Oxford City Council

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. **POLICY STATEMENT**

   Oxford City Council recognises and values the diversity of its workforce and communities and wants to ensure that all the attributes, talents and skills available throughout the community are recognised when employment opportunities arise. The law and Council's constitution requires that all officers (except political assistants) must be appointed on merit.

   The Council takes every possible step to ensure its employees, and potential employees, are all treated fairly and given equal opportunity and support appropriate to their needs. All employment decisions including those on recruitment, selection, promotion, training and career development, are based solely on objective criteria.

   The Council opposes all forms of discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, religious or political belief, sexuality, age, nationality, pregnancy, membership or non-membership of a trade union, gender reassignment or HIV status. This policy should be read in conjunction with Corporate Equalities Scheme and Fair Employment Statement.

   If this policy is successful, the workforce will be a reflection of Oxford’s population and all employees will have equal opportunities in their work.

   It is in this way – through fair, open and transparent recruitment, selection and development – that the Council and its workforce can work towards and achieve its vision of providing excellent quality services to the people of Oxford.

2. **SCOPE**

   2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all employees and potential employees.

3. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

   **Recruiting Managers (line manager of the vacant post)**

   3.1 The recruiting manager must ensure they are fully trained and that they have the skills and knowledge required to implement this policy to recruit and select in a fair way. This should include an understanding of the relevant equalities and employment policies and legislation.

   3.2 The Council has a Recruitment and Selection Toolkit providing guidance notes on each stage of the recruitment process. Recruiting managers must understand their role and responsibilities at each stage.

   **People and Equalities**

   3.3 People and Equalities will:-
   
   • Provide strategic advice on recruitment and workforce options taking the Council’s People Strategy and Workforce Plan into account.
provide advice to recruiting managers on effective methods to attract potential employees and to ensure a diverse and high performing workforce
assist in determining an appropriate selection process including preparing interview questions
co-ordinate the administrative elements of the recruitment process
provide coaching and training for recruiting managers

4. **WHO MAKES APPOINTMENT DECISIONS?**

4.1 All appointment decisions must be made by a panel consisting of a minimum of two people. In most cases the panel will consist of employees with line management responsibility for the job. At least one panel member will be on a higher grade than the position being filled. Other panel members (except People and Equalities representatives) must be at the same or higher grade as the position being filled.

4.2 All offers of employment must be made by People and Equalities. Appointment should be at the bottom of the grade, unless there are exceptional circumstances which should be agreed with the Head of People & Equalities.

4.3 Elected Members are responsible for appointing the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service. The appointment will be made by Appointment Committee which must include a member of the City Executive Board. In the case of the Chief Executive appointment the decision must also be ratified by full Council.

5. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS OR RELATIONSHIPS**

5.1 Applicants are required to declare any relationships to existing employees or Elected Members. Employees also have a duty to declare any interests that they may have in respect of any aspect of the Council’s business. Further details are in the Employee Code of Conduct.

5.2 It is the recruiting manager’s responsibility to ensure that if an employee declares an interest or relationship, or an applicant declares a relationship, that the person concerned does not take any part in the recruitment process. If the recruiting manager themselves identify that they have an interest or relationship with an applicant they must declare the fact to People and Equalities immediately and remove themselves from the recruitment process.

6. **CANDIDATES APPROACHING THE COUNCIL’S NORMAL RETIREMENT AGE OF 65**

6.1 The Council’s normal retirement age is 65. In line with the Age Discrimination legislation exemptions, the Council does not accept applications from people over 65 years of age or who are within 6 months of our normal retirement age.

7. **POLITICALLY RESTRICTED POSTS**

7.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 imposes restrictions on political activities by employees who hold certain posts. This includes the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Heads of Services and any posts that are ‘politically sensitive’ i.e. giving advice on a regular basis to Elected Members or speaking on behalf of the Council on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters. Refer to the Council’s Guidance for Employees and Managers on Politically Restricted Posts for further information.
8. **JOB SHARING**

8.1 The Council has a Policy on Job Share and therefore accepts applications on a job share basis for most full time positions. The minimum number of hours is 16 and the maximum is 21 hours per week. Where job share is available it will be specified on the job details.

9. **HAVING MORE THAN ONE JOB**

9.1 The Council recognises the increasing variation in peoples’ work patterns and arrangements. It does not wish to prevent employees from having more than one employment unnecessarily. We do, however, have a duty to ensure that employment legislation is not being breached and that there is not or not likely to be conflict of interest. Employees must therefore obtain consent prior to taking up additional employment. Further information is available in the Council’s Guidance for Employees and Managers on Additional Employment which is available on the Intranet or from People and Equalities.

10. **APPOINTMENTS EXEMPT FROM THE FULL SELECTION PROCEDURES**

10.1 There are some instances where the full selection procedure may not be applicable. These include:-

- Redeployments – employees who are on the redeployment list are given the opportunity to apply for jobs before they are advertised. This includes employees who are under notice of redundancy and those who are seeking alternative employment for health reasons. In these situations the procedures outlined in the Organisational Change Policy and the Attendance Management Policy should be followed.
- Internal Secondments – employees can apply for secondment opportunities within the Council through the Council’s selection process. If the position subsequently becomes permanent the ‘secondee’ may be offered the position without the need for a recruitment process. Refer to the Council’s Secondments Policy and Procedure for further information.
- Temporary to permanent employment - Employees who are in a temporary position may be made permanent. Refer to the Council’s Organisational Change Policy and Fixed Term Contracts Policy and Procedure for further details.

11. **TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT AND AGENCY STAFF**

11.1 The Council prefers to make permanent appointments where possible. Circumstances sometime, however, dictate the need to make temporary appointments. The Council aims to keep the use of temporary contracts to a minimum and maximise permanent employment opportunities. Where temporary appointments are necessary the Council will ensure compliance with employment legislation to avoid less favourable treatment. For further information refer to the Council’s Fixed Term Contacts Policy and Procedure.

11.2 The Council aims to fill as many vacancies as possible by directly employed staff. The use of agency staff is therefore kept to a minimum and used for short term and emergency staffing needs only. Where agency staff are needed they will normally be recruited from agencies that are under contract or preferred supplier agreements with the Council.
11.3 In all cases where it is established there is a need to hire a temporary member of staff, the appointment will be subject to the approval of People & Equalities.

12. EMPLOYING YOUNG PEOPLE

Children aged 16 or under

12.1 Children who are legally required to attend school may be employed in limited circumstances. As the Council does not employ children of this age as it does not have opportunities that would comply with the restrictions.

Employees aged 16 and 17

12.2 For employees over the minimum school leaving age, but under 18, legal restrictions on hours worked and other safeguards still apply e.g. right to paid time off for study, requirement for a risk assessment of the impact of the young workers’ immaturity and inexperience on their health and safety in the workplace and other restrictions on working hours etc. Specific advice should be sought.

13. EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS

13.1 When a person applies for a job with Oxford City Council, we will not take into account previous spent convictions as laid down in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA 74), except when a person is being appointed to an exempted position under the ROA 74.

13.2 The disclosure of a criminal record or other information will not necessarily bar a person from appointment. The Council will take into account the nature of the offence, the relevance to the post the person has applied for, how long ago the offence took place and the age of the person when the offence was committed.

13.3 Information provided will be treated in confidence and will only be taken into account in relation to an application where an exemption applies.

13.4 Refer to the Council’s Policy on the Employment of People with Criminal Records which is available on the Council’s website www.oxford.gov.uk or on the intranet for further information.

14. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

14.1 Managers should always seek to use a strategic and cost effective approach to recruiting to vacancies eg identifying whether duties can be absorbed via current post holders, through 'acting up' or secondment opportunities, or apprentice opportunities which can be used to achieve a diverse workforce with succession planning capability. Recruiting Managers should discuss resourcing needs with their HR Business Partner at an early stage who will be able to recommend a number of cost effective options that will ensure the Council has a balanced workforce capable of delivering its services.

14.2 Where recruitment to a vacancy has been authorised the recruitment procedure that the Council will follow is as attached at Appendix 1, with a summary attached at Appendix 2.
15. **DATA PROTECTION**

15.1 The Council will ensure that all information obtained during the recruitment process will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

15.2 The Council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you provide in your application form for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering funds for these purposes. Further information is available on the Council’s website [www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk).

16. **WHO DEALS WITH COMPLAINTS?**

16.1 You should make any complaint to People and Equalities in the first instance who will attempt to resolve your concerns, in consultation with the recruiting managers, where appropriate. If you are not satisfied with outcome you may make a formal complaint to the Council using the Corporate Complaints Procedure which is available on the Council’s website. Council employees may use the Council’s Grievance Policy and Procedure.

17. **RELATED POLICIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

17.1 Related Policies and documents are listed below:-

- Code of Conduct
- Corporate Complaints Policy
- Corporate Equalities Scheme
- Fair Employment Statement
- Fixed Term Contracts Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Guidance for Employees and Managers on Additional Employment
- Guidance for Employees and Managers on Politically Restricted Posts
- Guidance on the Use of Psychometric Tests
- Job Sharing
- Organisational Change Policy and Procedure
- Policy on the Employment of People with Criminal Records
- Policy on Safeguarding Children
- Relocation Policy
- Retirement Policy
- Secondments Policy and Procedure

18. **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

18.1 The Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service, has overall responsibility for employees and will receive regular monitoring information including diversity information on the effectiveness of this Policy.
Oxford City Council

Appendix 1 RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

Advertisements

- Council vacancies will normally be advertised internally first, but this may run in parallel with an external process (in which case internal applications may be given priority.)
- We will aim to provide a minimum period of two weeks for all job advertisements placed externally.
- The choice of publications for external advertisement will depend on the nature of the job, however, print media advertisements will be the exception. All advertisements will, however, be placed with the Jobcentre Plus, on the Total Jobs website, the Jobs Go Public website and our own website www.oxford.gov.uk.
- Our adverts will adopt a standard approach and provide clear details about how to apply for the job.

Applications

- Our application pack will provide the basis for you to make an informed decision about whether to apply for the job. It will contain, as a minimum:-
  - An application form
  - Job details
  - Job requirements (selection criteria)
  - Information for applicants about Oxford City Council
  - Information about how to apply

This information will be available on our website www.oxford.gov.uk as well as being available in paper format.
- Our adverts will give clear contact details for further information. We aim to answer most telephone calls personally during normal office hours. Outside office hours, and on occasions during office hours, you may be asked to leave a message on our voicemail service.
- We will acknowledge receipt of electronic applications by email. We will acknowledge receipt of paper applications if you provide a stamped addressed envelope or postcard.
- CV’s will not normally be accepted.
- We encourage applicants to submit applications electronically as this more efficient and environmentally friendly. We do, however, recognise that this is not always possible and therefore provide and accept paper versions.
- We aim to send an application pack to you within one working day of your request being received.

Equal Opportunities

- The monitoring section of the application form will be removed from your application before your form reaches the selection panel and this information will not be available to them. The Council wishes to ensure we reflect the diversity of the community in our workforce. We therefore welcome as wide a variety of applications as possible. If you have indicated that you have a disability, the recruiting manager may be made aware of this to ensure that you are given an interview if you meet the essential criteria and to make any necessary special arrangements for the interview.
• The information you provide in the monitoring section will be held in confidence by People and Equalities and will be used for statistical purposes to enable Oxford City Council to carry out its equal opportunities monitoring obligations. In this way we can work towards identifying any possible barriers to employment and take steps to ensure our workforce proportionally reflects the community.

Shortlisting

• Shortlisting will be carried out by assessing the evidence provided on the application forms against the selection criteria.
• We will shortlist all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria.
• We aim to tell you if you have been shortlisted within 3 weeks of the closing date.
• If you have not heard from the Council within 3 weeks of the closing date you should assume that you have not been shortlisted for the vacancy.

Selection Process

• If you are selected for interview we will aim to give you 7 days notice, unless the interview date was specified in the job details. This notification may be by telephone, email or letter.
• If the job asks for qualifications as essential selection criteria you will be asked to bring your certificates (or other documentary evidence) with you for verification.
• You will be informed in advance about the selection techniques to be used, which will relate directly to the selection criteria.
• If psychometric tests are being used they will be carried out by trained staff in accordance with the Council’s Guidance on the Use of Psychometric Tests.
• At the interview you will be told when you can expect to hear the final outcome of your application. We aim to contact you within three working days.
• The interview panel will make the final selection decision assessing selection the evidence they have obtained from your application form, interview and any other tests or assessment used against the selection criteria.
• If requested you can obtain feedback about your performance in the selection process. In the case of psychometric tests feedback will be provided by a qualified test assessor.

Pre-Offer Checks

• Prior to making a verbal offer of employment we will check any references that have been received to make sure that they are satisfactory.
• We will also check the declaration of criminal convictions on your monitoring form for any relevant convictions that may preclude an offer of appointment from being made.

Offer of Employment

• If you are successful a member of the P & E team will contact you to make a verbal offer of employment. This offer will be subject to satisfactory confirmation of the following:-
  o References
  o Right to Work in the UK
  o Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)/Independent Safeguarding Agency (ISA) clearance
  o Medical Clearance
  o Evidence of possession of essential qualifications
• Successful completion of probationary period
  • The verbal offer will be confirmed in writing normally within 4 working days.

References

• The application form asks you to provide two references and asks for permission to contact them prior to interview. If the referees have not been contacted or replies have not been received prior to the verbal/written offer of employment, the offer will be conditional upon receipt of satisfactory references. The referees will be contacted immediately to obtain references. In the event that we have difficulty obtaining references we will contact you to ask for your assistance in obtaining them or to provide details for other referees that we may contact.

Right to Work in the UK

• The Council is required to check that you are eligible to work in the UK. The offer of employment is therefore conditional upon confirmation of this point. You will be given details of the documentary evidence you need to provide to confirm your entitlement to work in the UK.
• Oxford City Council cannot employ migrant workers from outside of the European Economic Area and Switzerland under the Points Based System rules issued by the UK Border Agency as it is not currently licensed as a sponsor.

CRB/ISA Clearance

• If you have applied for a position which is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and requires CRB/ISA clearance you will be required to complete the relevant checks.
• Your appointment is conditional upon satisfactory completion of these checks and you will not be allowed to start work until these checks have been completed.

Medical Clearance

• All offers of appointment are subject to obtaining satisfactory medical clearance. You will be required to complete a health questionnaire which will be assessed by People and Equalities. If your answers raise specific further questions you will be asked to complete a more detailed questionnaire, which will be assessed by our Occupational Health Advisor and you may also be required to attend a medical assessment.

Data Protection

• The personal data you provide during the recruitment process will be held securely on the City Council’s personnel information systems in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 for obtaining and processing ‘sensitive’ personal data and will not be published on an individual basis.
• Applicants’ recruitment documentation will be destroyed/deleted after 6 months, except for that of successful applicants which will be kept with employee’s personal records.
### Oxford City Council

**Appendix 2 RECRUITMENT PROCESS SUMMARY**

The recruiting manager in consultation with People and Equalities will:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identify need</strong></td>
<td>Consider how the need has arisen e.g. a new job, employee leaving, additional projects, maternity cover, secondment cover, long term sickness cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discuss with HR Business Partner</strong></td>
<td>Identify options for cover and agree course of action e.g. distribute duties amongst existing staff, acting up opportunities, opportunities for employees with priority status, Future Jobs funds, apprenticeships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discuss with Finance Business Partner/Accountant</strong></td>
<td>Agree available budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review Job Description, Person Specification &amp; Grade for Role</strong></td>
<td>Identify changes needed to deliver service objectives Agree with HR Business Partner and Service Head Submit for job evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complete establishment control process</strong></td>
<td>Complete establishment control request for approval by Service Head, People &amp; Equalities and Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Advertising and selection process** | Recruiting Manager meets with HR Business Partner/HR Officer to discuss advertising, agree timescales recruitment below:--  
 HR Business Partner/ HR Officer will place advert (normally internally only first)  
 Shortlist applicants for interview  
 Undertake assessment/interview process  
 Select successful candidate  
 HR Business Partner/HR Officer makes job offer  
 HR Business Partner/ HR Officer commences new starter process including contract, references, right to work in the UK, CRB/ISA checks and medical clearance  
 Plan induction phase |