

Recruitment and selection policy

The councils reserve the right to revise, withdraw or replace the content of this policy at any time and to introduce new policies from time to time to reflect the changing needs of the organisations.

Introduction

1. Both councils aim to:

- recruit and retain employees who demonstrate high levels of performance and motivation and those who demonstrate future potential
- treat all employees and prospective employees fairly and with respect, promoting equal access to such opportunities, including supporting the positive action provisions (appendix 4)
- recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the demographics of each district
- support the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship pledge, encouraging service areas to take on apprentices where appropriate.

This policy covers the following

Recruitment advertising
Selection

Other policies or documents referring to recruitment and selection

Appendix 1 – getting the right person for the job

Appendix 2 – psychometric testing

Appendix 3 – recruitment of ex-offenders and Disclosure and Barring Service checks

Appendix 4 – positive action provisions

Equality in employment policy

Grievance policy

Constitution

Local Government and Housing Act 1989

Local Government Act 1972

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1993 (SI 1993/202) and (2001/3384)

Local Government (Structural and Boundary Changes) (Staffing) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/1419).

Recruitment advertising

2. Once a vacancy has been established and the correct paperwork has been received the appropriate HR business partner will work with the hiring manager to agree how the post should be advertised.
3. The information provided for a vacant post will include, but not be limited to, a job description, person specification, how to apply for the post, closing date, and where possible, interview date.
4. When a vacant post requires a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check this will be stated in the job description.
5. Only applications on the councils application form will be accepted.
6. All vacancies will be advertised unless there is a potential redundancy, redeployment situation, or other business reason for not doing so.
7. The councils will promote best practice in recruitment, selection, promotion and transfer/ redeployment opportunities in addition to complying with related legislation.
8. Any candidate subject to a recruitment and selection process who is related to a councillor or employee at either council is required to disclose the nature of this relationship when applying for a post at either council

Selection

9. The hiring manager and HR business partner will agree the appropriate selection methods for each post in line with the guidance in appendix 1.
10. Appendix 2 outlines in full the councils' approach to psychometric testing.
11. The hiring manager will consider all application forms and shortlist candidates based on how well they meet the essential and desirable criteria in the job description and person specification.
12. Any selection process will be objective and will take account of the evidence the candidate presents relating to the job description and person specification for a post.
13. Any employee involved in running or administering a recruitment or selection process will receive adequate training before making any decisions relating to these processes.

14. Any employee involved in running or administering a recruitment or selection process who is alleged to have acted in a discriminatory manner or who has given a particular candidate an unfair advantage may be subject to the councils' disciplinary procedure, which could potentially lead to dismissal.
15. Reasonable adjustments to support candidates with a disability are made throughout any recruitment and selection process, including during the use of psychometric tests. For further information see appendix 4 and speak to your HR business partner.
16. All candidates with a disability who meet the minimum essential criteria for a job vacancy will be interviewed and considered on their abilities (as referred in appendix 4).
17. We are fair to candidates who have criminal convictions that will not impact on their ability to carry out the post they have applied for (please see details in appendix 3).
18. All candidates attending an interview or completing any other form of assessment will be informed of the outcome of their application and given feedback on their performance on request.
19. All offers of employment will be subject to:
 - Receiving two satisfactory references, including a reference from the most recent employer. In exceptional circumstances, one reference may be accepted (for example if the prospective employee has been with their employer for many years, thereby nullifying the benefit of a reference prior to this). References should be received prior to the prospective employee commencing their role except when there is a particularly short lead time from offering the position to start date, when they may be received after employment begins.
 - The prospective employee providing all relevant documentation stated in the offer letter.
 - The prospective employee providing original examination certificates and or professional qualifications referred to in the application form.
 - The prospective employee completing a pre-commencement health questionnaire which will enable the councils to make any adjustments as required.
20. Certain posts that involve making regular financial transactions or working with young people or vulnerable adults will be subjected to a DBS check as laid out in the job description.
21. There are a number of posts including Head of paid service, Monitoring officer, Section 151 officer which will be recruited for in accordance with the councils constitution and appointed in a manner compliant with the appropriate legislation.
22. All employees joining the councils will need to complete a six month probationary period. This includes employees with continuous service from other authorities or from employers

listed under the modification order (please contact HR for further information if required).

23. All data relating to unsuccessful candidates in the recruitment and selection process will be kept for six months from the closing date for the post and then destroyed.
24. Equal opportunities data will be collated for monitoring purposes but not passed to the hiring manager.
25. All personal data relating to the successful candidate will be held on their electronic personnel file.
26. All new employees should receive induction training from their line manager or a colleague on starting at the council. Corporate induction training is arranged periodically for new starters and should be attended as soon after joining as possible.
27. Internal complaints relating to the recruitment and selection process should initially be raised informally with the option of using the councils' grievance policy available on the intranet.
28. External candidates should refer to the councils' complaint procedures on each council's website.

Alternative formats of this policy

29. Alternative formats of this publication can be made available on request. These include large print, braille, audio, email, easy read and other languages. Please contact the HR team on 01491 823424

Legislation

Legislation relating to this policy:

Data Protection Act 1998
Employment Rights Act (1996)
Equality Act 2010
Human Rights Act 1998
Local Government and Housing Act (1989)
Prevention of Illegal Working Act (1997)
Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
Section 122 of the Police Act 1997
Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

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Version 2 issued: November 2014

Appendix 1 - Successful selection - getting the right person for the job

We need to ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are robust so we recruit the best person for the job, not just the person who is best at interview. We also need to look for future potential.

An unstructured interview in isolation is one of the least likely selection techniques to predict future job performance.

To improve success during selection we would recommend that as well as a scored, structured/competency based interview that is based on the job description and person specification – i.e. the skills and behaviours for the job, that there is also at least one other form of assessment and preferably more than one but that this is done in proportion with the level and complexity of job being recruited to.

Additional suggested selection tools

We suggest that recruiting managers use at least one of the additional selection tools as listed below which HR can advise on:

- Ability testing, e.g. verbal reasoning, numerical testing, checking etc as appropriate to the job role. Some tests can be done on line prior to interview and could form part of the short listing exercise
- Personality questionnaire. This can also be done as above
- Bespoke in house test, e.g. test using excel, test based on case notes with questions etc.
- Presentation which could be scored based on specified criteria
- Additional interview questions that probe further than the scored interview. These would not be able to be scored as are likely to be different depending on the questions asked of each individual
- Assessment centre – this would be a group of exercises which could include the above and would give more complete picture of an individual's performance. Assessment centres can last half or full days.

Additional support – using probationary periods effectively

The best test as to whether someone can do the job is if they are successful in that job. The probationary period gives us the opportunity to set expectations from the start and manage performance.

Performance should be reviewed at two and four months using the job description and person specification and/or any objectives set at the start of employment. These objectives should be set out clearly so that new staff are fully aware of what they need to achieve to pass probation. Although this could feel onerous this will enable managers to

manage any performance issues during the probationary period or recognise a need to potentially extend the probationary period. This will also be good evidence for the individual 'passing' their probationary period.

Managers considering dismissal at month four should set clear targets for improvement and hold fortnightly one to ones to monitor progress. These meetings should be noted and agreed.

Probationary periods can be extended, but if the employee is not performing or on their way to performing to the accepted level after four months the possibility that they will not pass their probationary period, and will therefore not be retained at the councils, needs to be considered and should be relayed to them.

It is appropriate to extend probationary periods if the member of staff is close to achieving their objectives and also if for example; some staff with disabilities, such as Autism, make take longer to settle in to a role; young people who may not have worked in an office may take longer to settle in to a work role; those returning to work after a long period of unemployment; if the team or manager has not had time to give support and training to the new member of staff.

Employees who do not pass the probationary period and wish to appeal their dismissal should follow the councils' grievance policy.

Recruitment needs to be fair for all candidates and must ensure that no one is disadvantaged. Using objective and consistent selection methods will achieve this. It is also fundamental to ensure that you know what skills and behaviours are being recruited for by being clear in the job description and person specification.

Appendix 2 - Psychometric testing

Both councils aim to ensure that:

- psychometric tests are used in a professional manner
 - objective, reliable and relevant information is provided for the purposes of selection, development, training and organisational change
 - psychometric testing contributes to fair employment decisions
1. Psychometric tests can enhance the quality and quantity of information available for selection, development and training decisions, and provide an aid to organisational change. Both councils are committed to the highest standards of practice in the use of all psychometric tests. This will maximise the benefit of testing to both councils and also to the person completing the tests and ensure that the potential misuse of tests is avoided. Both councils use psychometric tests provided by Saville and Holdsworth Ltd (SHL).
 2. Psychometric tests may be used to provide objective information about a candidate in a variety of situations:
 - selection
 - promotion
 - personal and team development
 - team building
 - counselling
 - out-placement
 - organisational development
 3. Psychometric tests results should always be considered along with other relevant information, to enhance the overall quality and quantity of information available. Psychometric test results alone should not form the basis of any decisions in the situations listed above.

Overall responsibility for psychometric testing standards

4. The HR team is responsible for ensuring that psychometric testing guidelines are in place and adhered to. The HR team is also responsible for providing an advisory service on the use of psychometric testing within both councils.
5. Qualified test users within the HR team are responsible for approving the appropriateness of the use of psychometric tests in the areas of selection, development, training and organisational change.
6. Test users will discuss the principles of the test with shortlisted candidates declaring a disability prior to testing to see if any adjustments are needed.

7. Only qualified test users within HR will have access to, use and interpret psychometric test results. Qualified test users may delegate test administration to a person trained in this area.
8. Test users should only use and interpret psychometric instruments to the level that they are suitably trained for.
9. Any psychometric test used must be clearly relevant to the given purpose. It is important that clear objectives for the use of psychometric tests are established by the test user to ensure that the test is appropriate for achieving the intended outcome.
10. Detailed job descriptions and person specifications based on objective job analysis form the basis of deciding the appropriateness of a test for selection purposes, and these must be provided by the hiring manager before the qualified test user can decide on the most appropriate test to use.
11. Test scores must be interpreted on the basis of relevant norm groups within the appropriate test battery. If suitable comparison groups are not provided with a test, the qualified test user will contact SHL Client Support for advice.
12. Test users need to ensure that their interpretation of results is accurate, is within the context of clearly defined criteria, and does not go beyond the information that is available.
13. Where test results are considered against interview performance clear decisions need to be made about the expected standards of results.
14. Test users should also ensure that third parties receiving information about test results or a personality profile understand their meaning and use the data appropriately.
15. At the test session candidates will be told why tests are used, how their test scores will be used and who will have access to the results.
16. Candidates should be informed that relevant feedback can be given after the test session. Feedback should only be given by trained users, and should be accurate and open. Feedback may be provided face-to-face by telephone or email as requested.
17. For selection purposes, a candidate's test results are valid for any similar position for 12 months from the date of testing. Candidates may be retested after six months at their request.

Copyright

18. All testing materials are subject to copyright, and potential breach of this will lead to prosecution by the test publisher. Under no circumstances should materials be photocopied or installed on computer without the express permission of the relevant test publisher.

APPENDIX 3 – Recruitment of ex-offenders and Disclosure and Barring Service checks

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 was updated on 10 March 2014 under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment Act 2012, to decrease the length of time that some criminal convictions become spent, or ignored. This rehabilitation period varies depending on the sentence or order imposed by the courts. After this period, an ex-offender is not obliged to mention their conviction when applying for a job, unless the position they are applying for is exempt from the Act. Custodial sentences of more than four years can never be spent.

The following sentences become spent after fixed periods from the date of conviction:

For custodial sentences:

Sentence length	Previous rehabilitation period (applies from date of conviction)	<u>New</u> rehabilitation period is period of sentence plus the 'buffer' period below which applies from end of sentence)
0 - 6 months	7 years	2 years
6 - 30 months	10 years	4 years
30 months - 4 years	Never spent	7 years
Over 4 years	Never spent	Never spent

For non-custodial sentences:

Sentence	Previous rehabilitation period (applies from date of conviction)	<u>Buffer period</u> (will apply from end of sentence)
Community order (& Youth Rehabilitation Order)	5 years	1 years
Sentence	Previous period	New period
Fine	5 years	1 year (from date of conviction)
Absolute discharge, conditional discharge, referral order, reparation order, action plan order, supervision order, bind over order, hospital order	6 months	None
	Various – mostly between one year and length of the Order	Period of order

As with the current scheme, the above periods are halved for persons under 18 at date of conviction (except for custodial sentences of up to 6 months where the buffer period will be 18 months for persons under 18 at the date of conviction).

With certain exceptions, it is unlawful under s.4(3)(b) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 to refuse to employ a "rehabilitated" person on the ground of a spent conviction. However, the same does not apply to unspent convictions. Candidates with spent convictions will be made aware should a certain post be an exception.

The councils recognise that automatically rejecting candidates with a criminal record, regardless of when or how they received it, will be discounting a large proportion of potentially suitable workers. In deciding whether an applicant with an unspent conviction is suitable for a position the councils will take into account issues such as whether the offence is relevant to the job, whether it was recent, and whether it was a one-off or one of a number. These points will be considered on a case by case basis.

Disclosures by the Disclosure and Barring Service

Under the Police Act 1997 the councils can obtain directly, or ask prospective employees to obtain, criminal record certificates which disclose information about any convictions or police records through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Service. The Head of HR, IT and Technical services will be the lead signatory for both councils under the DBS scheme and several members of the HR team will be registered as DBS counter-signatories.

Each council will meet the cost of all DBS disclosures for candidates who have accepted an offer of employment at that council. Both councils commit to:

- ensure that the disclosure information is not passed to persons not authorised to receive it under section 124 of the Act. Under section 124, unauthorised disclosure is an offence
- ensure that disclosures and the information they contain are available only to those who need to have access to them in the course of their duties
- store data from disclosures securely
- retain neither disclosures nor a record of disclosure information contained within them for longer than is required for the particular purpose. In general, this should be no later than six months after the date on which recruitment or other relevant decisions have been taken, or after the date on which any dispute about the accuracy of the disclosure information has been resolved. This period should be exceeded only in very exceptional circumstances which justify retention for a longer period

Any existing employee convicted of a criminal offence must inform the Head of HR, IT and Technical Services in writing, giving details of the conviction. The Head of HR, IT and Technical Services will then consider the type of offence, whether it could impact on the employee's ability to continue in their post and whether there should be a disciplinary investigation. If a custodial sentence is imposed, it is likely that the employment relationship would terminate due to frustration of the contract of employment.

Data relating to DBS disclosures

Confidentiality will be observed fully in dealing with information supplied by either the individual or the disclosure certificate. This data will be held securely on the employee's personnel file and on the HR Pro system and will only be made available to those with a

legitimate need to have access. Certificates and associated information will be retained for a maximum of 6 months, before being destroyed.

Posts at the councils which require a DBS disclosure may include, but not be limited to:

- Cornerstone tutors
- Sports workers
- Counter fraud workers
- Housing workers

APPENDIX 4 – New positive action provisions

The positive action provisions mean that it is not unlawful to recruit or promote a candidate who is of equal merit to another candidate, if the employer reasonably thinks the candidate:

- has a protected characteristic that is under represented in the workforce; or
- that people with that characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic.

However, positive action does not allow an employer to appoint a **less suitable candidate** just because that candidate has a protected characteristic that is under-represented or disadvantaged.