

## Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

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## **1 Policy statement**

- 1.1 Oxford City Council needs to attract and retain the best talent to achieve our vision of building a world class city for everyone.
- 1.2 Recruitment and selection is one the most important responsibilities of our managers. The Council takes every possible step to ensure that not only are practices inclusive, fair, objective, transparent and legally compliant but that they result in the appointment of the best candidates.
- 1.3 The Council values the diversity of its communities and is committed to reflecting this diversity in its workforce. This will enable us to engage effectively with all communities and design services to meet a range of needs. We will work to remove barriers to employment and improve the diversity of the workforce.
- 1.4 Everyone involved in recruitment will be mindful that they are representing the Council and present the Council as an employer of choice. Candidates should have a positive experience of recruitment, no matter what the outcome, and should be treated with respect and courtesy.

## **2 Scope**

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all recruiting managers, applicants and candidates and employees applying for a different job within the Council including those seeking redeployment, secondment and promotion.

## **3 Review**

- 3.1 The policy will be reviewed: every two years, when there are changes to legislation or following Trade Union Consultation.

## **4 Roles and responsibilities**

### **Recruiting Managers**

- 4.1 The recruiting manager will:
  - Undertake the Inclusive Recruitment and Selection training and follow the Recruitment and Selection Guidance provided on the Intranet
  - Provide an up-to-date role profile for each job. The role profile should set out a clear description of the overall purpose and key accountabilities of the role so that the requirements of the role are clear. In addition, the role profile should include the knowledge, skills, behaviours and experience needed for successful performance in the role. The role profile must be in the current template available to download on the Intranet
  - All roles must have been through the job evaluation process prior to the start of recruitment.
  - Make sure enhanced Disclosure and Barring is included where relevant in the role profile.
  - Arrange for a diverse mix of people to be involved in shortlisting, interviews and other selection methods for the entire recruitment process

- Include a minimum of 2 people in the shortlisting process and ensure that recruitment decisions can be evidenced by adequate notes and scoring information for all candidates.
- Consider reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for applicants with a disability.
- Be responsive to the needs of candidates on the day of any assessment and provide a positive experience to all applicants, regardless of the outcome.
- Make a verbal offer to the successful candidate as soon as possible after the decision has been made.
- Contact and provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates
- Understand their role and responsibilities at each stage, using this policy and the guidance notes on the people Team Intranet pages

### People Team

#### 4.2 The People Team will:

- Provide advice on inclusive recruitment and workforce planning options.
- Provide advice to recruiting managers on effective methods to attract a diverse pool of candidates.
- Advise on an appropriate selection and testing process.
- Co-ordinate the administrative elements of the recruitment process.
- Provide coaching and training for recruiting managers.
- Invite candidates to interview from the schedule produced by the recruiting manager
- Send out offer letters and contracts of employment
- Undertake Right to Work and other pre-employment checks

## 5 Support and guidance for applicants

- 5.1 Applicants should refer to supporting materials on the Council's [website](#) to find out more about working for Oxford City Council and for guidance on applying online, writing a great job application and preparing for interview.
- 5.2 Applicants who have more specific queries about a particular job may contact the recruiting manager identified in the job details for an informal discussion.
- 5.3 Applicants are welcome to contact the People Team for general queries regarding the recruitment process or working for Oxford City Council.
- 5.4 Applicants are welcome to contact the recruiting manager to ask for reasonable adjustments to be made at the interview
- 5.5 Applicants who are unsuccessful at shortlisting or interview stage may request feedback to assist them with future applications.

## 6 Commitment to diversity and inclusion

- 6.1 The Council needs to reflect the diversity of the citizens it serves so we welcome applicants from all communities. For all roles, we particularly encourage applications from candidates from minority ethnic groups because of under-representation in our workforce. We encourage applications from women for management posts to tackle under-representation of women at senior levels. Positive action policy
- 6.2 We have several commitments to help improve the diversity of new recruits and promote local recruitment.
- Advertising roles in DWP and other local organisations, community newspapers and through community groups
  - Seeking feedback from unsuccessful applicants to identify where we can improve apprenticeships and training schemes.
  - Supporting local organisations which are supporting vulnerable groups into employment or return to work.
  - Implementing initiatives to promote the Council as an employer of choice and community leader, such as the 'Oxford Living Wage'.
- 6.3 The Council is an accredited Disability Confident employer and is committed to making all reasonable adjustments to accommodate any applicants declaring a disability under the Equality Act 2010. We will interview all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a role and assess them on their abilities. We will carefully consider and facilitate any reasonable adjustments necessary to enable an applicant to attend an interview or undertake any assessment centre or test.
- 6.4 Recruiting managers can contact the People Team for guidance on making adjustments to the recruitment process.
- 6.5 Recruiting managers should record any requests for adjustments or additional support and note the reasons for any decision to accommodate or refuse the request. This record should be kept separate from the application and assessment information so that it does not influence the decision making.
- 6.6 The Council's [Fair Employment Statement](#) gives more information on the Council's commitment to equality and diversity and is available on the Council's website.
- 6.7 To improve equity, diversity and inclusion, leaders and managers should:
- Monitor the demographic data of applicants and successful candidates to ensure recruitment practices are fair and inclusive.
  - Develop recruitment practices to meet the commitments outlined in Service Plans and the People Strategy.

## 7 Inclusive Recruitment Process from advertising to selection

- 7.1 Recruiting managers are expected to undertake recruitment training provided.

- 7.2 All recruitment activity will be supported by the People Team
- 7.3 When a vacancy arises, recruiting managers should consider if service needs have changed and if the role is needed in its current form. The role profile may be updated or it may be necessary to change the role. The manager should consider if the role can be filled with an apprentice, graduate or someone who can develop skills and experience through a planned progression route
- 7.4 Approval for recruitment to a vacancy is required prior to advertising.
- 7.5 Requests to recruit should be raised on the People Team Service Desk platform. This will be actioned once the required authorisation is obtained from Finance and the Service Director.
- 7.6 The role should be advertised for a minimum of 2 weeks for external advertisements and at least 1 week for internal vacancies. Once the request is approved the People Team will advertise the vacancy within 48 hours
- 7.7 If a Recruiting Manager wishes to advertise a role on an external website this must be confirmed on the request to recruit providing a cost centre for the charge. Advertising in media to attract a diverse pool of applicants will be considered. Guidance can be found on the Intranet - Advertising a vacancy
- 7.8 Shortlisting can commence at any point once the vacancy has gone live but all applicants must be considered up to the closing date. Shortlisting should be carried out independently by at least 2 people to reduce the impact of bias. Ideally the people who have shortlisted will be on the interview panel. Guidance on shortlisting is available on the intranet.
- 7.9 Candidates who are not shortlisted will automatically receive an email once the shortlisting documentation is received by the People Team. Candidates who are shortlisted will be emailed with the details of the interview by the People Team.
- 7.10 Interview dates should be scheduled no less than 7 working days from the closing date to allow time to arrange interviews and give reasonable notice to applicants.
- 7.11 Hiring managers have a responsibility to ensure all candidates, including young people and those new to the workforce, have the necessary digital capabilities and access:
- Where necessary, an IT skills assessment should be incorporated into the interview process by managers to assess competency levels before appointment.

## **8 Appointment decisions and pay**

- 8.1 All appointment decisions should be made by a panel consisting of at least two people. A panel of three is required for senior roles from Grade 11 and above. Panels must be diverse in terms of gender, and consider ethnicity, age, disability and, where appropriate, other protected characteristics. In areas where we have

under-representation of people from minority ethnic groups, the recruiting manager should seek to have a diverse panel in terms of ethnicity.

8.2 Positive action Under section 159 of the Equalities Act 2010 Tie Break:

The recruiting manager may treat an applicant or employee with a protected characteristic that is under-represented in the workforce more favourably in the selection process provided they are as qualified for that role as someone without that characteristic. Please refer to the Positive Action Policy for more guidance.

8.3 Elected Members are responsible for appointing the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Directors through the Appointments Committee, which must include a member of the City Executive Board. In the case of the Chief Executive, the decision must also be ratified by full Council.

8.4 Offers of employment should be made by the recruiting manager. Appointment will be at the minimum point of the pay grade for the role. Any exceptions must be agreed by the Head of People before making the offer.

8.5 Offers of employment are conditional upon completion of all appropriate checks including references, medical clearance, proof of right to work in the UK and employment vetting and criminal record checks.

8.6 If the highest ranked candidate does not take up the offer, the job should then be offered to the next appointable candidate.

8.7 A New Starter form should be raised in the People Service Desk platform as soon as the candidate accepts the position. This will generate an offer letter and contract of employment.

If the position is offered to an internal candidate in most cases, a new starter or mover form is required, particularly where the job role is different, as all contract details are needed.

A contract change request should only be used where the individual is already doing the same role and is simply changing contract type (for example, moving from temporary to permanent).

## 9 Declaration of interests or relationships

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

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

9.3 If the recruiting manager has a common interest or relationship with an applicant they must declare the fact to the People Team immediately and either remove

themselves from the recruitment process or agree with the People Team appropriate measures and safeguards to ensure that the recruitment and selection process is fair and not be influenced by any personal interest or relationship.

## **10 Politically restricted posts**

- 10.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 imposes restrictions on political activities by employees who hold certain posts. This includes the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Directors and any posts that are 'politically sensitive' because of giving advice on a regular basis to Elected Members or speaking on behalf of the Council on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters. If a post is deemed politically restricted this will be indicated in the role profile. Employees should refer to the Council's Guidance for Employees and Managers on Politically Restricted Posts for further information. External applicants requiring further information should contact the People Team.

## **11 Having more than one job**

- 11.1 The Council recognises that some employees will be able to have more than one employment. There should not be or likely to be a conflict of interest between the employment with the Council and any other employment. Further information is available in the Council's Guidance for Employees and Managers on Additional Employment.

## **12 Appointments exempt from full selection procedures**

- 12.1 There are some instances where a full selection procedure may not be required.

These include:

- Redeployments - employees who are on the redeployment list are given priority for interview where they meet the essential criteria for the role. This includes employees who are under notice of redundancy and those who are seeking alternative employment for health reasons. In these situations, the procedures outlined in the Organisational Change Policy and the Attendance Management Policy should be followed.
- Internal Secondments – the normal selection process applies for secondment opportunities. If the position subsequently becomes permanent the 'seconded' may be offered the position without the need for a further recruitment process after a certain period in the role. Refer to the Council's Secondments Policy and Procedure for further information.
- Temporary to permanent employment – employees who are in a fixed term position may, in some circumstances, be made permanent without the need for a further recruitment process providing that: a full and open selection process was carried out for the fixed term role, the employee has completed a minimum of 12 months in post and there are no performance issues.

## **13 Temporary employment and agency staff**

- 13.1 The Council prefers to make permanent appointments where possible, keeping the use of temporary contracts to a minimum.

- 13.2 Agency staff are normally recruited from agencies that are under contract or preferred supplier agreements with the Council.
- 13.3 Established Posts:  
All appointments to established posts must, without exception, fall within IR35 regulations.
- 13.4 Non-Established Posts:  
Where a hiring manager identifies a requirement for a post outside the established structure—such as for a specific project with a defined timeframe, it may be possible to operate outside IR35 but it is mandatory to seek advice and guidance from the People Team.  
The People Team will ensure that the necessary HMRC checks are completed before any engagement is confirmed.

## 14 Employing young people

### Workers aged 16 and 17

- 14.1 For workers above the minimum school leaving age, but under 18, legal restrictions on hours worked and other safeguards apply such as right to paid time off for study, a requirement for a risk assessment of the impact of the young workers' inexperience on their health and safety in the workplace and restrictions on working hours. Advice is available from the People Team.
- 14.2 Candidates should possess the required IT skills for their role. Where gaps are identified, appropriate training or resources must be provided.
- 14.3 Additional guidance, mentoring, or buddy systems should be offered to younger candidates or those with limited workplace experience to help them adapt to organisational technology.

### Young Workers Aged 18 or over

- 14.4 Workers aged 18 or over may also have an entitlement to time off for training. Advice is available from the People Team.

## 15 Employment of people with criminal records

- 15.1 When a person applies for a job with Oxford City Council, we will not take into account previous spent convictions as laid down in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, except for roles exempted under the Act.
- 15.2 The disclosure of a criminal record or other information will not necessarily bar a person from appointment. The Council will take into account factors including the nature of the offence, its relevance to the role and how long ago the offence took place.
- 15.3 Information provided will be treated in confidence and will only be taken into account in relation to an application where an exemption applies.
- 15.4 Refer to the Council's Policy on the [Employment of People with Criminal Records](#) which is available on the Council's website and on the intranet for further information

## 16 Safer recruitment

- 16.1 As part of the Council's commitment to safeguarding children and adults we undertake 'Safer Recruitment' when recruiting to certain posts. Safer recruitment means thinking about and including issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults at every stage of the recruitment process. Adopting a structured recruitment process and ensuring all the necessary checking and vetting takes place will minimise the risk of appointing someone who is unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.
- 16.2 Recruiting managers who are recruiting to a position where someone will be working with children or vulnerable adults should have undertaken safeguarding training and should understand the responsibilities outlined in this policy and the Recruiting Managers' Guidance in relation to safer recruitment.
- 16.3 The People Team will be responsible for carrying out vetting checks and taking references, but it is the recruiting manager's responsibility to ensure that during interview and selection, a candidate's suitability for, and attitude towards, working with children and/or vulnerable adults is explored thoroughly. Gaps or anomalies in their employment or training history should be understood, scrutinised and recorded.

## 17 Data protection

- 17.1 The Council will ensure that all information obtained during the recruitment process will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Regulations. Further information including our [Recruitment Privacy Notice](#) is available on the [Data Protection Page](#) of the Council's website.
- 17.2 The Council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information provided in an application form for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering funds for these purposes. The Council's [Fair Processing Notice](#) for the purpose of fraud prevention and detention is available on the Council's website.

## 18 Dealing with complaints

- 18.1 Applicants who are not satisfied with how they have been treated, or aspects of the recruitment process, can make a complaint to the People Team in the first instance. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may make a formal complaint to the Council using the [Corporate Complaints Procedure](#) which is available on the Council's website. Council employees may use the Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure.

## 19 Related policies and further information

- 19.1 Related Policies and documents are listed below:-

- Code of Conduct
- Corporate Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Fair Employment Statement
- Grievance Policy and Procedure

Guidance for Employees and Managers on Additional Employment  
Guidance for Employees and Managers on Politically Restricted Posts  
Organisational Change Policy and Procedure  
Pay Policy Statement  
Policy on the Employment of People with Criminal Records  
Policy on Avoiding Bribery, Fraud and Corruption  
Policy on Safeguarding Children  
Secondments Policy and Procedure  
Positive Action Policy