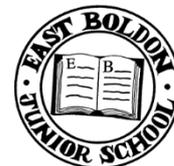


East Boldon Junior School Recruitment and Selection Policy



This policy will run alongside the South Tyneside Council Single Central Record of Recruitment and Vetting Checks (June 2015) which gives further guidance and support.

People are important. They are the most valuable resource in our organisation and our success depends on having people with the right skills and abilities. Without them, we will not deliver the improvements needed in our services or continue to provide a quality public service.

To make sure that the right people are recruited in the first place, a fair, structured and professional recruitment process will be consistently applied.

The process will be carried out in a fair, efficient and cost-effective manner, which takes account of relevant legislation, the school's commitment to safeguarding children and young people and vulnerable adults and the LA Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented within the school. Any variation to recruitment and selection procedures must be approved by the Governing Body.

At least one interviewer on each panel for posts which have contact with children and young people/vulnerable adults must have received Recruitment and Selection including Safeguarding training.

This policy applies to the recruitment of all employment groups and grades including those, that are temporary but excluding workers recruited from an agency. They do not apply in circumstances where an existing employee is required to "act up" to a post to cover for absence (e.g. due to maternity leave, sickness etc.), or pending the appointment of a new postholder. For long term acting up, where several potential postholders could be eligible, an objective selection method should be used, e.g. informal interviews

The aims of the recruitment and selection process are to:

- recruit high quality employees with the right skills on the appropriate contracts to deliver the key objectives of the position within the school.
- ensure that all processes support the commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and that effective systems and training are in place
- ensure that equality of opportunity is considered as an essential part of recruitment practice, encouraging diversity
- ensure that recruitment is effective as a key public relations exercise for all involved
- ensure that recruitment is fair, consistent, efficient, objective and cost-effective
- help and encourage best practice by training those involved to follow a structured and systematic process of selection
- continuously monitor, review and improve the recruitment process in the light of experience, changes in employment legislation and information obtained from those involved in the process

To fill a vacant post, the following steps should be carried out:

Review the post

If the vacancy is for an existing post, the Governing Body should consider whether the role is still needed and if so, have the duties or responsibilities changed since the post was last filled. The salary may need to be reviewed to reflect changes to the post. The existing job description and person specification should be updated and amended as appropriate.

If it is a new post, a job description and a person specification should be prepared.

With careful planning and management, most posts are suitable for job share and it would only be in exceptional circumstances that a post would be exempt from job sharing. Examples of situations where job share may not be appropriate include jobs that can not be carried out by two employees due to the need for continuity; where one to one client contact is high and the lack of continuity would have a negative impact; where there are residential posts, with employees living on site for example caretakers.

The interview panel should include at least two interviewers. The dates on which the shortlisting and interviews will take place should be decided before the post is advertised and must be included on the Authorisation to Recruit to a Vacant Post Form (Appendix A) as this information is sent out to candidates.

Once authorisation has been given to recruit, the Governing Body should prepare a draft advertisement, and an up to date job description and person specification and send this to Employee Support and Development.

The Job Description

The job description for the post should be short and to the point. It should identify the overall objective and the main duties and responsibilities of the job. It should include the following information:

- School
- Post title
- Salary scale
- Job purpose or main function(s)
- List of the key outcomes of the post and more specific information as to how they will be achieved
- All job descriptions applicable to working with Children and young people/vulnerable adults will include a commitment to safeguarding

Person Specification

A well written person specification is crucial for an effective and professional recruitment and selection process. It should reflect a profile of the “ideal candidate” in terms of their experience, skills, qualifications and other attributes needed to do the job. It will be useful in:

- producing the job advertisement
- choosing the selection methods to be used
- shortlisting
- making the final selection
- demonstrating that you have selected fairly and chosen the most suitable candidate

The qualities or criteria should be classified as either essential or desirable. Essential criteria are those which must be met before a candidate can be appointed. The desirable criteria are those qualities which would be preferred and can be used to reduce the numbers on the shortlist if a large number of candidates satisfy the essential criteria. The way in which both the essential and desirable criteria are to be assessed during the selection process should also be included for example through the application form, certificates, interview, presentation and references etc.

It is unlawful to

- **treat one person less favourably than you would treat another on the grounds of sex, race, disability, marriage or civil partnership, age, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation, or**
- **apply an unjustifiable condition or requirement which puts people of a particular sex or group at a disadvantage compared with others**

For posts that involve working with children or vulnerable groups, the successful candidate will be required to apply for either a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

METHODS OF RECRUITMENT

To promote open competition, avoid indirect discrimination and attract a sufficiently wide field of candidates, vacancies should be made available to external candidates as well as to internal candidates. However, where it is considered that there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced internal candidates eligible to apply for a post, advertising can be restricted, in the first instance, to internal candidates. In special circumstances, such as those described below, these arrangements may be temporarily changed:

- where restructuring is to occur
- in the event of budget reduction exercises, vacancies may initially be restricted to candidates who are existing permanent employees
- to redeploy an existing employee in a redundancy situation
- to redeploy an employee who becomes medically unfit for their existing job but is considered fit for other duties
- where applicable, to redeploy an employee whose fixed term contract is not being renewed.

Drawing from a pool of employees can be particularly useful in cases where it is important to fill a vacancy quickly, or where temporary or emergency cover is required.

All recruitment adverts **must** be placed through Employee Support and Development in order to:

- maximise discounts on advertising costs
- ensure that they are in accordance with the council's Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy
- ensure that they comply with legislation
- ensure that the vacancy exists and that it can be advertised for example previous postholder has left, or a new post has been agreed. All new posts graded Band 8 and above are subject to agreement by Human Resources Committee. Posts graded Band 7 and below are agreed under delegated powers in consultation with the Service Lead for Employee Support and Development and the Trade Unions. Employee Support and Development must be contacted for further advice on the establishment of new posts
- guarantee inclusion on the fortnightly Jobs Bulletin
- ensure the advert is produced in the council's 'corporate style'

All adverts must be based on the facts detailed in the job description and person specification.

5.3.3 All job adverts must include a standard statement on the Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy. Additionally all job adverts applicable to working with Children and young people/vulnerable adults will include a commitment to safeguarding and state that 'enhanced DBS clearance will be sought'. Employee Support and Development will automatically include the statement in all adverts.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, all posts will be open to all candidates irrespective of their ethnic origin or sex.

Generally, a minimum of two weeks from the appearance of the advert will be given to allow candidates sufficient time to receive, complete and return their application form. Applications should be received before 12.00 noon on the closing date and late applications will only be considered, at the discretion of the employing directorate, if exceptional circumstances apply. It is recommended that once the shortlisting process has started, late applications (unless the candidate has had agreement from the directorate) will not be accepted.

The information given to candidates by Employee Support and Development will include an Application Form, Guidance Notes, Job Description, Person Specification, and any other appropriate information supplied by the employing directorate.

6.2 Application forms

- 6.2.1** All job applicants (whether internal or external) must complete the standard application form. The use of this form ensures that candidates provide the required information in a consistent and standard way which should help to assess and compare them systematically. Other types of application (e.g. C.V.'s) should not be accepted, unless accompanied by a fully completed application form.
- 6.2.2** A candidate who cannot complete an application form personally (for example due to literacy difficulties or a disability) should **not** be excluded from consideration. In such cases, they may get help to complete the form or submit their application in an alternative format, for example on tape.
- 6.2.3** Individuals who make an unsolicited job application or casual enquiry about employment to the Service Lead for Employee Support and Development will be advised that recruitment is by application in response to specific advertised vacancies only. If a suitable post is being advertised at that time, an application form and further details will be sent out to the individual.

6.3 Recruitment Information Packs

- 6.3.1** Recruitment packs are produced for those posts graded Band 9 and above which have been advertised nationally. Employee Support and Development can provide guidance on information to include in the pack and potential costs.
- 6.3.2** On request, packs can also be produced for other posts that have been advertised nationally or for specific recruitment campaigns.

6.4 Acknowledging Applications

- 6.4.1** Due to postage and administrative costs, it is council policy **not** to acknowledge applications. The application form informs candidates that if they have not heard from the council within six weeks of the closing date, they can assume that their application has been unsuccessful.
- 6.4.2** If the applicant would like written confirmation that they have been unsuccessful, a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed with their application form. Directorates must ensure that if a candidate has included a stamped addressed envelope, a reply is sent.
- 6.4.3** Where a recruitment information pack has been sent out to candidates, an acknowledgement card is included as part of the pack. Candidates who wish their application form to be acknowledged are advised to affix a stamp to the card and return it with their application form. Employee Support and Development will ensure that all cards received are sent through return post.

➤ SECTION 7 - PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

7.1 Accuracy of Information

- 7.1.1 The information given in job applications must be full and accurate. Candidates who conceal or misrepresent relevant information are liable to be disqualified or, if already appointed, dismissed. Areas of doubt should be explored at interview.

7.2 Candidates Related to Officers and/or Councillors

- 7.2.1 The Employment Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution, Part D, Section 7, Part 1 states:

'The Council will adopt a policy requiring a candidate for any appointment to state in writing whether they are the parent, grandparent, partner, child, stepchild, adopted child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece of an existing Councillor or officer of the Council graded at a minimum above SCP 28 or equivalent; or of the partner of such persons'.

'No candidate so related to a councillor or any such officer will be appointed without the consent of the Service Lead for Employee Support and Development'.

7.3 Canvassing

- 7.3.1 Canvassing occurs when a candidate tries to gain an advantage through informal attempts to further their application. The Employment Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution, Part D, Section 7, Part 1 states:

'The council will disqualify any applicant who directly or indirectly seeks the support of any councillor or any employee of the council for that appointment with the council'.

'No councillor or employee of the council will seek support for any person for any appointment with the council. This rule shall not preclude any member or employee of the council from giving a written testimonial of any candidate's ability, experience or character for consideration in conjunction with an individual application, but having given such a testimonial, that member or employee shall take no part in the shortlisting or interview process'.

- 7.3.2 An employee who is canvassed by, or on behalf of, a job candidate must report this to the Executive Director/Service Lead for Employee Support and Development who will take appropriate action.

7.4 Confidentiality

- 7.4.1 The Data Protection Act 1998 places a responsibility on organisations to process personal data "fairly and lawfully" and in accordance with data subject rights, subject to the exemptions and restrictions of the Act. The Act contains eight basic principles that must be followed when dealing with personal information. If the principles are not followed, this is a breach of the Data Protection Act and may lead to possible legal action being pursued by the Information Commissioner (ICO) for example fines, enforcement notices and custodial sentences etc.

7.4.2 The ICO is the Government's Independent Body responsible for overseeing the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The ICO has issued a Data Protection Code of Practice, which puts forward recommendations as to how organisations can meet their DP legal requirements. The code is intended to establish good practice for the handling of personal data in the workplace and covers such issues as gaining information about workers, how records are held, access to records and disclosure of them. Please refer to www.ico.gov.uk for more detailed information.

7.4.3 The eight data protection principles that are central to the Act state that personal data must be:

- Processed fairly and lawfully
- Processed for limited purposes and not in any manner incompatible with those purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate
- Not kept for longer than is necessary
- Processed in line with data subjects' rights
- Secure
- Not transferred to countries that do not protect personal data adequately

7.4.4 The Act gives individuals certain rights in respect of the processing of personal data about them that takes place during the recruitment process. The Act does not prevent an employer from carrying out an effective recruitment exercise but helps to strike a balance between the employer's needs and the applicant's right to respect for his or her private life. The Act grants employees the right to have a copy of the information that an organisation holds about them.

7.4.5 Information obtained in the course of recruitment and selection may include details of a sensitive or personal nature, which must be treated as confidential by all those involved. This will include keeping information contained in application forms secure, following retention periods for recruitment records and carefully considering which information should be transferred to the employee's personal file. Please refer to Section R of the Human Resources Manual for the Retention of Information Guidelines and Operating Procedures.

➤ SECTION 8 - SHORTLISTING CANDIDATES

8.1 Who should Shortlist?

8.1.1 The challenge for officers shortlisting is to reduce the total number of applications to a more manageable number in a way that is reliable, valid, fair and cost-effective. Shortlisting should be carried out:

- by at least two people (one of whom should have management responsibility for the vacant post and be part of the final interview panel)
- as soon as possible after the closing date but by the date specified on the Request to Fill Form
- based only on the criteria identified in the person specification
- confidentially

8.2 The Shortlisting Process

8.2.1 If possible, the number of candidates shortlisted should be sufficient to provide a reasonable choice, allowing for withdrawals (for example six for a single appointment).

8.2.2 Although officers shortlisting can examine relevant information individually, they should reach a joint decision as to which candidates are included on the shortlist. All applications received must be considered unless they have been received after the closing date. In such circumstances, it is at the discretion of the officers shortlisting as to whether to accept the application form. However, any application forms received after the shortlisting process has been completed should not be accepted.

8.2.3 Method of drawing up the shortlist:

- assess the candidates strictly against the criteria as indicated in the method of assessment column of the person specification
- disregard a candidate's disability, age, race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity status, marital status or civil partnership, religion or belief, except where this is a genuine occupational requirement (see section 3)
- exclude any candidate who clearly fails to meet all the essential criteria in the qualifications and work experience sections of the person specification. You should only shortlist using these two sections, the other criteria should be assessed at interview.
- use the desirable criteria to reduce the field of candidates further if required
- be consistent in how you apply the criteria. If you reduce or adjust the criteria, you must ensure that it is applied exactly the same to all candidates and evidence your rationale for doing so.
- record your decisions and the reasons for them on a shortlisting matrix (see Appendix D). The matrix **must** be signed and dated by **all** the shortlisting officers.
- Place a ✓ in the relevant box of the shortlisting matrix if a candidate meets a particular criterion, and a ✗ if a candidate does not meet a particular criterion. It is not acceptable to insert a ?, a decision must be made as to whether the candidates possesses the required criteria.
- Check application forms for any gaps in employment or educational histories, to be clarified at interview

8.3 Candidates with a Disability

8.3.1 As a Disability Symbol User, the council guarantees to interview all suitably qualified candidates who consider themselves to have a disability and who meet the essential criteria.

8.3.2 Once the initial shortlist has been produced using the essential criteria, officers must contact Employee Development and Support to find out if any of the candidates consider themselves to be disabled. This **must** be carried out **before** desirable criteria are introduced. A 'Positive about Disabled People' flyer will be included in the recruitment file to highlight that disabled candidates have applied for the post.

8.3.3 If the applicant does not meet all the essential criteria, check that this is not due to a reason related to their disability. If there is a direct link between their disability and their inability to meet the essential criteria, they should still be invited to attend an interview.

8.4 Informing Shortlisted Candidates

8.4.1 Interview invitation letters should contain the following information:

- The date and time of the interview
- Where the interview will be held (a map to be enclosed where appropriate)
- Who the interview will be with
- Approximately how long the interview will last
- Whether the candidates will be required to prepare for the interview (for example presentation) or undergo any form of selection testing
- To bring a driving licence or passport to prove their identity.
- Whether they have any special needs that we should prepare for. This is to identify any special arrangements that may be needed for them to attend (this could involve, for example, providing assistance to those with hearing, sight or mobility difficulties or allowing them to bring a colleague) and to give them information about such matters as physical access to the premises, parking facilities and communication assistance available
- Who they should report to on arrival
- A statement that they will be asked at interview about their suitability to work with children/vulnerable adults (if applicable).

8.4.2 A standard interview invitation letter is included as Appendix E.

➤ SECTION 9 – THE SELECTION STAGE

9.1 Selection Methods

- 9.1.1** The purpose of the selection stage is to assess shortlisted candidates against the criteria in the person specification. It normally includes an interview used with information from other sources, for example application form or references, etc. For guidance on how to conduct interviews, see section 11.
- 9.1.2** However, the interview in isolation is of limited value in predicting how a candidate will perform in the job and is unlikely to satisfactorily assess all relevant factors in the person specification. It is recommended that you use at least one other additional method of assessment, such as a psychometric test, work sample test, presentation or practical job-related exercise, to help predict how the candidate will perform if appointed to the post. In this way, there is a far greater chance of reaching an objective decision and of selecting the most suitable candidate. Any additional selection methods used must be appropriate to the post being recruited to, please contact Employee Support and Development for further advice.
- 9.1.3** The use of psychometric tests within the council is strictly regulated. The tests can be administered and interpreted only by people who are appropriately trained and qualified and are specifically authorised.
- 9.1.4** Properly validated psychometric tests can help in reaching objective and reliable selection decisions and are helpful in determining a candidate's suitability. Various types include:
- tests of critical reasoning
 - tests of specific aptitudes (for example numerical, spatial, mechanical, clerical, computer)
 - attainment tests (for example typing, spelling)
- 9.1.5** For further information on psychometric testing please refer to Section R, Recruitment and Selection: Application of Psychometric Testing.

9.2 References

- 9.2.1** Except where candidates have stated on their application form that a referee should not be contacted prior to the interview, **two** written references **must** be taken up for all shortlisted internal and external candidates, for temporary and permanent posts, before interview. This enables a follow up during the interview stage regarding any points that may arise from the information obtained.
- 9.2.2** Where the post applied for includes contact with children and young people/vulnerable adults and the applicant has ticked the box to state that they do not want their referees contacted prior to interview, Employee Support and Development will contact the applicant to ask if it would be possible to seek references at the shortlisting stage. Where an applicant states that they still would not like their referees contacted they will be informed that any subsequent offer would be conditional upon satisfactory references.
- 9.2.3** Open references will not be accepted, the details of two referees must be supplied to Employee Support and Development for them to contact.
- 9.2.4** Candidates are required to supply two employment references, one of which must be the candidate's current or most recent employer. The exception to this would be where a candidate has been employed in their current post for less than one month. Where the post

applied for involves working with children and young people/vulnerable adults and the candidate has not worked with these groups for some time, but did in a previous role then this organisation will also be contacted for a reference. Additionally, where there are any concerns about a candidate working with these groups the Council may contact any of the organisations listed on a candidate's application form to obtain a reference.

- 9.2.5** Applicants will be advised in recruitment documentation that references will include a request for information on any relevant allegations concerning the applicant's suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults.
- 9.2.6** The main purpose of a reference is to verify information given by a candidate and to confirm assessments made during the final selection stage. References are likely to be more useful and relevant if referees are sent a job description and person specification. A standard reference request is included in Appendix G and H.
- 9.2.7** If the post involves working with children or young people and vulnerable adults there are additional questions that should be asked in the reference. For these posts a standard reference request letter is included in Appendix H.
- 9.2.8** Referees should be given a pre-paid addressed envelope for their reply. References received by telephone are acceptable as long as the referee sends written confirmation.
- 9.2.9** When a written reference is received, Employee Support and Development staff will telephone the referee to ensure that the information received is genuine. This telephone check will be carried out for all posts, which require a criminal records bureau disclosure. The member of staff carrying out the check must complete the Reference Verification form shown in Appendix I. The original reference will then be retained on the employee's personal file.
- 9.2.10** A manager who is actively involved in a recruitment process will not be able to provide a reference for a candidate being assessed in that same process. In these circumstances the candidate will be asked to supply an alternative referee or a different manager should be involved in selecting the successful candidate.
- 9.2.11** Under the Data Protection Act (1998), references are not exempt from disclosure when in the possession of a new/prospective employer therefore we may be obliged to disclose the reference to the candidate. They may be called as legal evidence in any allegation of discrimination. References need to be treated with some caution by the panel as they have the potential to be indirectly discriminatory due to the possible prejudices of the referees. Any concerns should be discussed with Employee Support and Development.

9.3 Checking Criminal Records

- 9.3.1** All successful candidates for work or training with the council who will come into contact with children and other vulnerable groups will be required to apply to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for either a standard or enhanced disclosure. The procedure is as follows:
- A provisional job offer is made to the successful candidate.
 - The candidate is given a blank Disclosure Application Form to complete and a copy of the DBS Information Sheet and Booklet and advised that this should be returned within 10 days.
 - The candidate completes the form and provides the necessary evidence for verification to the recruiting manager/Head teacher. Employee Support and Development will ensure that the completed form and supporting evidence is supplied promptly and

where necessary contact the candidate where the documents have not been returned within 10 days.

- Once verified, disclosure forms must be forwarded by recruiting managers/Head teachers to Employee Support and Development, to be countersigned and sent to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Disclosure information is sent from the Disclosure and Barring Service, by post, to the candidate.
- The candidate should present the Disclosure certificate to the recruiting manager/head-teacher and a photocopy should be taken.
- Copies of disclosure certificates must be stored in locked cabinets and kept for a maximum of six months.

9.3.2 The council does not operate a portability policy therefore all employees appointed to a post which requires DBS disclosure are required to obtain this prior to taking up their post, regardless of the date upon which a previous disclosure may have been obtained.

9.3.3 Successful candidates for posts subject to enhanced checks should not start work until a satisfactory DBS disclosure has been received. However, managers and Head teachers have discretion to allow an individual to begin work pending receipt of the DBS disclosure but must ensure that the individual is appropriately supervised and that other checks have been completed, including Children's Barred List for school based staff. In these instances, an Authorisation Document form (appendix J) must be completed and signed.

9.3.4 For staff who begin work without a DBS disclosure it must be made clear that they are subject to additional supervision. The nature of the additional supervision must be specified and the roles of staff in undertaking the supervision made clear. The arrangements must be reviewed regularly, at least every two weeks, until the DBS disclosure is received. The letter in appendix K will be sent to the candidate by Employee Support and Development.

9.3.5 Where an applicant, or an existing employee in, a post which is exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 receives a DBS Disclosure containing details of a criminal record, an objective assessment must be made as to their suitability for the post. This assessment must be approved by the relevant Executive Director to ensure consistency of approach by completing the Record of Discussion Regarding DBS Disclosure form shown in appendix L. The council undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the applicant prior to withdrawing a conditional offer of employment. Please refer to Section R of the Human Resources Manual for additional information on the recruitment of ex-offenders.

9.3.6 Please refer to Section C of the Human Resources Manual for additional information on the DBS and the Disclosure Service.

➤ SECTION 10 - THE INTERVIEW

10.1 Interview Purpose

10.1.1 The interview is the most popular of the selection techniques. Its purpose is to help assess how closely the candidate meets the criteria contained in the person specification and to give the candidate information about the job. It is a two-way process - the panel needs to assess the candidate and the candidate needs to decide if they want to work for the council. The way the interview is conducted is vital as it reflects the level of professionalism of the council, and recruitment needs to be seen as a significant public relations exercise.

10.2 The Interview Panel

10.2.1 Panel interviews enable decisions to be shared. The size and composition of the interview panel will depend upon the nature of the post to be filled. However, for all posts within the Local Authority there must be at least two interviewers, one of whom must be authorised to appoint under delegated powers and one of whom should have management responsibility for the post. The other can also be a manager from the employing directorate and a representative from Employee Support and Development.

10.2.2 From 1 April 2009 at least one interviewer on the panel must have been through safeguarding training, where the role being recruited to is one which has contact with children and young people or vulnerable adults.

10.3 Preparation for the Interview

10.3.1 Interviewers should prepare for the interview by:

- familiarising themselves with the job description and person specification
- checking the information available in respect of each shortlisted candidate (application form, references, test results etc.) and identifying areas which may require further questioning. This particularly includes identifying any gaps in employment or educational histories which require clarification
- drawing up a series of standard questions to be put to **all** candidates

10.3.2 Using standard questions helps to ensure that interviewers express themselves clearly without bias. Used consistently, they allow them to compare candidates on the same basis whilst avoiding irrelevant issues. Interviewers should agree in advance the detailed structure of the interview, including their respective roles and areas of questioning. A schedule of interview questions to be completed by each member of the interview panel should be drawn up. The responses to each question/exercise should be scored as this will allow for a consistent and fair assessment of each candidate (see appendix M). Additional supplementary questions can be used as appropriate to probe into specific areas and to allow for a more detailed understanding of the candidates' experience, skills and qualities to be obtained.

10.3.3 It is best practice to prepare an information pack for each member of the interview panel. The pack should include a copy of each candidate's application form and references (if received prior to the interview) the job description, person specification and the interview questions for each candidate. This will allow the interview process to be conducted in an orderly and professional manner and the decision to be clearly recorded. Please contact Employee Support and Development for further advice if required.

10.4 Structure of Interviews

10.4.1 The following format of interviews is suggested:

- *the opening* – this will include introductions, advising candidates of the structure which the interview will follow and that note taking will occur. A few moments of small talk will help to relax the candidate and establish rapport.
- *the body* – this is the main part of the interview where the required evidence about the candidate's suitability for the post against the key criteria is obtained. Candidates should be asked a series of standard questions and any additional supplementary questions as appropriate.
- *the close* - candidates should always be given the opportunity and sufficient time to ask any questions or raise any queries they may have. They should be informed of the timescales and methods of notifying them of the outcome (for example letter, telephone call etc.) and should be thanked for attending the interview. The arrangements for feedback should also be discussed and candidates should be given an Expenses Claim Form.

10.5 Questions to Candidates

10.5.1 Candidates must not be asked questions related to their gender, ethnic origin, marital status, personal or family circumstances, sexuality, trade union activities, age, religion or belief as they have no bearing on a person's suitability for the job and could be unfairly discriminatory.

10.5.2 However, if candidates raise these matters (e.g. asking about childcare arrangements) a reply can of course, be given. Also, if a job requires special working arrangements (e.g. unsocial hours or regular overtime) candidates can be asked if they can meet these requirements, as long as all candidates are asked in the same manner, using the same wording each time.

10.5.3 Care must be taken to phrase questions clearly and unambiguously, avoiding jargon, which may not be readily understood by all candidates. Questions should encourage candidates to give information and enable them to demonstrate their suitability for the role. They should not be used as a test.

10.6 Taking Notes

10.6.1 It is important that interviewers take notes and do not rely on memory. The candidates should be aware that notes will be taken but he/she should not be able to see what is written. The process of note taking should not mean that eye contact is lost – the notes should be brief. These notes should be factual and not include opinions. Under the Data Protection Act, notes taken at an interview may be subject to scrutiny by the candidate.

➤ SECTION 11 - MAKING THE APPOINTMENT

11.1 Evaluating Candidates

11.1.1 An evaluation of each candidate should be made, taking into account information from **all** elements of the process, including:

- Application Form
- Interview
- Occupational tests/work simulations/presentations
- References

11.1.2 Selectors must carry out their evaluation strictly and should aim to reach a general agreement about each candidate. Each question/presentation/exercise should be scored to give a consistent mechanism for assessing each candidate. An example scoring key is shown in Appendix M. A written assessment of each candidate should be made and entered in the overall comments box.

11.2 Notifying Candidates

11.2.1 All shortlisted candidates should be informed of the outcome of their application, ideally via telephone, then confirmed in writing and be offered the opportunity for feedback. When giving feedback, consideration should be given to the following:

DO:

- Be realistic – direct your comments towards actions that the candidate can control
- Be specific – generalisations are not helpful
- Be clear about what you say
- Be descriptive rather than evaluative
- Be sensitive to the goals of the candidate
- Be consciously non-judgemental – describe behaviour, don't judge people
- Be aware of balancing positive and negative feedback – positive feedback on its own allows no room for improvement and negative feedback alone is discouraging
- Be prompt following the request where possible – delay reduces impact
- Tell candidates what the Council / School was looking for and why they did not meet the standard
- Focus on aspects which the candidate can do something about
- Emphasise that the decision was based firmly and fairly on the evidence presented during the selection process
- Ensure that feedback given is accurate and unbiased
- Be tactful and try to give constructive advice for example suggest areas where they need to gain more experience in relation to the selection criteria

DON'T:

- Simply say there was a better candidate on the day
- Enter into a detailed debate about the rights and wrongs of the decision

- Give elaborate explanations of the reasons for not appointing as this may lead to the candidate objecting to the reasons stated and engaging in a lengthy and pointless dialogue
- Give feedback on information that did not emerge from the selection process
- Make statements that might imply unfair discrimination
- Offer positive feedback only as a compensation for negative feedback. This creates mixed messages and reduces the credibility of what you want to say. If, however, the candidate takes the feedback very negatively, sandwiching negative feedback between positives can be helpful.

11.2.2 A standard unsuccessful letter is included as Appendix N.

11.3 Offer of Employment

11.3.1 All offers of employment must be made by an officer who is included in the 'List of Officers Approved to Exercise Delegated Powers', Part C, Section 3 of the Council's Constitution. An offer of appointment must be made conditional upon the receipt of references satisfactory to the council, medical clearance, proof of identification, eligibility to work in the United Kingdom and, if appropriate, a criminal records bureau disclosure if these are not immediately available. At this point the successful candidate's date of birth should also be checked against all documents supplied. Under no circumstances should an appointment be confirmed or taken up until these clearances are obtained. Remember, **a verbal offer is legally binding**.

11.3.2 A standard offer of appointment letter is included as Appendix O.

11.3.3 Once all clearances have been received a letter should be sent to the candidate to confirm the offer of employment and provide a start date with the council (Appendix P). The letter will be issued by the directorate team in Employee Support and Development and should include the Corporate Induction Brochure. For further information on induction please refer to Section I in the Human Resources Manual.

11.4 Starting Salary

11.4.1 New starters to the council will be placed on a spot point within the band. If a manager has been experiencing recruitment and retention difficulties a report should be submitted to the Service Lead for Employee Support and Development requesting a market forces supplement to be added to the post. In the case of internal employees applying for and obtaining a new post within the same band, where their current salary is a higher SCP, their salary would remain unchanged as long as the new role does not put them into a different band.

11.4.2 Where a new post is subject to a career grade, the starting salary must be agreed in line with the criteria identified in the career grade.

11.5 Disclosure and Barring Service

11.5.1 For posts which have responsibilities for children or vulnerable adults a Disclosure must be requested. Please refer to paragraph 9.3 for further information.

11.6 Medical Checks

11.6.1 All candidates appointed to a post must be fit to carry out the duties.

11.6.2 All successful candidates must be medically cleared **before** the offer of appointment is confirmed. Candidates must be asked to complete a medical questionnaire in confidence, which is then sent under separate cover to the Occupational Health Unit and may be followed up by an appointment for a medical examination. A pre-paid envelope addressed to the Occupational Health Unit should be sent out with all medical questionnaires.

11.6.3 Special attention should be paid to those:

- where driving or climbing is a substantial part of the job
- previously retired from employment on health grounds
- where, in the view of the selectors, the health declaration on the application form indicates a possible concern

11.6.4 Please note, **internal candidates are still required to complete a medical questionnaire.**

11.7 Qualification Checks

11.7.1 Original qualification certificates must have been sighted and a copy retained on personal files. Additionally, for relevant posts proof of registration with the GSCC or GTC must also be produced and copied. This information should be sought and checked before any offer of employment is confirmed.

11.8 Evidence of the Right to Work in the UK

11.8.1 The Home Office operates a points based immigration system, which applies to people from outside of the European Economic Area. The system has five tiers and the council has applied for a licence to offer sponsorship to migrant workers under Tier two of the scheme, that being skilled workers with a job offer to fill gaps in the UK labour market. The Executive Director Regeneration and Resources is the Authorised Officer who is responsible for ensuring that the council follows to the scheme. Please contact Employee Support and Development for further information.

11.8.2 Under the provisions of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, the council is required to verify that prospective employees have permission to work in the UK. Before employment starts you must see, retain and ensure that the worker is the rightful holder of the documents listed on List A or List B, Shown in Appendix Q. If a candidate provides a document, or documents from List B, checks should be repeated at least once every 12 months

11.8.3 On receipt of the documents they must be checked to ensure that they are valid, genuine and that the potential or existing worker is the person named in the documents. The documents must be checked to ensure that the worker is allowed to carry out the work in question.

11.8.4 The UK Border Agency has started to issue identity cards for non-EEA foreign nationals and their dependants who are granted further leave to remain in the UK. The cards will replace paper based immigration documents. Currently they are only limited to certain categories and will be gradually expanded as the scheme rolls out. Cards contain biometric details and will be sent to all successful applicants. When presented with an identity card

Employee Support and Development staff should check the card to ensure it does not look tampered with, check the card number, cardholders image, the tactile feature on the back and that all the details contained on the card match the details of the person presenting the card.

Detailed guidance for checking identify cards is available at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk. Any concerns regarding a card can be checked by calling the UK Border Agency.

11.9 Aids and Adaptations for Disabilities

11.9.1 Job Centre Plus can provide assistance with funding to meet the costs of aids or adaptations needed in the workplace to accommodate an existing or potential employee with a disability. Further information and advice can be obtained from Employee Support and Development.

➤ SECTION 12 - RECORD KEEPING

12.1.1 For each vacancy advertised, the panel must ensure that a recruitment file containing the information on the Recruitment File Front Sheet is completed. Please refer to Appendix R for further information. All completed Recruitment File Front Sheets **must** be forwarded to Employee Support and Development for the purpose of establishment updates and Equality and Diversity monitoring throughout the recruitment and selection process.

12.1.2 Following recruitment to a new post the following documents should be contained on the successful candidates personal file:

- Proof of identity, including photographic evidence
- Application form
- References, including confirmation that the follow up telephone call has been carried out to check authenticity.
- Medical clearance
- Proof of qualifications
- Record that a satisfactory DBS disclosure has been received. Including the date of the disclosure, who provided it and the unique reference number.
- Children's Barred List (if applicable)
- Notes from interview
- Job description and person specification

12.1.3 To allow for the appointment of a previously unsuccessful candidate to an identical vacancy (see section 4) or to answer a complaint of unlawful discrimination (see section 13), the recruitment file must be kept by the employing directorate for 12 months from the date of appointment.

12.1.4 The Service Lead for Employee Support and Development may request to study the record of any recruitment exercise. Regular recruitment file audits are carried out by representatives of Employee Support and Development to ensure that correct procedures are being followed.

12.1.5 Please refer to the Retention of Information Guidelines, Section R in the Human Resources Manual for more information.

➤ SECTION 13 - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

13.1 Right of Complaint

13.1.1 The council has a legal responsibility to ensure that no discrimination on the grounds of disability, age, race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity status, marital status or civil partnership, religion or belief occurs in the recruitment and selection process. Equality of opportunity must be an integral part of the process.

13.1.2 Candidates for posts have the right to complain to the council if they consider that they have been unlawfully discriminated against during the selection process. It does not affect their right of complaint to an Employment Tribunal under the Equality Act.

13.2 Procedure

13.2.1 The complaint must be made in writing to the Service Lead Employee Support and Development within three months of the action in question. On receipt of the complaint the Service Lead for Employee Support and Development will:

- if feasible and appropriate, “freeze” the appointment pending the outcome of an investigation
- complete an investigation into the complaint and report back to the complainant within two weeks
- Interview all relevant persons including the complainant, and have access to all documents used during the selection process
- Determine what action, if any, will be taken and inform the complainant accordingly
- Give consideration to invoking the Disciplinary Procedure if a complaint of discriminatory behaviour is upheld.

➤ SECTION 14 - MONITORING

14.1 Employee Support and Development will collate and analyse information from the equality and diversity monitoring forms. The Service Lead for Employee Support and Development is also responsible for monitoring the application and effectiveness of this Policy and for recommending changes as required.

➤ SECTION 15 – EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

15.1 South Tyneside Council is committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity in everything we do including service delivery and employment. Further details can be obtained by referring to the Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy Statement in the Human Resources Manual, Section E, or the Equality and Diversity Policy available from the Chief Executive’s Office (Policy).

This policy will be reviewed February 2021

Signed: *Hilton Heslop*

Chair of Governors

Signed: *Tim Shenton*

Head Teacher