**Human Resources and Organisational Development**

Recruitment and selection policy and procedure

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**Recruitment and selection policy**

## Introduction

1.1 The Council recognises that its staff are fundamental to its success in serving the community. As such it looks to attract and retain staff of the highest calibre by being an employer of choice and delivering excellence in all aspects of its recruitment and selection process. Our Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure are therefore designed to ensure the highest standards of transparency, fairness and equality of opportunity.

1.2 The council welcomes and promotes diversity amongst staff and applicants and is committed to ensuring that all activities associated with the recruitment, selection and appointment of staff are governed by the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. No applicants will be treated any less favourably than others because of factors such as sex, race, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, disability, gender, gender reassignment, gender identity and gender expression, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

## Purpose and principles

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a robust framework for the recruitment and selection of staff, based upon the following principles:

1. to ensure the application of the policy is aligned with the council’s [TOWER values](https://www.thebridge.towerhamlets.gov.uk/me-at-work/general/living-the-tower-values) [k)](https://www.thebridge.towerhamlets.gov.uk/home/me-at-work/general/living-the-tower-values) and upholds the reputation of the Council;
2. to ensure there is a consistent, transparent, and fair approach across the Council;
3. to seek to recruit and appoint the best candidate for a job based on merit;
4. to encourage the recruitment of individuals with disabilities and make reasonable adjustments to all stages of the recruitment process (the Council is a “[Disability Confident](https://disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk/)” employer and supports the scheme and ethos that makes the most of the talents disabled people can bring to the workplace);
5. to treat all candidates equitably and with respect and courtesy, aiming to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of the outcome;
6. to ensure that recruitment and selection processes are cost effective;
7. to ensure that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner, and in compliance with current employment legislation;
8. to provide appropriate training, development and support to those involved in recruitment and selection activities;
9. to ensure adherence to the [Safer Recruitment](https://static.lgfl.net/LgflNet/downloads/online-safety/LGfL-OS-Research-Archive-2006-DfES-Safeguarding-Children.pdf) principles: this is a set of practices to help make sure that candidates and staff are suitable to work with children and young people. It is a vital part of ensuring the Council creates a safe and positive environment that is committed to keeping children safe from harm;
10. to meet the requirements of the [council’s equality policy](https://www.thebridge.towerhamlets.gov.uk/policy-and-procedures/equalities/equality-policy), [the Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) and all other relevant employment legislation, in particular, this also includes adherence to:
    1. [General Data Protection Regulation](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation) (GDPR): all documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with GDPR.  Applicants will have the right to access any documentation held on them. In particular, data collected as part of the recruitment process is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing the recruitment exercise effectively to decide to whom to offer the job;
    2. [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/53): https://www.thebridge.towerhamlets.gov.uk/asset-library/HR/Recruitment/policy-on-the-recruitment-of-ex-offenders.docxthis makes it unlawful for employers or prospective employers to take into consideration offences which are classified as spent. An offence is spent when the person is deemed to be rehabilitated under the Act, such that once the rehabilitation period has expired the offence is spent.

## Scope

3.1 This policy applies to the process of recruiting staff to vacant posts within the Council. It does not apply to staff in schools under local management, procuring workers through our approved agency supplier, or for posts ringfenced during a restructure for staff whose posts are under the threat of redundancy (see the Organisation Change Guide and Redeployment Guide for further details of the process to follow), or a redeployment for justifiable medical reasons (see the Attendance Management Policy for further details).

3.2 The following types of recruitment fall within scope of this policy:

* external recruitment;
* internal recruitment (excluding ringfenced posts – see the Organisation Change Guide);
* recruitment to fixed term and temporary posts;
* senior leadership recruitment with a view to following the same principles
* apprenticeships.

## Responsibilities

4.1 The Recruiting Managers’ responsibilities are as follows:

* in the first instance, to fairly consider redeployees before looking at other candidates (NB at any point in the process up to an offer being made managers may have to consider redeployees);
* for a new post: to draft the job description and person specification, ensuring this is job evaluated, where relevant;
* for existing posts: to review the content of an existing job description and person specification to ensure they are relevant. Any changes must be discussed with the HRBP. Changes may need to undergo a formal job evaluation process to check if this affects the grade and any other staff with the same job description; also, consideration needs to be given to other posts impacted by a change. Changes which affect others may require consultation with the staff affected;
* to uphold the reputation of the Council during the process;
* to promote the Council as an employer of choice;
* to adhere to equalities legislation;
* to be objective, consistent, and considered in decision-making;
* to draft the advert and consider where this should be placed and liaise with Recruitment and Resourcing on these matters;
* to raise Purchase Orders and invoices;
* the chair of the panel must ensure the panel composition is reflective of LBTH’s workforce in terms of diversity;
* Responsible for the shortlisting and arranging interviews via the applicant tracking system
* to make sure adjustments are put into place for applicants with a disability;
* to ensure records are comprehensive and compliant in evidencing selection scores and decisions, are kept secure and confidential; that all completed documentation is uploaded on to Applicant Tracking System for retention;
* for the Chair of the panel to make a verbal offer to the preferred candidate having liaised with the Recruitment and Resourcing team regarding the offer and to inform those who were unsuccessful;
* to be available to provide feedback to candidates on request.
* Responsible for approving/rejecting references received via the applicant tracking system

4.2 The Recruitment and Resourcing team’s responsibilities are as follows:

* advise on recruitment and selection processes;
* identify any suitable redeployees for the post prior to any job offers;
* process the advert (service managers are responsible for raising Purchase Orders and invoices);
* retain records in line with the retention schedule, i.e., shortlisting grid, interview notes, and scores;
* obtain clearances (e.g., DBS, medical, , confirmation of eligibility to work in the UK, evidence of qualifications, declarations of interest. Only original documentation is an acceptable form of verification);
* release requested documents to applicants;
* issue conditional offerd confirmation of appointment including terms and conditions.

4.3 HR Business Partners responsibilities are as follows:

* to provide advice on workforce planning, including review agency and fixed term posts in service areas with managers, and advise on the best approach to fill the vacant role;
* to assess and agree all and any changes to a post’s job description and person specification. Changes may need to be considered for a job re-evaluation;
* to advise managers and seek authorisation from the relevant Director for any requests to convert an agency worker or fixed term worker to a permanent post, for hard to fill posts only;
* for Member appointments to Director or Corporate Director posts, the HR Business Partner will manage the recruitment process with support from Recruitment and Resourcing.

4.6 Corporate Director’s responsibilities are as follows:

* to authorise extensions to fixed term contracts of more than 12 months;
* to agree any deletions of posts and changes to jobs which may impact the establishment and require consultation or impact on other posts.

## 5 Review and reporting

* 1. In order to continuously improve the recruitment experience, the Council will capture a range of data and report annually on this to the appropriate boards.

**Recruitment and selection procedure**

## Preparation stage

6.1 The recruitment and selection process should not commence until a full evaluation of the need for the post has been completed. For existing posts, as soon as the current post holder has resigned, or a vacant post needs recruiting to, consideration must be given to assess the need to recruit. Consideration should be given to the following:

Is it necessary for the post to be filled? If the post is not to be recruited to changes of this nature to be agreed and potentially involve a change process. Managers should consult their HRBP about any changes. See Organisation Change Guide. Any change of structure/Establishment numbers may, for example, add pressure or involve changes to the job descriptions of existing staff.

* Is the same job required as originally envisaged? Any changes require seeking agreement through the HRBP.
* Is the role suitable for a job share?
* Is there an unacceptably high turnover or exit interview information that signifies the job content needs reviewing?
* Can the job be enriched in any way to increase job satisfaction?
* Consider the contract type (Permanent/ Fixed Term / Secondment).

6.2 All new or changed posts must be formally job evaluated were relevant before they are advertised to ensure equal pay for work of equal value. Where it is proposed to create a new post, or where it is considered that the existing grade is no longer appropriate, or there are changes needed to a post’s duties, the Recruiting Manager should liaise with the HRBP when producing/drafting a new job description and person specification. Consideration should also be given to the i*mplication of a change on others with same Job Description and other posts even if the Job Description is different but there is an impact.* If necessary, the HRBP will arrange for an assessment of the grade via a Job Evaluation Scheme. See section 7 below for further information on a job description and person specification.

6.3 Formal authorisation must be given to recruit to a post. This is managed through the applicant tracking system. When a manager wants to recruit to a post, they need to upload information for the post they wish to recruit to. This information and request will go through a series of approval processes. Requests may be rejected at any stage of this process.

6.4 In preparing for the selection process Recruiting Managers should consider the use of job-related tests which can further assess and evidence candidates’ suitability for a post. Interviewing is not the only source of candidate assessment. Examples of tests are as follows:

* job-specific tasks (for example the use of spreadsheets or in-tray exercises);
* presentations (to assess, for example, subject knowledge and communication skills);
* psychometric tests (which can test, for example, verbal or numerical reasoning);
* role plays (for example, for front-line customer service posts or line management responsibilities).

At this planning stage Recruitment and Resourcing should be consulted, who will source an appropriate test, ensure it is not inadvertently discriminatory, is linked to the person specification, and can assist in developing a robust scoring mechanism. The Recruitment Panel also needs to be clear from the outset the weighting they will give to tests in the overall scoring mechanism. The Person Specification should signify what aspects of the criteria will be tested. See the Recruitment and Selection Manager Guide for more information.

## 7 Job description and person specification

7.1 The job description describes the grade, main purpose and key duties of a post. It enables anyone considering the post to have a clear view of what key tasks they will undertake.

7.2 The person specification will describe the type of qualifications, training, knowledge, experience, skills, behaviours, aptitudes and competencies required for effective performance of the job. Behaviours must link to TOWER values and behaviours. The criteria must be directly related to the job and care should be taken to ensure that criteria do not indirectly discriminate against certain groups of applicants.  In rare cases an employer may be able to prove an applicant needs a certain protected characteristic (such as a person’s sex, race or religion) to do a particular job. This in known as a genuine occupational requirement. For this to be justifiable the protected characteristic has to be essential for, and relate to the main tasks of the job, and that there is a good business reason for applying this (an objective justification). An example from ACAS is a refuge for women who have experienced domestic abuse advertising for a female support worker because the resident would feel safer if the worker was female.

7.3 A job description and person specification template is available on the Council’s Intranet site and further information on producing these is available in the Recruitment Manager’s Guide.

## 8 Advertising

8.1 All permanent vacancies will normally be advertised internally and externally to help maximise equality of opportunity, and provide internal staff with opportunities for career development, thus maintaining the skills and expertise of the existing staff. Exceptions to this apply to hard to fill posts where we know we have the skills, knowledge and experience to fill the post internally, or for short-term posts of 6 months or less, which can be resourced internally through secondments, acting up arrangements (where possible), or through interim agency workers. Secondments and acting up vacancies can be advertised internally only within the Council. Secondments and acting up opportunities are not available to agency workers. Staff being considered for redeployment will be given access to vacancies before they are advertised. The Recruitment and Resourcing team will carry out the matching process and if there are no suitable redeployment candidates for a post. Managers need to be aware that their recruitment process can be halted at any point in order to consider redeployees, as long as a conditional offer has not been made.

8.2 The following recruitment channels are available:

* the Council’s intranet job vacancies page;
* specialist / professional publications and websites;
* social media job sites, for example, LinkedIn or Job Boards;
* LBTH approved recruitment agencies - managers must go via the Recruitment and Resourcing team to recruit through an agency and are not permitted to act independently in selecting and utilising a recruitment agency.

8.3 If a Recruiting Manager believes that there may be potential difficulties in recruiting to a post because of a skills shortage and market rates being higher than the internal salary range, they should read theGuide to Market Forces Supplements for the process to follow, which involves producing a business case and seeking agreement to any such exceptional payment, which must be justifiable. Consideration must also be given to the impact on existing staff on the same job description.

8.4 An advert is a key source of information that should be written in a way that is accurate, generates interest, sells the Council, and attracts the best pool of candidates. Recruiting Managers are expected to write sections of the advert pertaining to the post and their service and then should be uploaded to the applicant tracking system, where the Recruitment & Resourcing team, who will check the content and place the advert. An effective advert will:

* clearly communicate the requirements of the post and post holder;
* be aimed at the widest pool of applicants;
* showcase the Council and service;
* ensure its language and content complies with equality legislation and good practice;
* state whether a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required;
* contain a timeline – closing and shortlisting and interview dates, both of which are helpful to candidates.

8.5 Recruiting and Resourcing can assist Recruiting Managers in producing an advert.

## 9 Recruitment panel

9.1 The recruiting manager who will chair a selection panel should consider who will be on the interview panel and as early as possible in the process ensure the panel diarise these commitments. The Chair should also consider the panel composition being reflective of LBTH’s workforce in terms of diversity. the panel must comply with the following requirements:

* ***all panel members and those involved in the recruitment process must have completed the short ‘Managing Recruitment and Selection’ e-learning module on the Learning Hub before being part of an interview panel.***
* additional Recruitment and Selection Webinar training is highly recommended for recruiting managers and those new to the recruitment and selection process. This session, available on the learning hub, provides more information on equality and diversity during recruitment, unconscious bias, and interview questions.
* the Recruitment and Selection Manager’s Guide provides greater detail on how to fairly recruit and the Recruitment and Resourcing team can also advise;
* the panel must consist of a minimum of 3 members: the recruiting manager of vacant post, a manager familiar with the service area, and another panel member (which may by exception be an external panel member) which ought to also reflect the diversity of the Council where at all possible;
* be the same individuals that undertake the shortlisting process;
* all panel members have an equal contribution in terms of scoring and decision making (in the shortlisting and the interview/testing stage). The Chair’s role is not to override another’s decision, but rather take the lead on ensuring the process is adhered to. The Chair needs to agree in advance and remind the panel of the weighting of the scoring for any part of the selection process (for example, what will the weighting of a job-related test have in relation to the interview questions? Or which interview questions, if any, will be weighted higher for justifiable job-related reasons).

9.2 All staff involved in the recruitment process are required to disclose whether they have a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant as soon as they are aware of the individual’s application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process. An applicant’s identity may become known to panel members at the interview stage, and panel members should declare such an interest as soon as any conflict of interest becomes apparent and remove themselves from the process.

9.3 Recruiting Managers need to be aware of unconscious bias and how this can influence decisions in recruitment. Unconscious bias is when we make judgments or decisions on the basis of our prior experience, our own personal deep-seated thought patterns, assumptions or interpretations, and we are not aware that we are doing it. This is covered in the recruitment and selection webinar available on the Learning Hub.

## 10 Shortlisting

10.1 Once an advert has closed, the panel will be able to access application forms via the applicant tracking system submitted by the candidates subject to redeployee being identified. As a matter of good practice, and to avoid any unconscious bias and discrimination of candidates applying for roles, ***the Council is currently trialling anonymising applications in the Applicant Tracking System***. If successful, this will be rolled out across the Council. This ensures all sensitive and identifiable information of the individuals applying for vacancies is anonymised. The system will allocate numbers to the candidates and mask any information that could lead to their personal data being made available. The applications will remain anonymised until such point that shortlisting has been completed and the interviews confirmed, after this stage, the applicants’ details will become visible to allow the panel members to review the information and seek any points of clarification during the interview process itself and to consider if anyone is known to the panel members.

10.2 The selection process aims to identify the most suitable person for a post who best meets the criteria outlined in the person specification. All candidates (internal and external) should be assessed objectively and consistently against the selection criteria set out in the [Person Specification](https://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/recruitment/preparation/job-description/). Please be aware that a different threshold applies for redeployees (see the Redeployment Guide). The Person specification will outline how each of the criteria are to be assessed (application form, interview, testing) and the panel should adhere to this.

10.3 Notes and scores for each candidate should be recorded by each member of the panel on the [shortlisting form](https://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/recruitment/shortlisting/finalising-your-shortlist/). The Chair will need to liaise with other panel members and reach an agreed shortlist. Once the shortlisting information is gathered on the template excel spreadsheet the Chair must upload a PDF version of the shortlisting grid on to the system.

10.4 As a Disability Confident Employer all candidates with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a post as set out in the [person specification](https://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/recruitment/preparation/job-description/) must be shortlisted for the next stage of the recruitment and selection process.

## 11 Interviews and selection

11.1 Selection is a two-way process: candidates are assessing the role, their potential colleagues and the Council, as much as the panel is assessing the candidates’ suitability. As such, those involved in recruitment should consider how best to convey a positive image.

11.2 Candidates must not be discriminated against if they have a disability and reasonable adjustments may need to be put in place, for example, additional time to complete a test, providing the questions in writing, or allowing breaks during the process where justified. The candidate will be asked to indicate where an adjustment is requested.

11.3 Ahead of the interview or tests, it is the responsibility of the Recruiting Manager to seek agreement on the questions, the running order of the process and weighting of the scoring, if any. Interview questions and the structure of the interview should be consistently applied to all candidates and should be based on the person specification. The Manager’s Guide provides information on handling the interview process and interview questioning. Additionally, the panel must ensure that interviews that are booked in their Outlook calendars must not disclose the name of the interview candidate and mark as private.

11.4 Notes recording the evidence gathered in the interview should be taken by the interviewers so that they can refer back to these when assessing candidates against the person specification and making decisions, and in the event of having to provide feedback or information to an employment tribunal claim. Notes of the interview and any other assessment process should be uploaded on to the system, which will be retained in line with the agreed retention schedule.

11.5 In the event of a candidate requesting feedback about their performance, this should be provided by the Chair of the panel, although he or she may delegate this to another member of the panel where appropriate. Unsuccessful interview candidates should be dealt with courteously and sensitively.

11.6 **Virtual /on-line Interviews**: Normally interviews will be held face-to-face because this allows the parties to meet one another; for the candidate to see the workplace; and avoids the likelihood of technical faults getting in the way of conducting the interview adequately. There may be occasions when a virtual interview is necessary or preferable, for example, a strong candidate may be abroad and unable to return to the country within the timeframe needed to make a recruitment decision. In such circumstances it is recommended that the following practice be adhered to:

* the Chair has to organise the interview and check that the candidate has access to the technology to conduct the interview (normally MS Teams);
* all parties must have their cameras turned on and be muted when not speaking;
* panel members are expected to present a professional image, even if interviewing from home, for example, dressing professionally as one would for a face-to-face interview; ensuring the background screen is neutral or displays the LBTH logo; ensuring there are no interruptions;
* all the other normal interview processes which you would follow face to face are still to be observed, as outlined above and in the Managers Guide.

## 12 Making the appointment

12.1 It is recognised that in many cases it is desirable to make a verbal conditional offer of employment very shortly after the selection process to procure the candidate of choice. In such cases the verbal offer will normally be made by the Chair of the selection panel, although he or she has the discretion to delegate this responsibility if appropriate.

12.2 All offers will be made at the entry point of the grade (unless there is justifiable reason to offer higher, for example, for Social Workers the salary will be commensurate with their experience)**.** If this is rejected and the Recruiting Manager considers a higher scale point should be offered, given the skills and experience on offer and having had regard to existing staff in the team on the same job description and their level of pay, this can be requested by completing the ‘Starting Salary Form’ and submitting this to their HR Business Partner for comment. The final decision will rest with HR. Further information may be required before an offer is agreed, for example, where the candidate is currently paid a higher salary in their existing job elsewhere, salary information, with the candidates agreement, will be requested from their employer to evidence this. Recruiting Managers should also consider which other candidates interviewed could be offered the post if there is not agreement to pay the higher salary sought.

12.3 Once a selection decision has been made the decision is recorded by the Recruiting Manager in the applicant tracking system and a conditional offer letter is created and sent by the Recruitment and Resourcing team. Offers of employment are subject to the following checks, which are undertaken by the Recruitment and Resourcing team:

* the right to work in the United Kingdom;
* a medical screening questionnaire;
* two satisfactory references, one of which must be from the current or latest employer for external candidates for the majority of roles;
* one satisfactory reference for internal candidates, including secondments where the post on offer is with a different line manager;
* four years of employment references for Social Worker posts (justifiable gaps in employment can be accepted, for example for those who have had a child, or other family caring responsibilities, or taken a career break to travel. In such a case extend the period of employment to be checked to cover 4 years overall. The purpose of these check is to ensure a rigorous check of employment performance over a longer period for such a key post).
* a DBS check, where applicable to a post (with a DBS risk assessment where a conviction is confirmed – see the DBS guidance);
* verification of appropriate qualifications, where relevant;
* a licence to practice registration, where relevant
* Professional qualifications (eg accountant).

References are received directly via the applicant tracking system and are visible to the Recruiting Manager for their consideration immediately.

Once all the pre-employment checks have been completed, the Recruitment and Resourcing team will notify the Recruiting Manager who is responsible for contacting the candidate to agree a start date at which point a formal appointment letter with terms of employment will be issued to the candidate.

12.4 Recruiting Managers who have reserve candidates from a previous recruitment exercise for an identical role in the last 6 months may go straight to the conditional job offer stage for these candidates provided no changes to the job have been made and there are no suitable redeployees. The Recruitment and Resourcing team must be contacted and agreement sought before any such offer is made.

## 13 Onboarding and probation

13.1 This is the process of welcoming and integrating a new member of staff into the Council and its values, as well as providing the individual with the tools and information needed to fulfil their role and become a valued member of the team. The line manager is responsible for ensuring IT enrolment is carried out in advance of the new starter joining the Council and that any equipment is ready and make any reasonable adjustments. Advice can be obtained from Occupational Health where adjustments have been identified Other services can also assist with adjustments, such employees seeking support from Access to Services.

13.2 When a new member of staff commences employment the line manager will need to ensure the induction process is followed, which includes ensuring that local arrangements are put in place so that the individual is met on the first day; introduced to the team members, and other key stakeholders, provided with any relevant information about the service and signposted to the Council’s policies and procedures. New staff are required to sign up for the [Council’s Corporate Induction](https://learninghub.towerhamlets.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=274) event. During the probation period, the line manager will also be expected to manage the new member of staff in accordance with the Council’s Probation Policy and Procedure (available on the Council’s intranet). This must include ensuring that the compulsory corporate training programme is completed.