consultation with the Head of Service and Human Resources.

Internal advertising may not be appropriate for specialist jobs or more senior roles, however, it may be essential to advertise all jobs internally during a period of change management if a number of staff are at risk of redundancy. If internal advertising is unsuccessful, the post can then be advertised externally and internally at the same time.

All posts which are advertised externally will be placed on Jobs Go Public which provides a mechanism whereby candidates can make their application. Managers can also take the option of using the SmartSearch facility offered by Jobs Go Public which targets potential candidates and uses social media to attract candidates. Other publications can be used and the Council will place these job adverts via an advertising agency. Managers should approve the proof and the costs before the post is advertised.

**3.6 Mitigating the risks of Modern Slavery**

The council is committed to eliminating modern slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and similar human rights abuses by ensuring:

* All employees are given a written contract of employment and assistance will be provided, where required, to ensure that the contract can be clearly understood by the new employee**.**
* No employees pay any direct or indirect fees to obtain work (including fees for the recruitment, travel, visas or administrative fees) to the council and we communicate our expectations of this to any third-party agencies used.
* The HR and payroll database is monitored quarterly for addresses of employees- a number of people listing the same address may indicate high shared occupancy (often a factor for those being exploited) and the Safeguarding Officer will be alerted of this.
* As part of the employee induction, information is provided to all new employees (both agency and permanent staff) on their statutory rights including sick pay, holiday pay and any other benefits they may be entitled to.
* If, through the recruitment process, it is suspected someone is being exploited, the Council will provide the employee with appropriate support.

**3.7 Recruitment of agency workers**

A procurement process is carried out every 3 to 5 years to select the agencies to be used for temporary workers. The agencies are placed in Lots with a cascade system in operation whereby the first agency will have 24 hours to respond with suitable candidates.

The agencies we appoint must confirm that they have thoroughly investigated their labour practices and those of their direct suppliers, to ensure there is no slavery or forced labour used anywhere in the organisation or by any of the direct suppliers to their organisation.

The agencies we appoint must put in place all necessary processes, procedures, investigations and compliance systems to ensure that exploitation of agency workers does not occur. We monitor compliance by requesting that the agencies complete a Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking questionnaire and provide accompanying evidence.

3.8 The process for recruiting agency workers is as follows:

1. Manager completes online form Authorisation to Recruit (agency).
2. HR places the order with the agencies.
3. The agency liaise directly with the manager regarding CVs and interviews.
4. Manager completes the Authorisation to Appoint (agency) form.
5. Manager completes the online Systems Access Request form.
6. HR monitors and updates an agency worker spreadsheet.
7. Invoices are sent to the manager for approval.
8. Managers must agree any changes to the assignment e.g. hourly rates.
9. Time extensions to the assignment require approval.
10. An agency workers report is sent to the chief officers on a monthly basis.

Full details of the process for recruiting agency workers can be found in the    accompanying operational handbook.

4. **Pre-employment checks**

The Council will comply with legislation when completing checks on candidates prior to employment.

**4.1 Right to Work**

All applicants will be asked to bring the necessary documents to provide evidence of their right to work in the UK to their interview.

**4.2 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks**

DBS checks will be carried out for staff who are offered roles which will   involve working in close proximity to children and vulnerable adults. The    roles which are checked will be in accordance with government guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-checking-service-guidance--2>

**4.3      Health checks**

Health checks carried out before confirming the offer of employment are only permissible if there is a legal requirement, e.g. eye tests for commercial drivers. Prior consent is required and checks must not discriminate i.e. all applicants must be checked.

**4.4      Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

Candidates will be asked for details of any convictions on the application form. Job applicants do not need to tell potential employers about spent convictions or cautions. The Council will not refuse someone a job because they have been convicted of an offence if that conviction or caution is spent. Convictions with a sentence of four years or less become spent after   a certain period of time. To check spent conviction timescales use this link:

           <https://www.gov.uk/exoffenders-and-employment>

5.        **Data protection**

5.1      On application all candidates will receive a privacy statement.  We will only seek to obtain information which is relevant to the recruitment and selection exercise.

5.2      Initially personal data is provided by the candidate when they apply for a vacant post and is used to follow the recruitment process. The individual is informed when they submit their application that the information we are collecting is for recruitment and equality and diversity purposes and to meet other statutory requirements such as the right to work. They are informed that their data will be retained for 12 months after the conclusion of the recruitment process.

5.3      HR process special categories of data, such as information about ethnic origin, sexual orientation and religion or belief, to monitor equality and diversity statistics. We also collect information about whether or not applicants are disabled to make reasonable adjustments for candidates who have a disability. We process such information to carry out our obligations under the Equality Act.

5.4      Applicants are informed that their information may be shared internally for the purposes of the recruitment exercise. This includes members of HR and the recruitment selection panel. Their data may be shared with external third parties if a specialist or expert is participating in the recruitment selection process, who will be expected to comply with the Council’s GDPR policies.

5.5      We take the security of an applicant’s data seriously. We have internal policies and controls in place to ensure that data is not lost, accidentally destroyed, misused or disclosed, and is not accessed except by our employees in the proper performance of their duties.

5.6       If an application for employment is unsuccessful, the organisation will hold the data on file (centrally by Human Resources) for 12 months after the end of the relevant recruitment process. At the end of that period, the data is deleted or destroyed.

# 6.        Equality and Diversity

6.1 The council will ensure that people from all sections of the community have genuine equal opportunities to gain employment with the council in all of its service areas and, if employed, to progress within the council.  We will take appropriate, reasonable, and practicable steps to remove all barriers and obstacles to such equal opportunities. Job applicants will be required to complete an Equalities Monitoring Form to enable HR to keep equalities monitoring data and make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants. Recruiting managers will not see these forms.

Job applicants expect and deserve to be treated fairly and considerately. It is unlawful to unjustifiably discriminate against people applying for jobs on the grounds of:

* Age
* Disability
* Race
* Religion or belief
* Sex
* Sexual orientation
* Gender reassignment
* Pregnancy and Maternity
* Marriage and Civil Partnership

6.2     The council seeks to employ on merit, a workforce which reflects the diverse community at large because we value the individual contribution of people irrespective of their age, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, nationality, race, religion or belief, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation, trade union or political activity.

6.3      The policy and procedure aims to provide a framework within which managers can objectively set and assess the skills, abilities, knowledge, experience, or other valid job-related criteria for each post.  This objective approach helps to eliminate bias and enables selectors to appoint the most suitable candidate for a post.

6.4      Recruitment and selection within the council is an identifiable process through which equalities will be promoted and monitored enabling clear action to be taken to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

6.5      The Council will take all reasonably practical steps to prevent discrimination from occurring. The Council will be legally responsible for any discriminatory acts of its employees.

6.6      The Council will take all necessary steps to avoid direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination is where applicants are required to have a particular characteristic to fit into a role and in direct discrimination can be as a result of imposing unnecessary conditions for a job. For example of all against wearing headgear at work could in directly discriminate against Sikh men who wear turbans.

6.7      The Council will take all necessary steps to ensure that victimisation is not a factor in recruitment.

6.8      The Council will ensure that it carries out its duty to disabled candidates by

* interviewing all disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for a job vacancy.
* making the necessary adjustments to enable disabled candidates to attend the interview and to carry out any assessments
* to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness and commitment to make adjustments.
* to work with external agencies to help disabled employees to enter the workforce

**Reasonable adjustments are** a way of preventing discrimination against disabled people by making changes to ensure that they are not at a disadvantage. For example, where a typing test is used as a selection method, a specialist keyboard would count as a reasonable adjustment for a disabled job applicant unable to use a conventional keyboard.

# 7.        Risk Management

7.1 There is a risk of litigation if this policy and procedure and associated policies such as the Council’s Equality policy are not followed to ensure compliance with legal requirements.

7.2 There are also risks associated with appointing unsuitable or less suitable candidates if the measures outlined in this and other complementary documents are not complied with or applied consistently across the council. Such risks include unsatisfactory or poor work performance that could adversely impact on the quality of service delivery and on the reputation of the council as an employer of choice seeking to attract, recruit and retain the best people for jobs within the Council; and possible adverse impact on colleagues and other staff.

8.         **Review**

8.1      This policy and procedure will be reviewed every three years to ensure it remains effective and takes account of changes in legislation and best practice.

8.2      The successful implementation of the Council’s Recruitment and Selection policy and procedure will be demonstrated through achieving the following outcomes:

* Low number of complaints, grievances and Employment Tribunal cases in connection with recruitment and selection.
* Provision of training courses and refresher training courses for those involved in recruitment and selection.  (HR will keep a database of those who have attended the required training courses).
* Ensuring consistency of practice across the council.
* Filling job vacancies quickly.
* Reduction in the number of temporary or agency staff
* Low staff turnover rates
* A diverse workforce that reflects the local population of Hertsmere.
* Reasonable adjustments for disabled job applicants and employees.

9.        **Hertsmere Borough Council Constitution** **– Officer Employment Procedure Rules**

9.1      The council’s Constitution contains provisions regarding the employment of officers that should be taken into full account in carrying out recruitment and selection.

9.2      Details of the officer employment procedure rules are outlined in the council’s Constitution which is available on the council’s website.

9.3      The following extract taken from the council’s Constitution contains examples of such officer employment procedure rules:

#             Recruitment and appointment

(a)     Declarations

1. The Council will draw up a statement requiring any candidate for appointment as an officer to state in writing whether they are the parent, grandparent, partner, child, stepchild, adopted child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece of an existing Councillor or officer of the Council; or the partner of such persons.
2. No candidate so related to a Councillor or an officer will be appointed without the authority of the relevant director or an officer nominated by him/her.

(b)     Seeking support for appointment.

1. Subject to paragraph (iii), the Council will disqualify any applicant who directly or indirectly seeks the support of any Councillor for any appointment with the Council. The content of this paragraph will be included in any recruitment information.
2. Subject to paragraph (iii), no Councillor will seek support for any person for any appointment with the Council.
3. Nothing in paragraphs (i) and (ii) above will preclude a Councillor from giving a written reference for a candidate for submission with an application for appointment.

10.       **Employment of Relatives Policy**

The Council has a policy on employing relatives and this must be complied with in the case of external and internal recruitment.

# 11.      Contact Details

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