

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY & PROCEDURE

Northgate Human Resources

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1 Policy Statement and Objectives

1.1 South Derbyshire District Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunity and fairness in the provision of services and employment. The Council will promote best practice to eliminate discrimination in employment and create a working environment where everyone is treated fairly and with respect.

1.2 The Council will take action to ensure that its employees and those seeking employment will not be discriminated against or treated less favourably on any grounds. Examples include:

- Age
- Childcare and dependent responsibilities
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Disability
- Ethnicity, race, colour, or nationality
- Gender or gender reassignment
- Marital/Civil Partnership status
- Political beliefs
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Trade Union activities
- Unrelated criminal convictions where appropriate

1.3 The overall aims of the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure are to provide equality of opportunity to all applicants and to recruit on merit. All employees should be able to make a positive contribution to the delivery of the Council's objectives and actively support the values of the Council.

1.4 The objectives of the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure are to:

- Ensure that recruitment and selection is fair and transparent.
- Ensure that recruitment and selection is efficient and cost-effective.
- Ensure that recruiting officers are appropriately trained to complete recruitment and selection fairly and consistently.
- Recruit people with the right experience, knowledge and competencies on the appropriate contract to help deliver service objectives.
- Ensure that recruitment is an integral part of the Council's operations.
- Encourage and help ensure best practice through the provision of a standard and systematic process for recruitment and selection.
- Ensure that equality of opportunity is considered as an integral part of recruitment and selection to avoid any form of discrimination.
- Ensure that recruitment and selection is seen as a key public relations exercise by all of those involved.
- Support the achievement of the Council's Workforce Development Strategy.
- Provide a process for applicants (Internal and external) who believe they have not received fair treatment to make a formal complaint and for any complaint to be handled efficiently and fairly.

2. Scope

2.1 The procedure covers all posts on the Council's establishment with the exception of the following:

- Those employees on the Conditions of Service for Chief Executives.
- Those employees on the Conditions of Service for Chief Officers.

There is a separate procedure for appointments to these posts. This can be found on the Intranet. Before commencing any recruitment at this level advice must be obtained from the Head of Organisational Development Northgate. Whilst separate arrangements are in place they will reflect the principles detailed in this document.

3. Training

3.1 Managers and officers will receive appropriate training to ensure they are competent to fulfil their responsibilities when recruiting and selecting. A briefing note on the Recruitment and Selection Procedure has been developed to help officers and is available on the Intranet.

4. Interview and Shortlisting Panels

4.1 An Interview Panel or Shortlisting Panel must consist of at least two officers who have received appropriate training. Where practicable, these panels should be gender representative.

5. Equalities and Fairness

5.1 The Council will monitor, review and improve where possible its recruitment and selection process in the light of experience and information obtained from those involved. Information obtained will be held confidentially by Northgate Human Resources and used for monitoring purposes only. Disabled applicants will be identified for the Interview Panel for the purposes of our Guaranteed Interview Scheme (please see below).

6. The Guarantee Interview Scheme (Two Ticks Symbol)

6.1 In line with the Council's Guarantee Interview Scheme disabled applicants will be shortlisted for interview subject to them meeting all the essential competencies set out in the Person Specification for the job.

7. Complaints

7.1 Any applicant (internal or external) who believes that they have been unfairly treated can raise their concerns in the following ways:

- Internal applicants – through the Council's Grievance Procedure, which is on the Intranet.
- External applicants – by writing to the Head of Organisational Development, Northgate who will respond to the individual by no later than 5 working days of receipt of the complaint.

7.2 Advice should be obtained from Northgate Human Resources before any formal action is considered relating to any complaint.

8. Flow Charts

8.1 In addition to this procedure there are flow charts on the Intranet explaining the responsibilities of Managers during the following procedural stages:

- Raising a vacancy.
- Placing Adverts.
- Applicant Process.
- Offer Process.

9.0 Raising a vacancy

The start

9.1 The recruitment and selection process can start when:

- A manager becomes aware of an employee's resignation.
- An employee becomes temporarily absent from work.
- There is a project to be undertaken for a finite period of time.
- A new job is created e.g. through the restructure of a service.

Employee's resignation

9.2 When a manager becomes aware of someone resigning they should take the opportunity to consider their options before recruiting. Issues to consider include:

- Is the job still required?
- Can the job be delivered in another way e.g. in partnership with another organisation?
- Is the job required on the same hours to do the same duties?
- Will the job be affected by current or future organisational objectives or initiatives or other factors (e.g. changes in legislation)?
- Reviewing the Job Description and/or Person Specification

9.3 The recruiting manager must obtain approval to fill the vacancy from an authorised Officer. **A Vacancy Management Form must be completed and signed by the authorising officer (a Vacancy Management Form is on the Intranet). If the recruitment is to a newly created post Appendix A (New Post Information) of the Vacancy Management Form must be completed.**

9.4 Before authorisation is given to fill the vacancy the authorising officer should:

- Be satisfied that there is a genuine need to fill the vacancy.
- Have considered different options to maintain the level of service.
- Ensure that there is sufficient budget for the job.
- If appropriate, ensure that the contract length is appropriate for the needs of the service.
- Be satisfied that there is an up to date Job Description and Person Specification for the job.
- Ensure that the grade for the post has been evaluated and the other terms and conditions are appropriate.

9.5 When approval to recruit has been obtained ***the recruiting manager should check with the Northgate Human Resources that there are no employees requiring redeployment and who should be given prior consideration for appropriate vacancies.*** This is in accordance with the Council's Redeployment Procedure, which is on the Intranet.

Temporary appointments - fixed-term contracts

9.6 Temporary appointments occur when an employee is likely to be absent for a long period of time or where there is a specific and time-limited project to be undertaken. A temporary appointment is usually for a fixed-term or filled by having an Agency Worker (see paragraphs 9.9 to 9.14).

9.7 Managers should be aware that employees on fixed-term contracts do have employment rights. Some of these are linked to length of service. This could include an entitlement to a redundancy payment at the end of the contract. Guidance on fixed-term contracts is on the Intranet.

9.8 Any temporary appointment should be reviewed every six months. The continuation of any temporary arrangements beyond nine months must be discussed with Northgate Human Resources to clarify potential additional costs and employment implications for the Council and individual.

Agency Workers

9.9 If the recruiting manager has been unable to appoint to the job or needs to fill the job quickly to maintain service delivery then using an Employment Agency may be considered. The Council has contractual arrangements with an Employment Agency. Advice is available from the Northgate Human Resources.

9.10 The Agency Worker Regulations (which came into force on 1st October 2010) provide temporary Agency Workers with the right to equal treatment in terms of basic working and employment conditions including pay, as if they had been employed directly by the hirer to do the same job. These rights are subject to a 12- week qualifying period.

9.11 Access to vacancies is a "day one" right and not subject to the 12-week qualifying period. Access to vacancies means the right to be informed of vacancies in the organisation. "Closed" processes can still be used e.g. in restructure or redeployment situations.

9.12 Additional advice on the Agency Worker Regulations is on the Intranet.

9.13 With regard to the recruitment of Agency Workers from Agencies other than the Council's preferred supplier, it is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to ensure that any Agency used has carried out the appropriate employment checks (eligibility to work in the UK, whether the individual has the necessary qualification to do the job, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure), before the placement begins.

9.14 Confirmation that the Agency has carried out all the appropriate checks can be obtained either by email or letter. The record of the confirmation should be kept by the recruiting manager for the duration of the contract.

Restructures and reorganisations

9.15 Jobs are often reviewed, created or deleted during a review to improve a service or part of a service. The Lead Officer should follow the Council's Guidance on Organisational Change, which is on the Intranet. This includes appropriate consultation with individual employees and the relevant Trade Unions and will need the approval of the Council's Finance and Management Committee.

9.16 The arrangements for recruiting or appointing to posts during this process will be in line with the Council's Guidance on Organisational Change. At all times, the principle of ensuring equality and fairness must be maintained.

9.17 The Guidance on Organisational Change also ensures that the grades for posts are properly job evaluated where necessary. For any guidance on this matter contact Northgate Human Resources.

10. Preparing to Recruit and Select

Timetable

10.1 It is essential that the recruiting manager plans and timetables the recruitment and selection process taking into account all its stages including the job evaluation of the grade if necessary and obtaining a DBS Disclosure (please see paragraphs 20.13 to 20.17). The appropriate resources required to assist with the exercise should also be taken into account. This helps to ensure effective and efficient recruitment and selection and to promote a positive image of the Council to all applicants.

The Job Description

10.2 Before the job is advertised the recruiting manager must ensure that there is an up to date Job Description. The Job Description forms the basis (with the Person Specification) of the job advertisement and is included in the application pack. There is a corporate template for a Job Description (**see Toolkit – Recruitment and Selection on the Intranet**).

10.3 The main sections of the Job Description are:

□ **Job Summary**

This includes a brief description (using two or three points at most) of the job's main purpose.

□ **Main Duties and Responsibilities**

These are very often generic (e.g. they describe responsibility for the management of people, budgets, service planning etc). Also included in this section are the Council's standard clauses on health and safety, equality and fairness and the performance of "other duties".

□ **Specific Duties**

These are the core duties and responsibilities unique to the job.

10.4 It is recommended that managers keep Job Descriptions as concise as possible e.g. no longer than two sides of A4.

10.5 The Job Description should also indicate whether the job is politically restricted (**for advice see Toolkit – Recruitment and Selection on the Intranet**) or whether the job is subject to a Disclosure from the DBS (see paragraphs 20.13 to 20.17). Advice is available from Northgate Human Resources.

Person Specification

10.6 The recruiting manager must ensure that there is an up to date Person Specification for the job. The Person Specification clearly describes *the competencies* a person needs to do the job. There is an example of a Person Specification in the **Recruitment and Selection Toolkit which is on the Intranet**. The example is based on the Council's Competency Framework (see paragraph 10.10) The Person Specification should be included in the application pack.

10.7 The Person Specification is vital to the recruitment and selection process. It should be realistic in the description of the knowledge and competencies required to carry out the duties and responsibilities included in the Job Description. The criteria included in the Person Specification should be:

- Relevant in terms of the job requirements.
- Justifiable if challenged.
- Non-discriminatory.
- Measurable to enable objective assessment.
- Clear and unambiguous.

The Value of the Person Specification

10.8 The Person Specification:

- Forms the basis (with the Job Description) of an effective job advertisement.
- Provides clear and measurable criteria against which applicants can be assessed and a common reference point for those involved in the recruitment and selection process.
- Provides the criteria for consistent and fair shortlisting.
- Helps to frame interview questions to test an applicant's knowledge, experience, competencies and practical skills.
- Helps to decide whether any relevant tests and/or other assessment methods are required.
- Gives (with the Job Description) information to potential applicants, which helps them to decide their suitability for the job.
- Provides useful information for those giving references.

Qualifications, Professional Membership and Technical Skills

10.9 The qualifications, professional membership and technical skills included in a Person Specification should be necessary for the competent performance of the job.

Competency Framework

10.10 The Council has developed a Competency Framework. One advantage of this is that it can help managers to recruit by helping them to define the behaviours required for the successful performance of the job. The framework can be applied to all the Council's jobs. **Information on the Council's Competency Framework is on the Intranet.**

Essential Competencies

10.11 These describe the minimum requirements, which are expected of the person in the job. Essential criteria should always reflect the Job Description. A simple exercise when thinking of essential competencies is to ask why the job requires this competency. For example an essential criterion under the competency Communication (Level 3 - Communicates with empathy) for a manager might be “Ability to communicate to an appropriate level of detail and provision for their audience.”

10.12 In line with the Council’s Guarantee Interview Scheme disabled applicants will be shortlisted for interview subject to them meeting all the essential competencies set out in the Person Specification for the job.

Desirable Competencies

10.13 These are competencies, which would enable the jobholder to perform the job more readily or effectively. Desirable competencies can be used at short listing as an additional screening mechanism if there are a large number of applicants that match the essential competencies. An example might be that under the competency Communication (Level 3 - Communicates with empathy) for a manager might be “Communicates complex information in a variety of written formats

Assessing the Competencies

10.14 All the competencies identified as either essential or desirable must be capable of being objectively assessed. The Person Specification needs to detail when and how they will be identified and assessed to enable the managers to consider if the applicant matches the listed competencies.

10.15 More than one method of assessment might be applied to a competence. For example, specific experience might be initially assessed from the Application Form at the shortlisting stage and then later assessed in more detail at interview through questions and/or a practical exercise.

10.16 Only those essential competencies that can be initially assessed from the Application Form should be used to shortlist applicants. If there is an occasion where no applicant meets the required essential criteria advice can be obtained from the Northgate Recruitment Team.

Evidence

10.17 If any complaint is made to an Employment Tribunal alleging discrimination the Person Specification will be important documentary evidence. The Person Specification can help to show that the recruitment and selection process was based on fair, lawful and relevant/justifiable criteria.

Guidance and advice

10.18 Guidance on writing Person Specifications is on the Intranet. Northgate Human Resources can also provide advice.

11 Terms and Conditions

11.1 The terms and conditions of the job must be decided before it is advertised. There is a template for inclusion in the application pack (**see Toolkit – Recruitment and Selection on the Intranet**).

11.2 It is important to decide whether the job should be subject to a Disclosure from the DBS (see paragraphs 20.13 to 20.17)

11.3 These conditions should only be applied if relevant to the job. The jobs that require checks and the level of checks have been identified by managers with the support of Northgate Human Resources, clarification can be obtained from Northgate Human Resources. The level of check will be either standard, enhanced or an enhanced check for regulated activity. (The enhanced check for regulated activity is a requirement for posts that involve working with children/vulnerable adults) It should also be decided whether the job is politically restricted (**for advice see Toolkit – Recruitment and Selection on the Intranet**). Advice is available from Northgate Human Resources.

11.4 If required the recruiting manager should ensure that the grade for the job has been job evaluated. This stage should be included in the recruitment and selection timetable.

12 The Job Advertisement

12.1 Using the Job Description and Person Specification the job advertisement should be written to ensure that it:

- Attracts *suitable* applicants.
- Promotes the Council as an attractive place to work.
- Promotes interest in the job or assists individuals to decide whether they would be suitable candidates.
- Reaches appropriate applicants in a cost effective way.
- Does not breach employment legislation.
- Signposts applicants to apply electronically.
- Provides a point of contact to obtain additional information.

Content

12.2 The advertisement should be clear and concise and include:

- The job title.
- The employing service.
- The salary range/annual salary.
- Whether the job is part-time or job share (where applicable).
- The length of contract (where applicable).
- A job outline (based on the Job Description).
- Essential criteria (based on the Person Specification).
- Selling points e.g. development opportunities, flexible working, the pension scheme, payment of a professional fee.
- The procedure for application.

- A contact name for informal discussion.
- The closing date.
- Interview date (or at least a week commencing date)
- Whether the job requires a DBS Disclosure

12.3 The Northgate Recruitment Team will notify the Contact Centre in advance of the forthcoming vacancy/vacancies and closing date(s).

13. Placing Advertisements

13.1 All vacancies are normally advertised internally and externally at the same time. However, special circumstances might exist where the advertisement is only placed internally. Examples of such circumstances are where the advertisement is confined to one service because of restructuring, where there are employees whose posts are at risk or where redeployment opportunities are being sought for employees. ***Before the job advertisement goes external the recruiting manager should check with Northgate Human Resources or the Northgate Recruitment Team to see if the job should only be advertised internally first.***

Internal advertisements only

13.2 The recruiting manager should inform from the relevant Trade Union in advance where it is proposed to only advertise internally.

13.3 The recruiting manager must liaise with the Northgate Recruitment Team throughout the recruitment process.

13.4 All internal advertisements should be emailed to employees. Recruiting managers should ensure that either advertisements are put on appropriate notice boards for employees who do not have direct access to email or communicated at team meetings or other briefing sessions. Employees who are absent from work should also be informed when it is appropriate to do so – for example where it is known that the employee is facing a potential redundancy situation.

Advertising externally and internally at the same time

13.5 The recruiting manager should liaise with the Northgate Recruitment Team to enable the job to be advertised externally. The Northgate Recruitment Team can provide advice and guidance on the most appropriate media to use. A Purchase Order will need to be raised and approved to cover the full cost of the advert and details provided to the Northgate Recruitment Team before an advert will be posted.

13.6 Recruiting managers should be aware that publication deadlines apply when advertising jobs externally. The information in paragraph 13.7 should be provided to the Northgate Recruitment Team by at least five working days before the deadline of the journal/newspaper where the advertisement is to be placed. Advertisements will not be placed unless this information is provided. For any advice on deadlines contact the Northgate Recruitment Team.

13.7 The recruiting manager should send the following information electronically to the Northgate Recruitment Team:

- A completed Vacancy Management Form (this authorises the advert).
- The job advertisement with closing dates etc
- The current organisation chart, Job Description, Person Specification, Terms and Conditions summary and any other relevant information. This will enable the Recruitment Team to put the application pack together.
- Information on where the job advertisement is to be placed.
- A Purchase Order number to cover the cost of the advert.

13.8 The Northgate Recruitment Team will obtain costings and will ask for the recruiting manager's approval before placing the advertisement in the chosen publication(s). The advertisement will also be placed on the Council's recruitment website.

13.9 The recruiting manager is responsible for ensuring the job is advertised internally and should liaise with the Northgate Recruitment Team with regard to when the job will be advertised.

13.10 The roles of the recruiting manager and Northgate Recruitment Team are explained in the Flowchart - Raising a Vacancy.

Specialist Recruitment Agencies

13.11 In some cases a recruitment agency might be used. ***If this option is chosen then advice should be sought from the Northgate Recruitment Team.*** It is important that this option is based on clear reasons such as:

- It is an appointment at Director level.
- Failure to recruit previously.
- There is a discreet market for the job.
- It is more economical or cost effective to use an agency.
- An interim appointment is required to cover a vacant post.

14. Applicant Process

14.1 It is the recruiting manager's responsibility to provide the Northgate Recruitment Team with the information to be included with the application pack. ***This should be provided by no later than 5 working days before the advertisement is published.*** The Northgate Recruitment Team will then put the application pack together.

Content

14.2 The recruiting manager should provide the following information:

- The Job Description (see template in Toolkit).
- The Person Specification (see template in Toolkit).
- A copy of the advertisement.
- The terms and conditions for the post (see template in Toolkit).

14.3 The recruiting manager can also include any other information they consider relevant which promotes the job and the Council as an employer. All information should be provided electronically and in the corporate style if appropriate.

Sending out the application packs

14.4 Application packs will be available on the Council's website so that applications can be made electronically. Any enquiries about the availability of Application Forms should be directed to the Northgate Recruitment Team.

14.5 Managers should not send out application packs.

Receipt of Application Forms

14.6 Completed Application Forms returned in the post and electronically will be received by the Northgate Recruitment Team who will acknowledge their receipt. The Northgate Recruitment Team will screen all the Application Forms received and send them securely electronically for the recruiting manager to review. A Shortlisting Summary Form will also be provided highlighting those with a disability (see paragraph 14.13).

14.7 In some cases an applicant might request that they provide their Application Form after the closing date. This **should not** normally be allowed. However, exceptional circumstance might apply (e.g. if the Council's email system goes off line) where a late application is allowed. If the recruiting manager is in any doubt they should consult with Northgate Human Resources.

Shortlisting arrangements

14.8 Arrangements for shortlisting are the responsibility of the recruiting manager. This includes the distribution of all received Application Forms before the Shortlisting Panel meets.

Shortlisting Panel

14.9 The Shortlisting Panel should consist of at least two officers who have been appropriately trained.

Confidentiality

14.10 All applications must be treated confidentially and made available only to those involved in the selection process. At all times the Application Forms must be securely stored and distributed.

Paperwork for shortlisting

14.11 The recruiting manager should ensure that members of the Shortlisting Panel receive:

- A copy of each Application Form
- A completed Shortlist Criteria Form (**see Toolkit – Recruitment and Selection on the Intranet**). The criteria on the form should be the essential criteria from the Person Specification. Provision of this form ensures that all members of the Shortlisting Panel are assessing applicants on the same basis and consistently.
- A blank Shortlisting Summary Form (**see Toolkit – Recruitment and Selection on the Intranet**).

14.12 It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to keep the completed paperwork after shortlisting. This will be handed to the Northgate Recruitment Team when the recruitment and selection process is completed.

Choosing applicants for interview

14.13 The Shortlisting Summary Form should be completed individually by the members of the Shortlisting Panel. The panel members should assess whether there is adequate evidence on the Application Form to demonstrate that the applicant meets the criteria on the Shortlist Criteria Form. At the meeting of the Shortlisting Panel summary forms will be compared and a list of candidates to invite for interview agreed. If too many applicants meet the essential criteria then desirable criteria can be used to reduce the number.

Please note that disabled applicants who meet all the essential criteria are guaranteed an interview.

Notifying Applicants

14.14 The recruiting manager is responsible for liaising with the Northgate Recruitment Team to ensure that letters to the candidates selected for interview and to unsuccessful applicants are sent out.

Invitation to interview

14.15 The recruiting manager must provide the list of candidates to the Northgate Recruitment Team **at least six working days** before the day of interviews. This will ensure that letters can be sent out and other matters can be arranged in good time. Additionally, for inclusion in the invite letter, the recruiting manager should advise the Northgate Recruitment Team of:

- The names of the people on the Interview Panel
- The selection schedule, which will include the date, time and venue for interviews and selection methods
- Details of any selection methods
- Who candidates should inform of their attendance/non-attendance

The Northgate Recruitment Team will send out invite letters after receipt of the relevant information from the recruiting manager.

Regret Letters

14.16 The Northgate Recruitment Team will send out regret letters as directed by the recruiting manager. These will be sent out if possible, within 5 working days of notification from the recruiting manager. It is the recruiting manager's responsibility to give feedback to candidates not selected for interview if requested.

Equalities Act 2010 - Disability Discrimination

14.17 Candidates are advised of the Council's obligations under this legislation in the invite to interview letter. They are invited to indicate if they require any special requirements to assist them to attend the interview and/or undertake any other selection method.

14.18 The Equality Act 2010 requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to their selection process and later to the working environment. Advice can be obtained from Northgate Human Resources.

Preparing for Interviews

14.19 The recruiting manager will arrange the following:

- The venue (more than one room might be required).
- Car parking for candidates and any external advisors assisting with the selection process. (Liaise with the Recruitment Team for the provision of car parking spaces).
- Facilities where requested by an applicant under the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010.
- Administrative assistance (e.g. to escort candidates to and from rooms, to take copies of documentation required for pre - employment checks, to help administer tests).
- Support from Northgate Human Resources to provide selection tests e.g. Thomas International Profile Testing.

14.20 The recruiting manager should liaise with the Northgate Recruitment Team who will produce folders containing all relevant information for the Interview Panel. This should be done **at least three working days before** the interviews are to take place. The folders will include the:

- Programme for the day
- Job Description and Person Specification
- Job Advertisement
- Council's salary scales and summary of the Terms and Conditions for the job
- Application Forms (one for each candidate)
- Interview Assessment Forms (one for each candidate – to be included by Recruiting Manager).

Flowchart

14.21 The roles of the recruiting manager and Northgate Recruitment Team are explained in the Flowchart - Applicant Process.

15 Timing of interviews and the Interview Panel

15.1 Careful planning is essential to a successful selection process. It is important to remember that the purpose is not only to collect information from the candidates but also to provide information about the job and to promote a positive image of the Council as an employer.

15.2 There are a number of issues in planning the selection process. These are:

□ **Timing**

Enough time must be allowed for each interview including time to reflect and make notes. Also allow time at the end of the interviews to evaluate the information obtained from the candidates and any other selection methods used.

□ **Interview Panel**

The Interview Panel should be made up of at least two officers who have received appropriate training (this can include one to one coaching by Northgate Human Resources where the panel member has yet to attend the full training programme). It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to obtain approval from their Director before an external technical expert is invited as a member of the Interview Panel.

Each panel member must have reasonable opportunity to look through application forms, agree the format of the interview and their roles and identify the questions to be asked by each panel member. They should also be clear on the method of scoring questions to ensure a consistent approach during the day of interviews.

An Interview Assessment Form (please see paragraph 18.8) should be prepared by the recruiting manager. This should include the agreed questions linked to the requirements of the Person Specification and model answers to help panel members to assess the candidate's responses.

Northgate Human Resources can support interviews if required and requested. Support would normally be provided where internal candidates are being interviewed, arrangements have been made at the request of a disabled candidate, or the recruiting manager considers it would provide an independent assessment of candidates. Northgate Human Resources can also support other aspects of the selection process, for example, with an assessment centre.

16 Selection Methods

16.1 The Application Form and interview remain central to the selection process. There are other selection methods, which might be suitable for certain posts. Using a mixture of selection methods demonstrates a commitment to trying to ensure that the best person is appointed as a more rounded view of individuals may be obtained. Additionally all candidates are allowed the opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for the role in different situations.

16.2 The purpose of any selection method is to gather information about candidates and to help predict their performance in the job. They should be fair, objective and add value to the selection process. Selection methods include:

- Psychometric testing - Northgate Human Resources representatives and members of the Recruitment Team are trained in using the Thomas International Personal Profile testing
- Assessment Centres
- Case studies
- Group discussions
- In-tray exercises
- Presentations
- Problem solving
- Tests
- Work samples

16.3 Guidance on selection methods is available in the **Toolkit – Recruitment and Selection on the Intranet**. Advice is also available from the Northgate Recruitment Team.

17. Pre-employment checks on the day of interview

17.1 During recruitment it is important the appropriate employment checks are completed. The number of checks will depend on the post in question. It is the recruiting manager's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate checks are carried out on the day of interview, **Application Forms are signed by the applicants** and copies of required documents are taken. The following checks should be carried out as appropriate:

- Evidence that the individual is eligible to live and work in the UK (advice on the documentation that can be provided as evidence is on the Intranet). **This check will apply to all jobs.** Copies of the evidence for all candidates should be sent to the Northgate Recruitment Team.
- Possession of a Driving Licence. This will depend on the job. A copy should be taken if required.
- Possession of the appropriate qualification(s). This will depend on the job. The essential qualifications required should be stated on the Person Specification. A copy should be taken of each essential qualification required.
- Evidence of membership of the appropriate professional body. This will depend on the job and will be stated on the Person Specification. A copy of the evidence should be taken if required.

Internal applicants

17.2 Recruiting managers should also ensure that all required employment checks are carried with regard to internal candidates as follows:

- Obtaining confirmation that evidence is on file that the employee is eligible to work in the UK. If this is not the case the evidence should be obtained.
- Obtaining confirmation that evidence is on file of membership of the appropriate professional body. This will depend on the job and will be stated on the Person Specification. A copy of the evidence should be obtained if necessary.
- Possession of a Driving Licence. This will depend on the job. A copy should be taken if required.
- Obtaining evidence of essential qualification(s) if the new post requires the holding of a different qualification to the one possessed by the internal candidate.

17.3 Failure to provide the appropriate evidence that the appropriate checks have been carried out will delay the offer of employment being sent out.

Checklist for Recruiting Managers

17.4 There is a checklist on the Intranet for recruiting managers to use regarding documentation checks. The checklist should be forwarded to the Northgate Recruitment Team with copies of the documentation checked.

18. Conducting interviews - general points

18.1 The location of the interviews should be suitable for purpose, confidential and accessible for candidates and members of the interview panel.

18.2 Reception should be notified that interviews are taking place and provided with a list of candidates, timings and who to contact when they arrive (this will be provided by the Northgate Recruitment Team).

18.3 Delays should be avoided. The Interview Panel should start on time and keep a check on time during interviewing. It is important that enough time is allowed for interviews. It is advised that a minimum of forty-five minutes is allowed for each interview taking into account the recommended structure below. Break times should be included to allow time to catch up if necessary. A lunch break is required if a full day of interviews is planned.

18.4 The interview should be designed to obtain information about the candidate relevant to the requirements of the Person Specification and Job Description. Questions should not be asked about family and personal circumstances, which could be interpreted as being discriminatory. Candidates should not be subject to more rigorous questioning because, for example, of their gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or disability. Guidance on questioning techniques is included in the **Toolkit – Recruitment and Selection on the Intranet**. The Interview Panel should be aware of non-verbal communication (**see Toolkit – Recruitment and Selection on the Intranet**), which is recognised as being an important part of effective communication.

18.5 Panel members should avoid preconceptions. A selection decision should be based on the suitability of the candidate to do the job. Panel members should remain objective and listen to the opinions of other panel members.

18.6 Avoid arranging interviews for times when specific religious festivals or events are held.

Conducting interviews – structure

18.7 The interview should be structured to avoid irrelevant discussion and wasting time. A well-conducted interview will help create a good impression of the Council as an employer. The Interview Panel should agree the structure of the interview and their individual roles beforehand. A suggested format is as follows:

1. Welcome the candidate

- The appointed chair should introduce the panel.
- Put the candidate at ease.
- Explain the purpose of the interview and outline the way it will be structured.
- Explain that the panel will be taking notes to aid the decision-making process.

2. Briefly explain the job

Explain location within the service and current issues that may impact on the job (planned restructure, pay and grading review for example)

3. Ask questions

- Use the prepared questions to obtain information about the candidate
- Listen and probe using supplementary questions
- Identify any points from the Application Form that need clarifying
- Take notes

4. Give the candidate a brief overview of the terms and conditions of the job

Make the candidate aware if the appointment is subject to any conditions e.g. a satisfactory probation period, obtaining references, medical clearance, DBS Disclosure, Auto enrolment into the Local Government Pension Scheme etc

5. Give the candidate time to ask questions about the job or the Council

6. End the interview positively

- Inform the candidate when they can expect to hear from you and confirm their contact details
- Thank the candidate for their attendance and the interest shown in applying for the job

7. Allow time for the Interview Panel to assess the candidate's performance

The assessment should be done after each interview.

Making the decision – Interview Assessment Form and Summary sheet

18.8 Each panel member should complete an Interview Assessment Form (**see Toolkit – Recruitment and Selection on the Intranet**). The panel member can make notes about the responses given by the candidate to the questions asked. The notes should be clear and legible to enable feedback to be given, if required, to the candidate at a later date. They are also an important part of the audit trail in the event that a candidate considers they have been unfairly treated and the matter goes to an Employment Tribunal.

18.9 The response of each candidate should be scored on an agreed scale. A typical example is a scale of 0 to 4 where:

- 0 = Unacceptable – not met the required level for the job
- 1 = Adequate – met the basic requirements for the job
- 2 = Good – exceeded the basic requirements of the job
- 3 = Very Good – high level of competence for the job
- 4 = Excellent - fully demonstrated an excellent level of competence for the job

18.10 The Panel has the discretion to weight questions. This might occur if it is felt that some questions or a selection method will provide information that is considered to be more important regarding assessment of ability to perform the job. An example of this would be the ability to use Microsoft Office where this is highly required in the job.

18.11 The Chair should then complete the Interview Summary Assessment Form (**see Toolkit – Recruitment and Selection on the Intranet**), to enable an overall assessment to be made. The panel members should discuss their findings together to arrive at an overall score. The results of other selection methods should also be taken into consideration. The recruiting manager should ensure that the Summary Sheet is kept as part of the audit trail.

19. Notifying the Candidates after interview **Unsuccessful Candidates**

19.1 The recruiting manager should inform the unsuccessful candidates by telephone as soon as possible after the interviews.

19.2 The recruiting manager should provide a list of unsuccessful candidates to the Northgate Recruitment Team by the next working day after the interviews. Regret letters will then be sent out **by the next working day (i.e. within two working days of the interviews)**.

Successful Candidates

19.3 The recruiting manager should contact the successful candidate to make a verbal offer of employment. This should take place after assessments have been completed and the Interview Panel has reached agreement on the most suitable candidate.

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

- The salary being offered
- That the offer is subject to satisfactory references*, medical clearance, probation and any other checks (e.g. a DBS Disclosure, evidence of qualifications if for some reason this has not already been obtained)
- A contract of employment will be sent with enclosures e.g. Personal Health Capability Declaration.
- That the candidate accepts the offer

****Note: It should be clarified with the candidate that they give their permission for references to be obtained.***

Providing Feedback on Interview Performance

19.5 It is the recruiting manager's responsibility to provide specific detailed feedback to an applicant if this is requested.

20. The offer process

20.1 It is important that the individual receives a contract of employment before they commence employment. The recruiting manager should inform the Northgate Recruitment Team of the successful candidate. The recruiting manager should also ensure that the following information must be securely provided to the Northgate Recruitment Team:

- An Employee Authorisation Form.
- Evidence of other checks undertaken that are appropriate to the post (e.g. qualifications, driver's licence, membership of specified professional body)
- The eligibility documents – passport, evidence of national insurance number etc.
- Completed Interview paperwork for all candidates.

20.2 On receipt of the above the Northgate Recruitment Team will authorise Northgate HR Administration to send out the offer of employment. The completed Employee Authorisation Form (and evidence of the appropriate employment checks) will be forwarded to Northgate HR Administration to enable an offer of employment to be issued. Failure to provide the above documents will delay the issue of the offer of employment.

20.3 The offer of employment should be issued by no later than 5 working days of receipt of the Employee Authorisation Form and other information by the Northgate HR Administration. A draft offer of employment will firstly be prepared and sent to the recruiting manager who should check it for accuracy. When accuracy has been confirmed, the offer of employment will be sent to the individual with the appropriate enclosures (e.g. Personal Health & Capability Declaration, DBS Disclosure Application Form).

20.4 The offer of employment will be made subject to the following:

- Medical Clearance - Northgate HR Administration will advise the recruiting manager whether or not this is satisfactory.
- Satisfactory references - Reference requests are sent out by and returned to Northgate HR Administration who will provide the recruiting manager with a copy. It is the recruiting manager's responsibility to "chase up" reference requests if necessary.
- A satisfactory Disclosure from the DBS (if applicable to the job).
- A probationary period (see paragraph 24.1 to 24.4)

20.5 The offer of employment will include a start date which is subject to all the appropriate employment checks being received.

20.6 The signed contract of employment indicating acceptance of the offer of employment will be returned to Northgate HR Administration who will notify the recruiting manager of its receipt.

References

20.7 Northgate HR Administration will also request references at this stage if prior approval is given on the Application Form. If this is not the case the recruiting manager should obtain approval from the individual. A reference request will be sent out electronically where possible and consist of:

- Job Description and Person Specification
- Reference form
- Pre-paid envelope only when an e-mail address has not been provided

Note; references are required for internal candidates in appropriate circumstances e.g. where the employee is moving to another service area.

20.8 A reference must always be obtained from the individual's current employer or most recent employer. An internal candidate should not nominate a member of the Interview Panel as a referee.

20.9 References will be returned to Northgate HR Administration who will provide copies to the recruiting manager. The recruiting manager should follow up on any issues arising from the references (e.g. a high rate of absence).

20.10 Telephone references should only be obtained as a last resort. The recruiting manager should: make a written record of the conversation, including who they have contacted.

20.11 References will be put on the employee's electronic personal file by Northgate HR Administration.

20.12 Advice on references can be obtained from Northgate Human Resources.

Disclosure and Barring Service Certificates

20.13 Posts that require a DBS Certificate and the level (i.e. standard or enhanced) have been identified by the Council. If a satisfactory DBS Certificate is required it should only be obtained for **the successful candidate. This includes successful internal candidates.** Northgate HR Administration will send, with the offer of employment, a Disclosure Application Form. The successful candidate will part complete the Disclosure Application Form and return it to the recruiting manager together with the required evidence demonstrating proof of identity. **Only original documents can be accepted.** The recruiting manager should check the information on the form (current address, etc) against the documents provided by the successful candidate as proof of identity.

20.14 The evidence provided on the day of interview (i.e. to prove the individual resides and is eligible to work in the UK) can be used as a second check.

20.15 After completing the checking the recruiting manager should complete the relevant section of the Disclosure Application Form. This confirms that the evidence provided by the successful candidate as proof of their identity has been seen and checked. It is important that forms are completed correctly. Incorrectly completed forms are returned by the DBS for correction, which will cause a delay in the individual commencing employment. The completed form should be confidentially forwarded to Northgate HR Administration who will log it, get it signed and send it to the DBS.

20.16 The DBS no longer automatically issue a copy of the successful candidate's DBS Certificate to the Council. The recruiting manager should therefore ask the candidate for sight of their DBS Certificate to ensure it is satisfactory to the Council. The recruiting manager should then notify Northgate HR by email that they have checked the DBS Certificate and whether or not it is satisfactory. Alternatively subject to the candidate's consent a copy of the certificate can be obtained from the candidate. This must be securely stored by Northgate Human Resources. Managers should not keep copies of DBS Certificates. Where the candidate already has a DBS Certificate and subscribes to the online DBS update service, the Council can obtain up-to-date information from this service with the Candidate's consent. Advice can be obtained from Northgate HR.

20.17 **The individual should not commence in their substantive job until the Council is satisfied that they have a satisfactory DBS Certificate.** This is particularly important where an enhanced DBS certificate is required. The individual may commence where either:

The individual will be supervised and not work on their own until the Council is satisfied that they have a satisfactory DBS Certificate.

Or

Duties are adjusted (following a risk assessment) to prevent contact with vulnerable individuals/children until the Council is satisfied that they have a satisfactory DBS Certificate.

Advice can be obtained from Northgate Human Resources.

Medical clearance

20.18 The Personal Health and Capability Declaration (Part A is completed by Northgate HR Administration liaising with the recruitment manager) is sent with the offer of employment to the successful candidate who will then complete and forward it to Occupational Health. Occupational Health will review the information provided and make a decision on the employee's ability to satisfactorily perform the duties of the post appointed to within 3 working days. Notification is given to Northgate HR Administration who will inform the recruiting manager of the result and any other assessments that may be required.

20.19 Successful internal candidates may be required to undergo a medical assessment if the new post has specific demands/health requirements.

20.20 If a workplace assessment is required the Northgate Health and Safety Officer will contact the line manager to make arrangements for this to be carried out.

Flowchart

20.21 The roles of the recruiting manager and Northgate Recruitment Team and HR Administration are explained in the Flowchart - Offer Process.

21. Agreeing a start date

21.1 Recruiting managers should note that a start date cannot be confirmed until all employment checks are considered to be satisfactory. Offers of employment will state that the start date will be confirmed subject to satisfactory employment checks being received. Any variation from this can only be authorised by a Director and must be obtained by the recruiting manager and provided to Northgate HR Administration.

21.2 It is the recruiting manager's responsibility to advise the successful applicant of the outcome of the references, medical clearance and any other check (e.g. DBS Disclosure) that the employment is subject to.

21.3 The successful candidate should be advised not to resign from any current employment until all the required clearances have been received.

22. Records

22.1 All records (e.g. Application Forms, shortlisting records, interviewing records, copies of qualifications and eligibility to work in the UK documents) relevant to the recruitment and selection process must be kept to provide an audit trail. They should be given to the Northgate Recruitment Team who will keep them securely for a period of six months.

22.2 The Northgate Recruitment Team will forward appropriate records (e.g. the original Application Form, copy of qualifications, copies of documents to prove eligibility to work in the UK, etc) to Northgate Human Resources to retain on the employees files.

23. Starting the employee and induction

Before employment begins

23.1 It is important that preparation is made for any new employee before they start. This includes:

- Advising the employee who to report to and where/when to report
- Discussing the appointment with colleagues
- Ensuring someone is appointed to welcome the individual and to make introductions
- Ensuring IT facilities are available (including inclusion in the Address Book)
- Arranging the individual's ID card.

Induction

23.2 It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that the individual is properly inducted. This should occur within the first week of employment commencing.

23.3 To assist with the induction a New Starter – Induction Checklist is available on the Intranet. This consists of:

- A checklist covering the areas included in induction. The Northgate Training and Development Officer should be contacted to enable the employee to access the Corporate E-induction. The completed and signed checklist should be returned to Northgate Human Resources.
- The Personal Development Plan, which helps the manager and employee to plan the first few weeks of employment.

Staff Handbook

23.4 The Staff Handbook is available on the Intranet.

Training

23.5 The new employee should be booked on relevant training courses. A Training Guide is on the Intranet to assist managers to identify appropriate training. It should be noted that the Council has a range of mandatory training for all staff such as Health and Safety; Equalities and in addition for Managers training in Recruitment and Selection. Performance Development Reviews as examples.

24. Probation

24.1 The employment of all new employees of the Council (i.e. it does not apply to internal appointments) is subject to a satisfactory probationary period (normally six months). The Probationary Policy is on the Intranet.

24.2 The Probationary Policy is intended to ensure that all probationary employees have the opportunity to discuss their performance with their manager/supervisor during the probationary period. Any areas of concern to either side can, therefore, be raised and addressed.

24.3 Probationary review records should be passed to Northgate Human Resources for filing. Northgate Human Resources will notify the manager to remind them of the end of the employee's probationary period.

24.4 Advice on the Probationary Policy can be obtained from Northgate Human Resources.

25. Advice and support

25.1 Managers should liaise with the Northgate Recruitment Team before and throughout the recruitment process. The Northgate Recruitment Team can provide assistance during the recruitment and selection process with writing job advertisements, advice on where to best place the advert to ensure maximum exposure, advice on Job Descriptions/Person Specifications, sending applicant correspondence etc.

25.2 Northgate Human Resources can provide advice/assistance with:

- Local terms and conditions of employment.
- Employment options.
- Profile testing.
- Assisting with interviews. It is not mandatory for Northgate Human Resources to attend every interview. This is discussed in paragraph 8.2.
- Assisting with the selection process e.g. with an assessment centre.

26. Review of Policy and Procedure

26.1 This policy and procedure has been agreed with and can be reviewed at any time in consultation with the recognised Trade Unions. As a minimum it will be reviewed every two years.

26.2 Northgate Human Resources are authorised to make minor amendments to the policy and procedure e.g. changes in job titles resulting from an organisational restructure

Document Control

Version Control

Printed documents are uncontrolled. This document is only valid on the day it was printed

Version	Description of Version	Effective Date
1.0	Recruitment & Selection Policy & Procedure	1 st December 2010
2.0	Amended to take into account Competency Framework , Disclosure and Barring Service, additional advice on employment checks and the restructure	1 st April 2013
3.0	Updated for changes to DBS procedure	1 st July 2013

Approvals

Approved by	Date
Joint Negotiating Group	n/a
Joint Consultative Committee (if applicable)	n/a
Finance & Management Committee	n/a

Associated Documentation

Description of Documentation	
Senior Officer Appointment Procedure	Grievance Procedure
Recruitment and Selection Procedure Summary	Guidance on Fixed Term Contracts
Guidance on Organisational Change	Practical Guidance on Writing Person Specifications
Leadership and Management Development Competency Framework	Staff Handbook
Training Guide	Probationary Policy