

Version	1
Last Revision Date	January 2011



Recruitment & Selection Procedures

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
POLICY NAME	Recruitment & Selection Procedures
Department	Human Resources
Telephone Number	(01443) 424075
Initial Policy Launch Date	
Reviewing Officer	Dilys Jouvenat
Review Date	January 2011
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	January 2011
REVISION HISTORY	
Date	Revised By
January 2011	Dilys Jouvenat
DOCUMENT APPROVAL	
This document has received approval from:	Date of Approval
HR Senior Management Team	19 th June 2011
Corporate Management Team	9 th November 2011
Cabinet	

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1. INTRODUCTION

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council recognises that the recruitment process is a critical activity not just for the Human Resource (HR) team but also for managers who are actively involved in the selection process.

Consequently, there is a need to ensure that the Council has clear guidelines for managers to adhere to. This procedure provides managers with specific advice and guidance on how to approach a new or existing vacancy.

2. EQUALITY AND THE LAW

Equality of opportunity is an integral part of the recruitment and selection process. The Council is committed to ensuring that no unlawful discrimination occurs (either directly or indirectly) in the recruitment and selection process on the grounds of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, transgender and religion or belief.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal requirements for employers. The provisions of the Equality Act not only make it unlawful to discriminate against disabled individuals without justifiable reason but also when considering applicants with disabilities, the Council should note the positive obligation to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that a disabled person is not disadvantaged in the recruitment process because of their disability. This could be by, for example, ensuring that arrangements are made to facilitate attendance at interview. There is also a requirement that the Council makes reasonable adjustments to the workplace or working arrangements. The Council has a Reasonable Adjustment Policy, which can assist managers in this process.

However, there are rare circumstances where some types of discrimination can be justified. Under certain limited circumstances (Section 13 Equality Act) discrimination may be lawful if this is categorised as a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) and/or a genuine occupational qualification (GOQ). These exceptions are very narrow and will be strictly interpreted by any court or tribunal. There is also variation in the exceptions depending on what type of discrimination is alleged. If you believe that you have a situation, which might arise within an exception, you are encouraged to speak with a representative of HR.

2.1 The Welsh Language Act/Welsh Language (Wales) Measure

Welsh language matters are an integral part of equality issues, and the Council has a statutory duty to treat English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality and to ensure that the use of the Welsh Language is safeguarded and promoted. This duty and the Council's Welsh language Scheme form an integral part of the Council's recruitment procedures.

3. MANAGER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Existing posts

When a vacancy arises for an existing post the manager will need to take the following points into consideration:

- does this align with the Division's Workforce Plan?
- is the post still required?
- have the needs of the service changed?
- have work patterns, new technology or new products altered the job?
- are there any changes anticipated which will require different, more flexible skills from the jobholder?

Other considerations will be:

- i. does the job appear on the current establishment of the Council?
- ii. is there a budgetary provision for the job available within current financial arrangements?

Once the manager has satisfied him/herself with regards to the above, consideration will need to be given as to whether the job description and person specification will require amendment.

3.2 New Posts

The need to create a new post(s) may occur for a number of reasons including:

- i. Workforce Planning Requirements
- ii. a change in service delivery needs;
- iii. additional or new grant funding; or
- iv. the restructure of an existing service.

All new posts must undergo a desktop Job Evaluation to identify the appropriate grade before advertisement.

Before the manager enters the new post(s) on the e-recruitment system, a job description and job specification will need to be created in accordance with the competency framework. For new posts the manager must complete a Post Creation Proforma. Once completed the proforma is forwarded to the Human Resources Director for authorisation along with written agreement from Finance. Once authorised, the manager will arrange for the post to be created by the Vision team who will notify him/her in due course of the new post reference number.

3.3 Job description

A written job description is an essential part of the selection process and is used to communicate expectations about tasks and standards to ensure effective performance in the job.

This benefits the recruitment process by:

- providing information to potential applicants; and
- acting as an aid in selection; for example when designing assessment activities and making decisions between candidates.

3.4 Person Specification

A person specification states the essential and desirable criteria for selection. Essential criteria can be defined as a qualification, skill or level of experience without which an individual will not be able to undertake the duties of the post and would include the need to speak Welsh in some posts as determined by the service area, taking into account the requirements of the Welsh Language Scheme and the Council's Linguistic Skills Strategy. A successful candidate should match all essential criteria. Care should be taken in choosing essential and desirable criteria, as it needs to be measurable and impartial.

Drawing up the person specification allows the manager to profile the ideal person to fill the job. It is very important that the skills, aptitudes and knowledge included in the specification are related precisely to the needs of the job. The person specification helps the selection and subsequent interview to operate in a systematic way, as bias-free as possible.

The person specification should not include statements that could be viewed as indirectly discriminatory to a person or group of people, for example, it should not state that the candidate must have the “ability to drive” unless the job being advertised required the candidate to drive a Council vehicle.

All person specifications must be written having regard to the competency framework (see 3.5).

3.5 Competency Framework

The Competency Framework outlines a set of Competencies which describe how really ‘excellent’ employees would work in the Council; they are designed to complement and not replace other specialist technical or professional competencies or standards of practice.

Competencies are used in recruitment within the Person Specifications in order to outline the characteristics and behaviours that we believe an individual should have in order to be effective in the job.

For recruitment purposes a maximum of six critical competencies should be chosen from within the appropriate Competency Job Family.

It should be made clear that the Competency Job Family as a whole will apply to the post following recruitment.

Using competencies within recruitment can also help to find people who are aligned to the Council’s values.

The Framework plays a crucial role in the recruitment and selection process by focusing on the ‘match’ between the candidate and job. Should you have any queries on the Competency Framework please contact your respective HR officer.

3.6 Job Sharing

The Council has a comprehensive job sharing policy and encourages managers to consider the suitability of posts for job sharing when they become vacant. All vacancies are considered eligible for job share unless a Chief Officer related post can show that this would not be justified for a specific post.

4. E-RECRUITMENT

E-recruitment is an online recruitment system adopted by the Council. The system allows the use of technology to aid the recruitment process from placing an advert to a successful appointment being made.

A facility is available for prospective applicants to view and download the job description and job specification as well as completing and returning their application form on line.

E-recruitment:

- reduces recruitment costs
- speeds up the recruitment cycle and streamline administration
- allows the Council to manage vacancies more effectively and co-ordinate the recruitment process electronically
- reinforces the Councils branding and provide an indication of the culture e.g. a day in the life of
- offers access to vacancies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week reaching a global audience
- provides the Council with useful monitoring information such as the number of 'hits' on specific posts
- assists the processing of high volume job applications in a consistent way
- allows candidates to view and apply for posts at their convenience.

5. THE ADVERT

All posts must be advertised for a minimum period of two weeks.

The manager will be required to draw up an advert for the vacancy having regard to the information contained in the job description and person specification. Advertisements should be clear and indicate the:

- Job title, location and salary
- Hours to be worked
- Requirements of the job
- Qualifications/experience required
- Type of contract (for example, contract length)
- Details of how to apply and closing date
- Interview Date
- Language Requirements

- Whether appointment is subject to a CRB disclosure or the satisfactory completion of a Criminal Record Declaration Form
- Whether the appointment is subject to initial and ongoing Medical Screening

Once the manager has prepared the advert, job description and person specification they will be required to complete the online advert request form via the e-recruitment system. When completed, the system will generate an e-mail to the Head of Service/Service Director who will either approve or reject the request. If approved, the details will be forwarded to a HR officer for a quality assurance check. The HR officer will check the request for accuracy and fairness of opportunity (see flowchart shown in Appendix 1).

The request will then be forwarded to the Group Director who will either approve or reject the request. If approved, the request will automatically be forwarded back to the HR officer and then onto the advertising unit for the process to be finalised.

In addition to verifying the advert request form HR will check whether the vacancy is suitable for consideration as alternative employment for employees seeking redeployment.

All adverts will display the Positive About Disabled People '2 ticks' symbol to encourage disabled people to apply for vacancies. Adverts will also include reference to the Council's commitment to equal opportunities, and it's No Smoking Policy.

All adverts will automatically be placed on the Council's website. However, in unique circumstances, the Council may take the decision to recruit internally only. During such occasions, adverts will still be placed by the manager on the e-recruitment system, but the advert will appear on "Inform" only. Line managers must also ensure that copies of the 'Vacancy Bulletin' are displayed and circulated to colleagues who do not have intranet access.

All externally advertised jobs should be advertised in English and Welsh, but may be in English only in specialist English-medium publications with a general UK wide circulation. In a similar manner, adverts for posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential may be advertised through the medium of Welsh only, with a footnote in English explaining the purpose of the advert.

The redeployment of existing employees where there is a need to safeguard future employment as outlined in the Redeployment Policy will take precedence in all cases.

Three types of Application Forms (short, non disclosure and disclosure) will be available for prospective applicants and will be used as the basis for initial selection for interview. CVs are not acceptable.

6. SHORTLISTING

All involved in selection and interviewing procedures should be aware of the importance of a non-discriminatory approach to these processes and the need to simply choose the best candidate for the post, based on merit, ability and experience. No person who has a close personal relationship with a candidate for a specific job may be involved in the short listing or interview process for that job.

The e-recruitment system will automatically anonymise all application forms prior to being forwarded electronically to members of the short-listing panel. This ensures that only essential information is used for short listing, reducing the risk of discrimination occurring. In the event that an applicant has not applied electronically, arrangements will be made for the application form to be scanned into the system by a member of the recruitment/advertising team.

The shortlist exercise will be based on the competency framework. When placing the advert on the e-recruitment system, the manager is required to identify a maximum of eight essential competencies. When completing their application form the candidate will be specifically requested to identify how their qualification(s) and experiences meet the competencies identified.

An interview must be offered to all disabled applicants, who have indicated they wish to participate in the 'Positive about Disabled People Scheme', who meet the essential requirements and competencies identified. If requested by the candidate, reasonable adjustments must be made for the disabled candidate invited to attend for interview.

Once the shortlisting exercise has been completed and verified, arrangements will be made for candidates to be advised of:-

- the date, time and location of the interview;
- the format of the interview and details of the names of the interview panel;
- details of any other selection methods which will be used in addition to interview;
- the responsible officer who should be contacted for any further information on recruitment arrangements

All candidates invited for interview will be asked to indicate if they require any specific facilities or assistance. Notification of interview may be done electronically or by letter as appropriate to their application.

7. INTERVIEW AND SELECTION TECHNIQUES

Face to face interviews will be the primary means of recruitment to all vacant jobs. A range of other selection methods and processes will also be considered in relation to each vacant job. The Council will only use tests that relate to job requirements and measure an individual's actual or potential ability to perform or to train for a particular job or career. Any additional selection methods identified must be carried out by a person qualified and competent to do so. The Equality & Diversity Team should be notified of any new selection tests to eliminate any bias or potential discriminatory issues. The final selection process to be followed will be determined by the line manager responsible for the job, in conjunction with HR.

All interviews must be conducted with an interview panel with a minimum of two interviewers. There must also be a gender balance of officers/members on the interview panel. [Where the post in question requires the need to speak Welsh, interviews, or parts/elements of interviews, may take place through the medium of Welsh.](#)

The interview has two main purposes – to find out if the candidate is suitable for the job, and to give the candidate information about the job and the Council. Every candidate should be offered the same opportunities to give the best presentation of them, to demonstrate their suitability and to ask questions of the interviewers.

The Council has adopted a structured scoring system based on the applicants' competencies, which helps avoid the pitfalls of stereotyping and making snap judgements.

All questions used in the interview process should be competency based in line with the requirements of the post and the Council's Competency Framework (see 3.5).

To ensure that there is no discrimination, the Council expects all interview panel members to observe the following selection practices:

- Not to ask questions at interview about a candidate's personal life including for example marital status, children, family arrangements, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. Interview questions must only be related to ability to carry out the duties of the post. Residential status will not be queried at interview but any appointee will be expected to provide proof of the right to work in this country in accordance with current legislation.
- Not to use fluency in English/Welsh or any other language as a selection criterion unless it is a legitimate and justifiable job requirement or is essential for post entry training
- To make selection decisions only on the basis of the requirements of the job set out in the job description and the person specification.
- Not to ask candidates irrelevant questions which could be seen as directly or indirectly discriminatory e.g. asking a candidate from a minority ethnic background questions to test their understanding of the customs of the United Kingdom.

Detailed documentation and records will be kept relating to all aspects of the recruitment process, including information on the assessment of individual candidates, and information required to review and monitor implementation of the Council's policy on recruitment and selection and equal opportunities. The sensitivity of information gathered on individual candidates will be respected at all times and treated as strictly confidential. However, there are occasions when the Council may be required to provide such information e.g. to an Employment Tribunal.

No person who has a close personal relationship of any nature with a candidate for a specific job may sit on the interview panel for that job. Where an officer or elected Member is unsure as to the appropriate course of action in relation to their prior knowledge of a candidate, they should consult their line manager and HR. Officers and elected Members must be aware that if they fail to declare an actual or potential interest and this is found to be contrary to the above, the appointment could be jeopardised.

Canvassing of any officers or elected Members involved in the selection process by candidates, or attempts to influence on a candidate's behalf may result in disqualification of that candidate or the withdrawal of a job offer.

All members of the interview panel will be required to have undertaken the Council's recruitment training programme.

Service User and Parent/Carer participation - As a point of best practice, some Service areas will want to include service users and/or parents/carers in the selection process for employees. There will be guidance in place to assist managers to facilitate the inclusion of service users/parents/carers in the recruitment process in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy. Although Service users/parents/carers may take part in the process the decision making responsibility remains with the chairperson of the panel. All those asked to participate should be trained in what is expected and the purpose and value of their role.

8. OFFER AND APPOINTMENT

When agreement has been reached on the successful candidate, arrangements should be made for the manager to contact him/her with a view of making a conditional offer of appointment. This should be undertaken as soon as practicable after the interview process has been completed, and the decision to appoint has been made. Once an acceptance of the job offer has been secured verbally, the unsuccessful candidates will be notified of the outcome.

Should there be a delay between interviews being undertaken and a decision to appoint, a letter will be issued stating the reasons for the delay in making a decision.

Notification will be sent to unsuccessful candidates as a matter of good practice by the relevant HR officer. Feedback on their application and/or interview will also be made available on request from the manager involved. There is no legal obligation on the Council to 'volunteer' to tell applicants why they have been unsuccessful; however, this practice will demonstrate the objectivity and openness used in the selection process.

All appointments will be subject to the satisfactory completion of relevant pre-employment conditions e.g. medical assessment if relevant to the post and identified at recruitment stage, receipt of at least two references satisfactory to the Council, a disclosure application via the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), (where the individual will be working unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults) etc. No appointment will be confirmed, nor start date set, until satisfactory replies have been received for all pre-employment conditions

9. PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

9.1 References

References will be sought once a conditional offer of appointment has been made. A copy of the relevant job description and person specification for the job should be included with the reference request, which will be in a standard format.

The purpose of a reference is to check factual information such as employment history. The reference request form should not ask an employer/manager to supply a subjective opinion as to an applicant's likely future performance. Such data is unreliable and can be misleading.

Reference requests should not ask for details of previous sickness absence.

One reference must be from a candidate's current/most recent employer.

9.2 Criminal Records Bureau

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) is an Executive Agency of the Home Office. It was established under Part V of the Police Act 1997 and was launched in March 2002. This service enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that which involves children or vulnerable adults.

An individual who is required to work with children (those under age 18) or vulnerable adults (i.e. the elderly, people with disabilities, people in residential accommodation or in custody and those receiving domiciliary care) will be required to undertake an enhanced disclosure as part of their conditional offer of appointment. These positions will also be subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 which requires applicants to disclose information about spent, as well as unspent convictions.

For further information on the CRB and dealing with disclosure applications please see the following policy documents which may be viewed on the intranet or obtained from Human Resources:

- Criminal Records Bureau – Procedural Document
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
- Policy statement on secure storage, handling, use, retention, disposal of disclosures and disclosure information

9.3 POVA/POCA /List 99

These checks are undertaken when employees are required to work with children or vulnerable adults and are undertaken as part of an enhanced disclosure application. Employees should not be permitted to commence duties in an unsupervised capacity prior to these checks being undertaken.

9.4 Independent Safeguarding Authority

It should be noted that the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 contains the legislation to create the new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and enact a new Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS).

The main aim of the ISA is to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. It will do this by replacing the 3 previous barred lists of POVA, POCA and List 99 with one of two ISA Barred Lists – the “Children’s List” and the “Vulnerable Adult’s List”.

It will be the responsibility of the ISA to make decisions about who should be on these two lists and when introduced, it will change existing vetting systems. Until then, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department of Health (DH) are taking steps to improve existing safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be updated to take in to account any changes required as a result of the future implementation of this legislation.

9.5 Medical Assessment

Some posts (such as night workers or those working with vibratory machinery) may require a medical assessment at recruitment stage, followed by annual assessments; this requirement will be clearly stated at advert stage.

9.6 Confirmation of the right to work in the UK

It is a criminal offence to employ a person who has no right to work in the UK. The UK Border Agency introduced a civil penalty system for employers on 29 February 2008. Employers found to be using illegal migrant workers may be issued with a notification of liability (NOL) and a civil penalty of up to £10,000 for each illegal worker.

In the interests of equality, all persons offered employment with the Council are asked to produce documentation that verifies their eligibility to work in the United Kingdom. For further information on this issue please contact HR.

9.7 Sight of qualifications

A conditional offer of appointment will be subject to sight of original qualification certificates. Certified copies will be maintained on the individual's personal file for future reference.

9.8 Registration with professional bodies

Certain positions will require the successful applicant to be a member of a professional body. This requirement should be clearly identified in the job specification. The conditional offer of appointment will request sight of original certification of membership a copy of which will be maintained on the individual's personal file for future reference.

9.9 Children and Vulnerable Adults Posts

All posts that involve working with children and/or vulnerable adults require additional pre employment screening to those already identified above in order to comply with legal requirements and care standards. These include:

- Confirmation of reasons for leaving previous care posts
- Satisfactory explanation of any employment/educational gaps

9.10 Baseline Personnel Security Standard and GCSx

GCSx stands for Government Connect Secure Extranet. It is a secure private Wide-Area Network (WAN), which enables secure interactions between connected Local Authorities and organisations.

GCSx is connected to the Government Secure Intranet (GSI), which enables secure interactions between Local Authorities and Central Government Department/National bodies. Employees employed by the Council who will be required to have access to the system will need background checks, employees which are accessing GCSx must be cleared to “Baseline Personnel Security Standard” which specifies the following:

- Min of 2 satisfactory references
- Completeness and accuracy check of application form
- Confirmation of qualifications
- Identity check against a passport or equivalent document which contains a photograph
- Verification of full employment history for the past 3 years
- Verification of nationality and immigration status
- Verification of criminal record (unspent convictions)

The Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) has been developed by the Cabinet Office and is one of five levels of personnel security controls. BPSS should be applied to *‘employees who require access to, or knowledge or custody of, government assets protectively marked up to and including CONFIDENTIAL level’*.

Further guidance on this issue may be obtained from the Council's Baseline Personnel Security Standard Procedure or your respective HR officer appropriate to the classification of the information to be accessed.

10. INDUCTION

The line manager has a responsibility to ensure that on commencement of employment the employee is inducted into the service area. The line manager will follow the ‘corporate’ induction checklist which includes explanation of terms and conditions of employment; health and safety and procedural issues but will also ensure that the induction covers, in detail, the specific role, area of service and individuals physical location e.g. tour of the workplace.

Newly appointed employees to the Council will also be required to attend the Corporate Induction Programme.

11. PROBATION

All newly appointed employees to the Council shall be subject to a period of probation of not less than 3 months or more than 6 months. Further advice and information is included in the Probation Policy available from HR. At the end of the probationary period and, subject to satisfactory performance, the employee will have their employment confirmed.

Related policies

All of the following policies may be viewed on the intranet or obtained from your respective HR officer.

- Equal Opportunities Statement and Policy
- Welsh Language Scheme
- Records Bureau – Procedural Document
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
- Policy statement on secure storage, handling, use, retention, disposal of disclosures and disclosure information
- Probation Policy
- Competency Framework
- Recruitment & Selection Policy Statement

Sources of reference

ACAS

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)

Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

UK Border Agency

HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS)

E.Recruitment Flowchart

